



People, Performance and Development Committee
9 June 2021

Workforce of the Future

Purpose of the report:

To provide an update for the Committee on the delivery of the council's workforce strategy.

1. Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

2. Introduction

2.1 At its meeting in March 2021 the Committee endorsed the council's new workforce strategy: Workforce of the Future. This report provides the first quarterly update on progress in delivering the strategy.

2.2 There are five areas of focus that together will deliver Workforce of the Future; updates on the work that has been initiated over the past three months are summarised under each of the theme headings below. These updates cover both the new 'pilot' projects that have been established to trial and embed new approaches as well as progress with integrating Workforce of the Future into established programmes. More detailed updates on specific aspects of this work will be brought to PPDC for decisions as required.

3. Workforce of the Future: theme updates

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Workforce Insight and Management

- 3.1 We are developing our use of data and insight through aligning KPIs to the new workforce strategy. Restrictions with the council's existing systems mean we are currently only able to collect, analyse and report on base level data, such as equalities information, employee turnover and sickness. As part of this strategy we are developing more sophisticated use of data and analytics, enabling the insight we gain to inform evidenced-based workforce initiatives and demonstrate impact. This will be facilitated through the use of several new systems and data sets as outlined below.
- 3.2 Unit 4 (the council's SAP replacement) is due to go live at the end of this year as part of the Digital Business & Insights Programme and will provide far more data about employees than we currently have. For example, it will enable analysis of career progression and skills to inform our workforce and succession planning. The additional advantage is that the system will automate more of the reporting, making it quicker and less resource intensive to access and analyse workforce data.
- 3.3 Workplace Analytics from Office 365 will enable us to better understand how employees are working, by providing data such as:
 - Number of average emails sent per week by service/directorate in any given month/quarter
 - Hours spent on emails by service/directorate in any given month/quarter
 - Hours in meetings by service/directorate in any given month/quarter
 - Hours spent collaborating via Teams etc. by service/directorate in any given month/quarter
 - Hours spent in 1-1s with line manager
 - Hours spent in other meetings with line manager (this will be helpful to see where line managers are spending time coaching their direct reports, or not as the case may be)
 - Number of 'active' online hours per week.
- 3.4 It is important to emphasise that this is not about 'checking up' on employees – principles of trust, flexibility and working by outcomes rather than outputs are essential to agile working and the council's desired culture. Rather this data will help to highlight where targeted preventative measures may be required, for example to address workload pressures or lack of supervision, before they impact on employee wellbeing, productivity, or performance.
- 3.5 The new quarterly pulse staff surveys are providing valuable feedback around specific issues and opportunities which we will use to inform delivery of the strategy (see separate report to this meeting of the Committee). Survey questions can be tailored each quarter to gain additional qualitative and quantitative insight about specific issues to inform the activity within the strategy.

- 3.6 Finally, we are actively looking to benchmark the council's performance, whether in response to staff survey results, base employee data such as our workforce demographics, sickness levels and turnover, or benchmarking around areas of importance to us, for example our approach to staff wellbeing and work-life balance.

Strategic Workforce Planning

- 3.7 Workforce is embedded in budget planning processes for 22/23 and 23/24. Integrating workforce planning with financial, strategy and transformation planning through the budget setting process will enable a more holistic approach to strategic workforce planning, ensuring our workforce plans and investment is aligned with and supporting the council's strategic priorities.
- 3.8 An early example of this is where a cross-HROD team has been established to maximise the contribution of workforce to our climate change commitments. This project will explore how our employment practices, policies and ways of working can support the council's commitment to be a net zero organisation by 2030.

Work and Job Design

- 3.9 Workforce is embedded in the emerging Digital Operating Model, enabling a council-wide approach to service and organisation design. By working closely with services such as IT&D, Customer Services and Transformation we can consider work and job design in the context of the overall service offer, therefore maximising opportunities for identifying efficiencies and introducing more efficient and productive ways of working.
- 3.10 The Digital Business & Insights Programme will have a fundamental impact on work and job design, encouraging a 'self-serve' approach to tasks such as payment of expenses, booking annual leave and maintaining personal information. These will be accessible remotely via an App, modernising our employment practices, reducing the administrative burden of logging onto SAP to carry out these tasks, and resulting in productivity gains. Combined with the data that will be available from Workplace Analytics and the Agile Programme, this presents a significant opportunity to ensure we are designing work in such a way that enables employees to focus on the most impactful activities.

Resourcing

Values-based Recruitment:

- 3.11 The values-based recruitment project is developing more holistic recruitment practices, focusing on recruiting for the right values and attitudes in addition to professional skills and competencies. This places more emphasis on the behaviours that are becoming increasingly important, e.g. resident focus, adaptability and a growth mindset, and consequently will support the move towards more agile and outcomes focused ways of working.

Alternative employment models:

3.12 We are exploring a number of alternative employment models in response to specific challenges across the council. This includes an 'Associate' model, initially focusing on Programme and Project Managers working on Transformation Programmes, which will be instrumental in helping to reduce reliance on agency and interim staff. It will also support the delivery of transformation by having a pool of known and proven project and programme managers to work on our key programmes.

Employee Experience

Employee Value Proposition (EVP):

3.13 We have initiated a programme to review and modernise our reward practices, employment policies and employer brand. The overall aim is to build a strong EVP that will attract and retain the best candidates. To do this, we will need to create a competitive pay and benefits structure with underpinning policies that connects with our employees and aligns with their expectations and preferences.

Culture Review:

3.14 Following their previous work with the council in 2018, Linguistic Landscapes have been commissioned to undertake a follow-up diagnostic to assess our organisational culture three years on. This will explore how the culture has evolved and identify where we might have further work to do to ensure our culture is completely aligned to our Vision and Values. An update on this work will be brought to a future PPDC meeting.

4. Conclusions:

4.1 Financial and value for money implications

There are no direct financial implications at this time. The strategy will support overall value for money and drive efficiencies by ensuring we are designing and organising work in a way that maximises the impact of our resources.

4.2 Equalities Implications

Improving employee experience and access to opportunities for all staff (current and future) is integral to this strategy. It is closely aligned to the council's wider work around equality, diversity & inclusion.

4.3 Risk Management Implications

N/A

4.4 Implications for the council's Priorities or Community Strategy

The strategy will enable us to ensure that our workforce is best able to deliver the council's Priorities and Community Strategy.

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Report contact: Jackie Foglietta, Director of HR&OD

Contact details: Tel: 07976 112409
Email: jackie.foglietta@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers:

Workforce of the Future, PPDC 31 March 2021

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