



People, Performance and Development Committee
23 September 2021

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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 latest quarterly update on progress in delivering the strategy.
- 2.2 The strategy focuses on an ambition split out into five themes: Workforce Insight & Management; Strategic Workforce Planning; Work and Job Design; Resourcing, and Employee Experience. More details can be found in the March 2021 report.
- 2.3 Everything we do within HR&OD contributes towards one or more of these themes. Existing, 'business as usual', work within HR&OD is being shifted to align with the strategy, and this is supplemented by a programme of cross-cutting projects that help lay the foundations for future changes. Updates on this work are included under the relevant headings below. More detailed updates on specific aspects of this work will be brought to PPDC for decisions as required.
- 2.4 The main focus over the last quarter has been on developing our employee value proposition (EVP), the summary of SCC's offer to staff and what is expected in return. This has involved engagement with staff and

benchmarking ourselves against others to help to define where we are currently against where we need to be. We have then used this to help inform projects that contribute to the EVP, including the Reward Review, Policy Review and Talent Strategy. Updates on these are included under the relevant sections below.

- 2.5 It should be noted that whilst this update is split into the five themes below, much of the work is cross cutting, with projects supporting each other and ultimately moving towards the same outcomes. A good example of this is values based recruitment (see Resourcing) which will be critical in embedding our EVP (see Employee Experience) from the first interactions potential candidates have with the Council, and that we are recruiting based on the attitudes and behaviours we need from our workforce.

3. Workforce of the Future: theme updates

Workforce Insight and Management

- 3.1 Over the last quarter there has been a focus on engaging with existing and prospective employees to gather insights to inform the work to deliver the strategy, including the EVP, Talent Strategy, HR Policy Review and Reward Review. The engagement has included surveys and focus groups aimed at understanding what employees value most from an employer, what aspects of our employee offering we do well and where we can improve. Over 1600 responses (52 of those being external prospective employees) were received in total.
- 3.2 The key findings from this are presented in the table below (where there is more than one, they had equal weighting), and are being used to inform the work outlined in the rest of this report.

Top 3 themes	What aspects of employee experience do you value the most?	What do you think SCC does well (as an employer)?	What do you think SCC does not do well (as an employer)?	What could SCC do better (as an employer)?
1	Recognition <i>and</i> career progression	Positive work environment	Benefits system	Providing a consistent employee experience
2	Salary and reward	Agile/flexible working <i>and</i> interesting place to work	Limited career progression opportunities	Recognition for work <i>and</i> realising employee potential
3	Agile/flexible working <i>and</i> positive work environment	Helping the community	Unmanageable workloads	Better benefits system

- 3.3 A Workforce Data Analyst has just been appointed to develop a more sophisticated use of insight going forward, and ensure that we have a robust, evidenced based approach to delivering the strategy. They will also be key to measuring and monitoring the impact of the changes being made.

Strategic Workforce Planning

- 3.4 Workforce is fully integrated into the 'twin track' budget planning process for 22/23 and 23/24, ensuring a holistic, joined up approach to budget setting and strategic forward planning. Impact on workforce (positive & negative) is one of the criteria in prioritising the opportunities to be taken forward for further development for the 23/24 budget. This opportunity to think fundamentally differently about how services will be delivered in future, is a key opportunity to embed the Workforce of the Future ambitions.

Work and Job Design

Organisation design:

- 3.5 Linked to the budget setting work outlined above, HR&OD are leading on the development of an Organisation Design function & capability. This will be critical to designing and embedding the changes brought about by the new approach to the budget. We are in the process of commissioning external support to work alongside and upskill an internal team, by applying the approach to Organisation Design within priority areas of the Council.

Service design:

- 3.6 HR&OD continues to work closely with IT&D colleagues as part of the Digital Operating Model. We recently trialled a two day 'digithon' with the Registrations service, developing the future service vision and strategy and conducting virtual workshops on data, agile, customer and workforce. This enabled us to take a more holistic approach to the future design of the service, a model we would look to replicate going forward with other services. This provides the opportunity to redesign work and jobs using a combination of people, technology and data to create the most value and impact for Surrey's residents.

Resourcing

Values based recruitment

- 3.7 Over the last quarter values-based recruitment has been piloted in several areas across the council. This approach encourages more holistic recruitment practices which focus on values, attitudes and behaviours as well as professional skills and competencies. Initial pilots have been successful and early indications suggest it increases workforce diversity. Feedback and learning from these pilots is being collated and used to update

guidance & support materials ahead of the approach being rolled out more widely this Autumn.

Reducing agency spend

- 3.8 In an effort to reduce third party agency spend and move towards a more sustainable resourcing model, the option of an associate pool and pay model was explored, initially focusing on Project and Programme Managers within Transformation. Cost/benefit analysis showed that the desired savings would not be achievable through this route, and the decision was taken not to pursue this model further. However, the insight gained through this work will be used to revise the Interim Resource Guidance and associated Business Case to ensure that appropriate checks and measures are in place to maximise value for money. This will be supported by updated communications to hiring managers to ensure the best value route to market is chosen, with benchmarked rates of pay provided as guidance.

Employee Experience

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

- 3.9 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) define an EVP as a description of “what (the) organisation stands for, requires, and offers as an employer”; something the council has never clearly defined but will be integral to our Workforce of the Future ambitions.
- 3.10 An effective EVP can help us stand out in an increasingly competitive job market, helping to attract and retain the talent we need to deliver our priorities. Typically articulated as a statement, our EVP will appear at the forefront of our recruitment communications. It will also be used to guide workforce planning and decision-making so that employee experience continues to reflect the EVP.
- 3.11 The insights gained through recent engagement will help us develop our EVP; specifically, to understand which elements of our current offer or ambition we should promote and what we expect in return from our workforce (e.g. capability, attitude) to enable us to deliver the very best for Surrey's residents. This is currently in development and will be brought to a future meeting.
- 3.12 The overarching EVP statement will be brought to life through a range of different contributions, including the work mentioned in this report but also through the Council's communications and recruitment activity. We plan to establish an officer steering group to oversee the EVP and ensure coordination between these activities.
- 3.13 The work on our EVP directly links to other work underway that also contribute to the employee experience.

Talent Strategy:

- 3.14 A new Talent Strategy is being developed to attract, identify, develop, engage, retain, and deploy individuals. This will build on the talent processes already in place (Performance Conversations, Leadership Development, EDI), add additional processes and create a cross-Council approach to managing talent.
- 3.15 This work directly supports the delivery of the Workforce of the Future Strategy by providing a focus for investment in people to develop the future behaviours and capabilities needed in an agile workforce. The outcomes that will be achieved through this work include:
- Creating meaningful work and development opportunities for staff aligned to their strengths, interests, and the organisation's needs.
 - Building a high-performance workplace and culture, with increased productivity and engagement.
 - Increasing the diversity of our workforce by shifting to an Inclusion approach to Talent Management.
 - Encouraging continuous learning, growth and movement.
 - Contributing to the EVP by having clear development and progression opportunities for all staff.
 - Providing enhanced data about our workforce to inform future strategic planning and decision making.

Further detail on this strategy will be provided in a future meeting.

Policy Review:

- 3.16 The HR Policy review is an important aspect of the wider EVP project as it will ensure our policies reflect and reinforce our organisational purpose, our values as an employer and the relationship we seek to have between employer and employee.
- 3.17 This work draws on the engagement outlined above, as well as including research on wider best practice, analysis of the external and internal influences that need to shape HR Policy, and gaining insights from current intranet usage data, HR Helpdesk and HR Casework activity data.
- 3.18 This approach has drawn a number of conclusions, including the need for a new policy narrative and change of emphasis that better reinforces the Council's purpose and values, reflects the organisation we are seeking to become, presents a more positive intent (e.g. absence management should emphasise good health and wellbeing) and provide clarity and

consistency without over-dependence on what the policy says. In addition, engagement activity as part of the wider EVP project has confirmed that users want consistent branding, format and design, concise policies and associated guidance with accessible language and visuals, and policies written from the user's perspective, not HR's.

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- 3.19 There are strong interdependencies with the council's Personalised Intranet project being led by IT and the MySurrey (SAP replacement) project. The new intranet's features and functionality offers the opportunity to improve HR Policy accessibility and search capability, and the link with MySurrey will streamline the user experience, from understanding of policy through to taking action via MySurrey's self-service portal.
- 3.20 The HR Policy Review also includes identifying priority policy areas for review, for example where policies are out-of-date, have become unwieldy over time, or do not reflect the Council's ambitions around agile working. Examples of priority policies and policy themes include Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion-related policies, Agile & Flexible Working, Absence Management, Resourcing and Disciplinary.
- 3.21 We are now in the process of designing a look and feel for policies that fits with the new personalised intranet capability, with more logical policy groupings and consistent policy and guidance templates. As well as reviewing and updating content, we will use the priority policies we have identified as an opportunity to test a new and more user-friendly approach to presenting and accessing policy information, ensuring our proposals meet the requirements of stakeholders, including trade unions and staff networks, prior to implementation.

Reward Review

- 3.22 An external consultancy has been appointed to lead a review of the council's current total reward package and design a new approach that is simpler to navigate, reflective of our organisational values, innovative and aligned with future workforce trends.
- 3.23 The consultancy are also supporting two other strands of work;
- The development of a new permanent arrangement for unsocial hours payments. Following the cessation of the legacy payments in July 2021, an interim scheme was agreed by PPDC until the end of March 2022 whilst consultations for a new permanent scheme has been undertaken with impacted staff and the trade unions over the summer months.
 - A set of future employee personas to guide effective workforce decision-making and facilitate the delivery of the council's strategy.
- 3.24 Initial findings from the review include:

- Narrow pay ranges restrict pay progression within a job grade, resulting in staff moving roles or leaving SCC to obtain a pay increase
- A more inclusive reward offer could help increase the diversity of our workforce
- There is an opportunity to re-invigorate the communication of benefits (and approach to reward) to help retain existing staff and attract new talent

3.25 The output of this review, which will include proposed future pay arrangements, will be brought to the November Committee for approval to progress to formal trade union negotiations.

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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Sources/background papers:

Workforce of the Future, PPDC 31 March 2021

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