

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Staffing Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 July 2009
Report of: Paul Bradshaw, Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development
Subject/Title: HR Update

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 To update the Committee on progress with Human Resource issues.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 To note the report.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 No specific wards affected.

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

6.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1

11.0 Background and Options

11.1 Health & Safety

The first meeting of the Corporate Health & Safety Forum took place on 23 June 2009. This is a joint Officer/Trade Union Group looking at Health & Safety issues across the Council. Members of the Group discussed the development of Health & Safety policies and guidance documents and reporting arrangements for accident and other Health & Safety statistics. The forum will meet on a quarterly basis.

A number of Health & Safety policies have been agreed and implemented including the Corporate Safety Policy, Accident / Incident Reporting Policy, Drug and Alcohol, Members Safety, New and Expectant Mothers, Personal Protective Equipment, Risk Assessment and Stress Management. The Trade Unions are being consulted about a range of further Health & Safety policies.

The Chief Executive, Head of HR and the Council's Health & Safety Manager recently met with a representative of the HSE look at how the Council is developing its approach to Health & Safety and to discuss expectations for the coming year. This meeting was very positive and the HSE are happy that the Council has a robust Health & Safety framework in place.

A number of training sessions have been delivered and a full programme of Health & Safety training is currently being developed. This will include internally delivered training reflecting domestic and European legislation; externally purchased programme and a programme for income generated training.

A manual Accident Reporting database has been established for the recording of major accidents and incidents. An electronic accident reporting system is being purchased via the procurement process and this will enable all employees to enter accidents and for them to be processed automatically.

A 3 year Health & Safety audit programme is being developed and which will prioritise high, medium and low premises and activities

11.1.1 Future Work

Going forward it is anticipated that the Health & Safety Team will lead on a number of employee promotions, including a corporate programme which addresses Hand Arm Vibration, noise, dust, display screen equipment, risk assessments; service specific / themed programmes and a regular Health & Safety newsletter to all employees.

11.2 Organisational Development

A number of initiatives are underway to support organisational and employee development.

11.2.1 Supervisory Skills Training Programme

Key priorities for corporate training and development are the design, commissioning and delivery of a supervisory skills development programme. This programme will lead to the achievement of Institute of Learning and Management standards at Level 3. The programme will be tailored to meet our priorities and ensure that participants gain both a solid foundation in the 'theoretical' and good practice of supervisory management, while focussing on the practical issues for Cheshire East.

11.2.2 IT training programme

An IT training and development programme is currently being planned and finalised. Potential providers are being agreed for the delivery of the programme.

11.2.3 Performance Development Framework

The new Performance Development Framework (appraisal) will be launched from September. Workshops are being designed to enable both an understanding of the framework and an opportunity to identify skills required to ensure that we are able to gain the most from the framework. The workshops will be for small groups and will complement workshops designed to improve internal communication processes and engagement.

11.2.4 Induction for Cheshire East

Options are currently being finalised to identify the most effective means of staff induction for Cheshire East. The potential for the use of an induction DVD is currently being investigated along with the potential for an on-line induction process and resources.

11.2.5 Investors in People (IiP)

We are proposing a "retain and recognition" strategy for IiP for Cheshire East. This model will act on the findings of internal reviewers who will be nominations from our Directorates. Training and development for our nominated internal reviewers will commence in October and reviews and assessments will be completed by end May 2010.

11.2.6 Leading Improvement Conferences

A series of Leading Improvement Conferences for Cheshire East managers have been delivered at venues across the Borough. These conferences have

included an interactive workshop led and facilitated by Paul McGee, an inspirational speaker and specialist in working with new organisations and helping them work with their people to embrace change. These have been well received and a further conference within this series has been planned for the 27th August. A further programme of conferences is now being considered.

11.2.7 Employee Opinion Survey

The Council is to conduct an Employee Opinion Survey for approximately 7,000 non schools staff in September 09 to assess how well employees feel led, informed, involved and valued and to understand to what extent employees are starting to feel a sense of identity with their new employer. Ipsos MORI have been commissioned to conduct the survey.

Broad areas of questions are proposed as follows:

- Your Job
- Your Team
- Your Development and Performance
- Your Manager
- Your Wellbeing
- Our Council
- Our Customers
- Our Communications
- Our Leadership
- Our Future

Results are expected in the late Autumn and MORI will provide an extensive database to enabling comprehensive benchmarking. This would include benchmarking across local authority and other public / private sector norms, and measurement against an employee engagement index.

11.2.8 Future Work

A major piece of work is the development of an Organisational Development (OD) strategy for Cheshire East. This is currently being developed to ensure that it both clarifies the direction for the Council in OD terms and encapsulates priority activities and programmes within an action plan framework. Involvement of key stakeholders with the development of the strategy - and in taking a lead role within key actions will be important for the success of the strategy. A key principle for the strategy will be to develop and use employee engagement to enable and lever in performance improvement.

11.3 Employee Communications

Recognising the need to align and engage staff from 4 different Councils so that they feel part of the new Council a small number of focus groups have been run to obtain a “temperature test” of how staff, are feeling three months into the new Council.

In summary the feedback indicated that staff did not feel fully informed about the key things that mattered to them for example structures and accommodation, many don't feel part of the new Council, lines of

management are still unclear in some areas and there is a need for a better two way flow of timely and relevant information.

As a result the feedback a review of existing communications channels has been undertaken and the Communications Team are now working on improvements in a number of areas for example weekly news bulletins from the Chief Executive, monthly face to face team briefings and better use of the Intranet.

11.4 Organisational Transformation

The journey of transformation has already begun for Cheshire East with the creation of a new unitary Council on the 1st April 2009. There is however some way to go to truly transform the way services are delivered and to achieve the dramatic and sustainable improvement and efficiency savings associated with becoming a flagship authority.

The adoption of the 'Lean Systems' approach is key to driving forward excellent service delivery and achieving true transformation. The Lean philosophy is to create an organisation which is obsessively focussed on delivering 'value' for customers and one which continually strives to eliminate non-value activity or "waste".

Recognising the scale of transformational change required across Cheshire East aligning and empowering individuals, teams and services to identify and action new ways of doing things will be critical for success. Whether these are the "small things which make a big difference" which can be implemented locally or the bigger ideas which may need to be managed as part of a bigger project or programme.

Taking the vision, values and objectives in the Corporate Plan as the start point, the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team (CMT) have jointly established Transformational Priorities and Principles to guide, align and challenge all change initiative across the Authority to ensure that the vision of the Council is achieved. The Transformational Priorities (or 3 C's) are summarised below:

1. Delight our **Customers**
2. Manage our **Costs**
3. Develop our **Culture**

To achieve true transformation across the Council the appropriate balance needs to be struck to enable Directorates and Corporate Services to drive and deliver their own transformational agenda's – whilst ensuring an integrated and co-ordinated approach to those few key initiatives which when managed as a collective whole will together deliver a "step change" in performance for the Council.

Following a review of all projects underway across the Council, six key transformational themes have been identified as those which are interconnected, primarily cross-cutting and when managed as a "whole

system” will be major contributors in achieving our aim of becoming a flagship Council. These are summarised below:

Outline Transformation Programme

1. Closer to Customers
2. Partnerships and Shared Services
3. Childrens and Adults
4. Health and Wellbeing
5. Total Transport
6. Enabler and Asset Strategies

Subject to formal Cabinet approval of the outline transformation programme next steps are to agree and establish the management and governance arrangements and develop a Council wide “blueprint for change”.

11.5 HR Policy & Reward

Work is ongoing to develop and implement new HR policies and procedures for Cheshire East. In recent months the Cheshire East intranet site has been further developed to enable managers and employees to access policies, procedures and other HR information. A Restructuring Procedure and Redeployment Procedure have been developed to support organisational change.

A significant amount of job evaluation work has been undertaken to support organisational reviews in Services and advice and training is being provided for managers to enable them to produce the necessary job evaluation documentation. HR Officers are working closely with trade union colleagues to grade jobs quickly and in accordance with the Council’s job evaluation schemes.

The Council has entered into a partnership agreement with Fideliti to provide a Child Care Voucher Scheme. This enables employees to save up to £962 per annum for low rate tax payers and £1,196 per annum for high rate tax payers from the cost of their childcare by sacrificing part of their salary and therefore paying less tax and national insurance. The Council also saves money by paying less employers national insurance contributions. This is the first of many employee benefits that it is hoped will be introduced as part of a wider review of pay and benefits over the next 12 months.

HR Officers continue to support the relocation of employees currently located in Cheshire West and Chester to Cheshire East. Briefing notes for managers and information for employees have been produced and it is anticipated that the relocation will commence in September/October 2009. There is likely to be a significant amount of work over the coming months to continue to support this area of work. HR Officers are also working closely with Staff Travel Planning Officers to develop travel plans for Cheshire East’s main office locations.

11.5.1 Future Work

The Council currently has employees on 5 different sets of terms and conditions of employment; those of the four legacy authorities and the new Cheshire East terms and conditions. Over the coming months HR will develop a harmonisation strategy with a view to establishing one set of terms and conditions for all employees whilst meeting the Council's obligations to adhere to TUPE and other employment legislation.

Prior to vesting day the Council gave a commitment to undertake a review of the Council's pay and gradings structure and an equal pay review within the first two years of the life of the Council.

11.6 HR Delivery

HR Delivery Teams are primarily involved in advising line managers on service re-organisations including design, consultation and implementation as well as providing normal day-to-day advice on recruitment, disciplinary issues, grievances, absence management and workforce information.

11.6.1 Progress in Implementing Organisational Structures

Work on structures is now progressing at a much quicker pace as managers are able to align budgets and staffing costs.

- In Places, appointments have been made up to and including 60% of Fourth Tier. Consultation on the full structure closed on 15th June and final structures will be published around 23rd July. It is anticipated that approximately 70% of the remaining posts will be filled through slotting and completion will be around November.
- In People, Fourth Tier is complete and Fifth tier is currently being worked on. Consultation is taking place this month and completion of LGR restructure should be achieved in September. Further non-LGR-related restructuring will be required as a result of national changes e.g. social care redesign.
- Budget reconciliation has been more complex in Performance & Capacity. Legal & Democratic Services have filled Fourth Tier and one Fifth Tier post and aim to complete in September. HR&OD and Policy & Performance have completed Third Tier appointments and are aiming to complete structures by August. ICT Strategy and Procurement & Asset Management aim to complete by August, ICT Shared Services by September and Finance by the end of October.

A small number of people (16) are being released on Voluntary Redundancy which was deferred from the programme in March 2009. The majority of these people will leave by September 2009 with a couple remaining in post until March 2010 to complete service-critical work.

In line with Cheshire East's approach of offering future VER/VR on a targeted basis only - ICT was the first service to invite expressions of interest from employees. The closing date for these is 17th July with an aim to release those who are approved in September 09. This timeline enables the Shared Services ICT to address headcount reductions from both Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester at the same time.

Proposals with regard to dealing with displaced employees through a formal redeployment procedure have been developed. Cheshire East inherited 14 people from legacy councils who were already seeking redeployment although it is possible that some of these people may be successful in gaining new positions as structures are released. Only one person has already been displaced as a result of the new Cheshire East structure and she is currently fulfilling duties as required by the Authority while suitable redeployment options are being sought.

A great deal of work is taking place to ensure that Oracle structures are updated and recorded so that good, accurate workforce information can be provided / made available to line managers.

Ongoing training of new and ex-District Managers in the use of Oracle and HR Policies will be essential as Cheshire East has adopted much of this from ex-County.

11.7 Swine Flu Preparations

A cross-service strategic group has been established to consider and action the Cheshire East response to the Swine Flu Pandemic. All services have been asked to prioritise their activities into Categories 1, 2 & 3 - with 1 being those that are critical and must continue and 3 being those that would stop immediately should there be a call for resources, either (a) in Cheshire East critical services should we experience an increase in employee absences and/or (b) to assist partners such as the PCT in providing an essential response to the pandemic such as within Anti-Viral Distribution Centres.

We are aware of three Cheshire East employees who are suspected/confirmed as having Swine Flu. A number of employee communications/briefing notes have gone out and FAQ's have been posted on the CE Intranet. Draft guidance for managers on HR policies such as sickness, holidays, redeployment etc. has been drawn up and will shortly be sent out. Facilities Management are currently sourcing gel to be provided in Employee Rest Rooms and wipes to be used on hard surfaces - particularly, where employees "hot desk" or work in environments other than offices.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

12.1

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name:

Designation:

Tel No:

Email: