

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 28 October 2021  
**Subject:** Corporate Services Portfolio  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Darshan Sunger

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **People Team**

### **Common Operating Model**

Consultation and recruitment are still underway for the remaining teams/positions to finalise the restructure process;

- Legal Team restructure - New role profiles being produced for Job Evaluation. Proposals for consultation will be launched in October 2021
- Housing Asset and Property Team review - proposals costed, awaiting final approval
- Housing Strategy Team restructure -on hold pending further review

### **People Strategy 2020 – 2022**

#### **Attracting, On-Boarding and Retaining Talent**

- iTrent - iRecruit Phase 2 – letter templates are now in the test environment within the system. Further automation and efficiencies are being scoped to optimise the experience for prospective employees. The automatic issuing of provisional offers, reference requests etc. will begin on the 1st October 2021. Contract templates will shortly follow and will be in the test environment in 2022.
- iTrent - iRecruit Phase 3 – Onboarding through iRecruit is on hold until MidlandHR are able to apply the relevant system upgrade which is expected to happen towards the end of 2021 early 2022. Once the upgrade is in place, the onboarding portal will be built and rolled out by mid-2022.
- Our exit interview questionnaire has been launched, the Register of Interests questionnaire is undergoing final tests and will also be available by 1st October 2021.
- Onboarding/Induction documentation is currently being reviewed to include any learnings through Covid and links to member induction documents.

#### **Developing our skills and behaviours**

- Strengths Finder workshops for all our Leadership Team began in September providing a new perspective to leadership, (strengths based leadership).
- All Team Manger workshops have been arranged and Lunch & Learns will be run to support them to ILM 3 qualification.

- Our eLearning system Litmos continues to be built. The team are investigating the use of features such as gamification, and links to Social media.
- Skill Pills & MS Teams sessions - A new series of Skill Pills is being run for all employees between Sept 21– Mar 22. These are 60-90 minute sessions accessible by all employees. They will cover a variety of topics to support hybrid working skills, wellbeing, resilience and mental health.
- A series of MS Teams training is being rolled out. These are 60-minute sessions, helping employees use all different elements of Teams. These are provided free by Microsoft.
- Excel skills is still our top requested training, so more courses are to be provided.
- In total we now have 32 Apprentices in the workforce. Our Public Sector target is 14.

### **Engagement and Wellbeing project**

- We have an additional cohort of Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) training in September 2021 taking us to approx. 90 trained MHFA for the organisation.
- Leadership Programme – Wellbeing workshops have taken place for the wider Leadership Team with excellent feedback received. One of our directors has volunteered to be a MHFA.
- The Perkbox sign up is sitting at just over 90% of the organisation, a total of 524 employees out of 582 have logged into the site to access the fantastic employee benefits and tools with over 4809 perk redemptions so far which is up 24% compared to the previous report. The free treat perk is the most popular downloaded perk so far – 621 redemptions.
- Now that Perkbox Insights has retired, in September, we launched a new tool called WorkBuzz. Like Perkbox Insights, employees will have the opportunity, on a quarterly basis, to tell us what's working well and make suggestions for improvements. The first survey was launched on 27 September. Once the new system is embedded, we can start to produce engagement dashboards, these can be just for respective teams or for the full organisation. To help showcase our new platform, we have produced a short presentation about the WorkBuzz platform and WorkBuzz onboarding. We encourage our employees to complete the surveys and be an important part of organisational change at EFDC.
- Perkbox Recognition launched on 1 December 2020 continues to gain momentum, we have had overwhelming engagement on the platform and this trend is continuing.

### **Our Ways of Working (OWOW) – Creating Our Tomorrow**

- Our employees are moving away from traditional styles of management and approaches, to more agile, creative ways of working, thinking and leadership. Embedding the changes that OWOW and the Accommodation Project started, empowering employees to evolve the culture of the organisation, ensuring we embed the changes and achieve the desired outcomes:
  - Making Best Use of our Assets – Training Change Champions and using a Train the Trainer (TTT) approach to use the Audio-Visual Equipment and Booking Tools in the Civic Office. To maximise the number of employees that know the capabilities/functionality of these tools and can train others on how to use them.
  - Embedding the Change - Assessing & Monitoring Adoption (benefits realisation) – Understanding where we are today (our current state) against where we want to be (future state) and applying interventions that will close the gaps
  - Continued Employee Engagement and Wellbeing, including a Beyond the Pandemic Phase 2 survey
  - Enhancing skills and flexibility of our workforce – including Inspiring Great Performance and a refresh of EFDC Values & Behaviours – currently with SLT to approve taking forward
  - Review of Collective Agreement, Terms and Conditions and Employee Consultation

## **Internal Communications Strategy 2021 – 2023**

- An internal communications strategy has been developed to enable effective engagement and communication with our employees so that they can flourish. The Strategy will help us take a fresh approach to internal communications and employee engagement, one that is flexible, intuitive, and interactive and will cover three key focus areas:
  - Providing employees with reliable, accurate, and accessible information, that educates and informs employees about the council's priorities and strategies
  - Creating opportunities to collaborate and contribute thoughts, ideas, and stories through our content to reflect and drive EFDC's culture in line with our values
  - Empowering our people to represent the council in a positive and informed way to their colleagues, family, friends, and within their local communities
- There are six key areas for development over the 3-year period, including content creation, corporate information platform, channels, engagement and insights, content management and recognising and celebrating success. Further details on the first 4 areas include;
  - 1. Content creation and the introduction of Communication Ambassadors**
    - Initial protocols for Communication Ambassadors have been developed
    - During October we will be carrying out an audit of our existing communications activity to identify where our most active content producers are within the organisation and the harder to reach areas
  - 2. Supporting the development of a new corporate information platform**
    - We're in the discovery phase for the organisation's new intranet/information platform, initial desk-based research into different solutions available was carried out in July
    - The team have had meetings and initial conversations with potential providers to discuss platform functionality, price point and options
    - In October, once meetings have all taken place, the information will be collated to provide an overview for the project sponsor and ICT
  - 3. Channels**
    - As part of the Civic Offices refit, five digital screens were installed (2 customers facing and 3 internal), Our brand-new digital signage is now LIVE with up-to-date content and employee news, graphics, video, meeting information, messaging, and BBC news updates
  - 4. Employee engagement and insights**
    - We have supported the procurement, planning and implementation for a new employee engagement platform to replace Perkbox Insights
    - A Communications plan was created and has been delivered in time for the WorkBuzz launch on 27 September 2021

## **Business Support**

### **Local Land Charges (LLC)**

- All LLC data is migrating to Northgate's Cloud environment on 15 October 2021.
- All data cleansing is now completed, and we are waiting on HMLR to feedback on any enquiries they may have.

- Once migration has taken place any changes LLC make to the system will be updated overnight to HMLR
- We are on track to still migrate in Q4, our HMLR Service Delivery Manager is updating the Delivery plan to reflect this and hopefully we will meet this and receive the Transition payment.
- ICT have worked hard alongside the LLC team to ensure that the migration moves forward within the timescales.

## **Projects**

### **Print to Post**

- The Council continues to migrate service areas over to the PSL print to post solution. Multiple teams have already move across allowing EFDC to remove the remaining large print equipment from the Civic building and the Business Support team has seen a 60% reduction in 2<sup>nd</sup> class post. We are now entering the management and review stage, working closely with Service Areas to reduce printing and reengineer processes supported by PSL.

### **Accommodation - Concierge Project**

- The Concierge Service is up and running providing support to users of the building. Work is ongoing to understand the needs of our tenants and partners.
- The Concierge Service is being organised to support the requirements of the new building and ways of working.
- Process and policies are being developed for the management of the Conference Suite. Owing to word of mouth communication external partners have made booking enquires. A plan exists for developing the usage of the Conference Suite over the next six months.

### **Soft Facilities Management**

- Soft Facilities Management moved to Business Support on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.
- The Corporate Cleaning contract for the Civic and Corporate estate is out for tender. The closing date is the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- Site contacts, regular reviews and site visits are being introduced to manage soft facilities across the Corporate estate.

### **Storage and Archiving**

- A contract has been awarded to Iron Mountain to provide a storage, archiving and retrieval service for EFDC. The data inventory and boxes will be transferred to Iron Mountain over the next two months. An internal document retrieval system is being put in place managed by Business Support.

### **Multi-Functional Devices (MFD) replacement programme**

- The number of MFDs (printers) across the Corporate Estate has reduced from 26 to 15 over the last 12 months. The current contract with Xerox ended September 2021. A new project has been formed to tender for new machines incorporating current user need.

### **Post Room Activities**

- A review is being undertaken to ensure stationery is being sourced via the cheapest provider.

- Outgoing Post is being reviewed. As usage of PSL print to post project increases cheaper alternatives for sending end of day post out is being explored.
- An initial review of the incoming post functions is being conducted to identify any potential cost savings from outsourcing.

## **Corporate Health and Safety**

- Risk Assessment training commenced with a successful pilot course run for the Technical and Contract services in July and 4 courses are now booked starting the beginning of October which will see 40 managers trained before the end of December 2021. Further courses will resume after Christmas to complete all managers. A Health & Safety Campaign is planned to launch the new risk assessment templates and once created, a new repository for all records. This will meet legislative compliance for the council, safe systems of work, training and monitoring.
- More first aid sessions are booked in October, for Museum staff and Communities teams. Manual Handling sessions are also booked for Grounds Maintenance employees.
- The Incident Management Team for the Civic has been working well, managing the requirements to match the needs of the numbers of employees working at the Civic.
- COVID – there has been a review of the current COVID risk assessment for the Civic. Also there are separate measures in place for large meetings, gatherings and council business including members of the public. This is under constant review and follows government guidelines

## **Contingency Planning**

- Three more directors will receive GOLD training next month and be added to our on-call rota to manage both internal and external emergencies. Three Directors have now completed the Civil Protection course. As a result, Emergency Planning and how EFDC plans and manages an incident, is to be reviewed later this year.
- Essex Police have been asked and have agreed to assist with GOLD training for Directors giving them a better understanding of joint working with emergency services, what is expected in a Strategic Command Group and their role. This will be booked and carried out once COVID restrictions are lifted.
- All Directors have received training from Essex Police, regarding their role as GOLD strategic leads for the Council in an emergency. Officers are review current plans and resources, however, we are equipped to deal with an emergency and can call upon mutual aid as necessary, meaning we will comply with statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

## **Insurance**

- The Council's insurance programme was last tendered in July 2015 on a five-year long-term agreement (LTA) with the option to extend for a further two years. The current arrangement will expire 30 June 2022. Owing to the value of this contract there is a requirement to undertake a full Tender exercise on the open market to ensure we obtain the most comparatively advantageous terms.