Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

People Strategy 2017 – 2021

Introduction

The Corporate Plan 2017 – 2021 sets out our vision a 'Place of Opportunity' by creating great places to live, work and relax in and therefore improving the quality of life for everyone within the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

It defines the three priorities we will focus upon in order to realise this vision, namely:

- **People: helping people to stay healthy, active and protected from harm**
- **Places : creating clean and attractive places to live and work**
- **Prosperity: encouraging growth, attracting businesses, improving skills and supporting regeneration**

Our workforce is essential to achieve this vision as they deliver the services to the residents of Hinckley and Bosworth.

Strategic alignment

The Corporate Plan outlines the vision and priorities for our organisation. These priorities are developed in Service Improvement Plans and are the mechanism for delivering the corporate vision through our services. These plans help us understand what the opportunities and challenges ahead are going to be.

The People Strategy outlines how we are going to support and equip our workforce to meet the challenges and opportunities our vision presents. Our employees are an essential part of delivering our business and this strategy will outline key areas of focus for our workforce over the next few years. This will ensure that our staff can deliver the best service they can to residents of the borough.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy identifies the projected budget and expenditure over the next four years in order to plan the resources available to deliver the Corporate Plan and Service Improvement Plans.

Organisational context

External influences and local context

The strategy is also influenced by external and internal factors based upon the environment our organisation operates within. Some of the future challenges are known however there will also be challenges that are unknown. The strategy will need to be flexible to respond to the impact of any unplanned changes.
The challenges and opportunities are as follows:

Challenges

- Legislative changes and government initiatives

  Housing and Planning Act the introduction of this Act could mean a potential reduction in social housing stock and changes to tenancies. This will increase demand for the council's housing services (including homelessness).
  Welfare Reforms these are continuing and taking place including the roll out of Universal Credit across the borough which will also result in further pressure on housing and benefit services. Vulnerable groups will be particularly affected and we must be ready to meet the varying needs of its customers.
  Apprenticeship Reform effective from April 2017 confirms the Government's agenda to have three million apprenticeships in place by 2020.
  National Living Wage the Government's agenda to tackle low pay, as employees over the age of 25 years to be paid £9.00 per hour by 2020, will have a detrimental effect as it will reduce the differences in pay grades at the lower end of our pay structure.
  Industrial Strategy the Green Paper 'Building our Industrial Strategy' sets out the Government's objective to improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the whole country. The Strategy will focus upon targeting skills gaps along with introducing a comprehensive careers strategy. The paper also proposes long term funding for the upgrading of infrastructure such as flood defences and maintaining local roads and housing and recognises the importance of digital connectivity to support growth across the sector. This will lead to closer working with Local Authorities and the Government to deliver the strategy.

- Budget restrictions

  We will be operating in a volatile and uncertain environment following Brexit, and our organisation is not unique in having to address cuts in funding from Central Government due to ongoing austerity measures. Managing the impact of devolution has resulted in changes to the way we will manage our finances in the future. We have sought to manage future threats by securing significant savings through the Medium Term Financial Strategy and further savings are predicted over the next few years to create a stable position. However the financial impact of legislative changes outlined above and the impact on our services, when resources are limited, is still unknown.

- Demographic changes

  The population of our borough is ageing. According to the 2011 census residents over the age of 65 has increased by 15%. This means that a growing number of residents in this age range will need our services.

  The overall employment rate across the borough (residents in active employment) is 79.96% (Nomis – Official Labour Market Statistics 2017). This is a positive increase compared to the 2011 census, which was 65.3% and higher than neighbouring areas such as Coventry, Nuneaton and Leicester. Our location means the area enjoys good access links to the West Midlands, Rugby and Leicester and therefore in a good position to attract candidates from both inside and outside of the borough.

- Labour market pressures

  Restrictions in public sector pay has not limited our ability to recruit new employees to fill the majority of our vacancies, however there have been certain difficulties in recruiting and retaining particular groups of staff, due to competition from the private sector. This affects professional posts such as Planning Officers, Building Control Officers and Solicitors and also trade positions including: Plasterers, Plumbers and Electricians. Whilst currently there is not significant turnover of HGV drivers, in the longer term, should the Street Scene rounds be expanded, there may be further pressures to recruit HGV drivers.

Opportunities

- Partnerships

  We are working in various partnership arrangements jointly delivering cost effective services such as the Leicestershire ICT Partnership and the Revenues and Benefits Partnership. Social, Health and Welfare reforms has led to other partner arrangements with the Leicestershire County Council, Health, Police and the Voluntary Sector to provide more joined up working and sharing knowledge. Working with colocated partners at the Hinckley Hub has been integral to making this happen.

- Different ways of delivering services

  The majority of our workforce is directly employed. There are opportunities for us to explore working with other public and private sector providers to further improve the way local services are delivered. This will help strengthen our resilience and enable us to share learning, efficiencies and productivity so that we can reinvest in our services.

- Living and working in a digital age

  The increase in access to internet and digital technologies through high speed broadband is an important factor for residents and businesses when they are considering living, working or investing in the borough. What customers want from the public sector includes transactional services to be available through their own devices 24/7 and digital transformation can assist in driving down the cost of public services through increased efficiency, automation and effectiveness.

Whilst digitisation can help increase the productivity of the public sector workforce – through initiatives such as mobile and flexible working, we also need to give consideration, as a large organisation, to how it will attract and retain a younger workforce such as 'Generation Y' (age 20 years to 35 years and known as 'the Millennials') and 'Generation Z' (age 20 years and below). This generation, having grown up with technology and social media, will have high expectations for working in a digitised environment, where the use of social media is the 'norm'.

Composition of our workforce

In order to deliver our people strategy actions we need to understand the workforce profile. The overall size of our workforce has remained static over recent years with approximately 420 staff in post (375 FTE). Key headlines are:

With people working for longer and our need to attract younger people, the age profile will become increasingly spread and like many organisations, we are employing four generations of workers and this makes for interesting group dynamics. Defined by their age and critical societal events, each generation brings its own strengths to the workplace but also its challenges. We must continue to understand and respect those differences in order to minimise organisational conflict, and remind staff of our common values and behaviours within the workplace to support positive ways of working.

Age profile of our staff The age 'spread' has remained static over recent years except for the age group 16 to 24 years. This age group has steadily increased from 1.44 % in 2011 to 5.8% in 2016. We have done a lot of work to increase this number through a number of apprentices and graduate programmes. We recognise that we need to build upon this and further increase that percentage.	**Turnover rates** Turnover has started to increase from 10% in 2011, peaking at 14% by the end of 2015/16, this mirrors the median average in local government which is 13%, suggesting that the labour market is more buoyant. On average we have 50 leavers per year with approximately 60% leaving due to resignation.
Gender Our workforce is split 50/50 between male and female. 25% of our workforce is part time of which the majority are female. Flexible working is offered at all levels to encourage women into senior roles. We do not have a 'gender pay gap' and this is due to implementing a robust job evaluation scheme that has been in operation for 10 years.	**Diversity** **Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) backgrounds** Our BME workforce is currently 3.5% and this mirrors the community of Hinckley and Bosworth. **Disability –** The proportion of staff who have disclosed a disability is 2.7% which is lower than the profile of our borough residents (which is 8.3%). This is a priority area for us to address. We operate the 'Disability Confident' recruitment scheme, which guarantees an interview if the disabled applicant meets the essential criteria for the role.

Local context: The LGA peer review

The review, which took place during 2016, received positive feedback in particular that 'the council had a loyal and enthusiastic workforce where staff are encouraged to develop their skills and capabilities'. The report also highlighted that, in order to maintain our excellent services, we need to strategically plan to make sure our staff have the right skills as we move towards a more commercial, digital environment in the future. The LGA made the following key people recommendations, to be built into the People Strategy:

- Explore with partners future skills required for the borough and identify how we will meet any skills gaps
- Continue to support and develop staff to ensure they are resilient, flexible and adaptable to meet future challenges

People strategic aims

We want residents of the borough to experience an excellent and friendly service from highly skilled people when they use our services. As such we want our organisation to be a great place to work for everyone, including our staff. This strategy sets out our key priorities for our workforce that will guide our focus over the next four years:

1) Nurturing and attracting talent

People are our most important asset and crucial to the successful delivery of our services. We recognise the importance of not only identifying and supporting talented individuals but also developing, managing and retaining them as part of a planned strategy for talent.

We will:

- ✓ Develop a recruitment portal and refresh our recruitment material to encourage the most talented applicants– promoting our council as an employer of choice
- ✓ Undertake a review of existing recruitment advertising (expanding to include social media) and recruitment application methods
- ✓ Implement a talent development strategy across all levels of the council using interventions including:

1. A bespoke senior leadership programme for senior and aspiring senior managers
2. Mentoring for leadership roles
3. A programme of management development based upon coaching models to encourage our managers to drive performance, engage teams, grow in confidence and coach others. This includes: focus groups, interactive workshops, coaching and action learning
4. Participation in the Job Shadowing Scheme across Leicestershire authorities; this will encourage partnership working
5. Develop and encourage our staff to help them to fulfil their potential by investing in talent management and proactive succession planning that will help to secure the efficiency and effectiveness of our management teams of the future

- ✓ Modernise the current appraisal process and paperwork to become more responsive and Agile: for example, rolling feedback process
- ✓ Implement a corporate apprenticeship, graduate/newly qualified and 'grow our own' schemes
- ✓ Forge closer relationships with HR colleges and universities, locally and across the country
- ✓ Continue to support employee participation in our volunteering scheme

2) Building an agile and flexible workforce

We need to understand future demand for our services so we can effectively allocate workforce resources in a responsive way. We will support our staff to be high performing and prepared for increasing digitisation. We will encourage managers to seek new ways of working and delivering services through building commercial awareness and knowledge.

We will:

- ✓ Deliver technology solutions and infrastructure that will lead to improved ways of working for our staff
- ✓ Deliver training needs as identified by the Digital Strategy
- ✓ Integrate a workforce planning process linked to annual Service Improvement Planning – closely working with professional and technical areas recruitment and retention pressures and 'growing our own' staff
- ✓ Work with managers to explore new and innovative ways of delivering services. This could include different delivery models, risk management and employment options when reviewing structures
- ✓ Increase the number of career grades within the council to support succession planning
- ✓ Build role flexibility between roles inside and outside of the council – offering training and qualifications to existing employees and ensuring that future employees share those competencies by including those skills within job descriptions
- ✓ Undertake a complete review our pay structure in light of the living wage requirements and to improve the flexibility of the existing pay structure in order to meet the future needs of the organisation
- ✓ Put customer service at the heart of everything we do – Achieve accreditation for the Customer Service Excellence Standards

3) Encourage innovation and enterprise

We want to foster a culture of creativity and trust encouraging staff at all levels of the organisation to develop new ideas. We believe that building our ability to innovate will enable us to continue improving our services for the residents of the borough and encourage new income generating initiatives.

We will:

- ✓ Communicate clear messages in a clear and consistent way ensuring that our employees understand their contribution to our strategic vision and corporate priorities
- ✓ Develop a corporate approach to capture, consider and test new ideas from all employees
- ✓ Support managers to promote a culture of trust and creative thinking where staff are empowered to suggest new ideas
- ✓ Celebrate our successes and recognise great ideas, involving staff in feedback
- ✓ Provide regular opportunities for innovative and enterprising work to be shared across the council at all stages of the development, sharing lessons learnt

4) Promote health and wellbeing

We will promote the health and wellbeing of our employees to support a workforce that is able to respond to the needs of the community.

We will:

- ✓ Minimise sickness absence and support those suffering from ill health
- ✓ Review our Bullying and Harassment procedure
- ✓ Implement mandatory training for managers in regard to Workplace Conflict
- ✓ Review and update our Stress policy
- ✓ Develop training for managers and employees to ensure they are better equipped to deal with stressful situations
- ✓ Revise the Employee Code of Conduct
- ✓ Coordinate workplace health and wellbeing events to enable employees and partners to access advice and support about their health and wellbeing.

Delivery of the strategy

Progress against achievement of the strategic themes will be monitored by the Strategic Leadership Team. More detailed and specific implementation plans will be delivered through our performance management framework.

The successful delivery of the strategy will ensure that we attract and retain high calibre candidates, enable staff to progress their careers with the council, to feel valued and supported within the workplace. This will lead to a highly responsive workforce that can adapt to change and provide excellent services to our community.

Indicators of success include:

- High customer satisfaction rates within the Citizens Panel Satisfaction Survey
- A higher level of favourable scores in the biannual staff survey (scheduled to take place late 2017)
- Turnover levels reduced in key risk areas
- Increase in the number of apprentices and graduate placements
- Clear evidence of staff moving through career pathways
- Minimised staff complaints including grievances
- Reduced sickness absence levels including stress related absence
- Consistent level of high achievement in performance indicators
- More diverse and representative workforce