

Report to Stronger Council Select Committee

Date of meeting: 18th January 2022

Portfolio: Corporate Services (Cllr D Sunger)

**Subject: People Strategy Overview
(2022)**

Officer contact for further information: Joanne Budden (01992564000)

Democratic Services Officer: A Hendry (01992 564246)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

The Committee are asked to consider the report as information on the continuing People Strategy for 2022. The People Strategy for 2023-2025 is currently in review and draft format.

Report

People Team

Common Operating Model

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

- Legal Team – proposals for a new structure are progressing to consultation in January 2022.
- Housing Asset and Property Team – the service review proposals have been costed and are awaiting final approval.
- Housing Strategy Team restructure is on hold, pending further review.

People Strategy 2020 – 2022

Attracting, On-Boarding and Retaining Talent

- **iTrent - iRecruit Phase 2** – Letter templates for provisional offers of employment and reference requests are now “LIVE” and are being issued through the digital system. 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 can apply the relevant system upgrade which is expected in early 2022. Once the upgrade is in place, the onboarding portal will be built and rolled out by mid-2022. This system upgrade will present a more seamless approach for new starters and line managers.
- **Our ‘Exit Interview Questionnaire’** and ‘Register of Interests’ has launched.
- **Our onboarding/induction documentation** has been reviewed to include any learnings through COVID-19 and links to member induction documents.
- **Our ‘Onboarding Guide’ has been re-launched** and re-communicated. New starters are automatically contacted and invited to HRBP Power Hours; this is also open to existing employees.

Developing our skills and behaviours

- **Strengths Finder Workshops** for our Leadership Team began in September 2021 and provided a new perspective to leadership, (strengths-based leadership).
- **Team Manger workshops** have been arranged and 'Lunch & Learns' will run, to support them to achieve their ILM 3 qualifications.
- **Litmos**, our e-learning system, continues to be built and will fully launch by the end of January 2022. The team are investigating the use of features such as 'gamification', and links to social media.
- **Skill Pills** - A new series of Skill Pill sessions are being run for all employees between Sept 21– Mar 22. These are 60-90-minute sessions accessible to 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 webinars** are being rolled out. These are 60-minute sessions, helping employees use all different elements of MS Teams effectively. These are provided, free of charge, by Microsoft.
- **'Excel skills'** is still our top requested training topic, so more courses are to be provided.
- In total we now have 32 Apprentices in the workforce. Our Public Sector target is 14. We aim to support LGA National Apprenticeship Week (Feb 22) by creating videos of our Apprentices at work.

Engagement and Wellbeing project

- **We have a total of 80 trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs)** within the organisation.
- **MHFA networking meeting** took place in November 2021. Our MHFA's are being asked to refresh their commitment to the role and support colleagues through the darker winter months and emphasise the huge amount of support available via Perkbox. We are also encouraging our MHFA's to become Dementia Friends and Menopause Awareness Mentors.
- **Leadership Programme** – Wellbeing workshops have taken place for the wider Leadership Team which has received excellent feedback. One of our Directors has volunteered to be a MHFA.
- **Perkbox sign up rates** are now at 92% of the organisation, a total of 546 out of 584 employees have logged into the site to access the fantastic employee benefits and tools with over 6842 perk redemptions so far. The free Café Nero perk is the most popular download so far with 780 redemptions, followed by Tesco vouchers.
- **Our second WorkBuzz employee survey** launched in December 2021, employees got the opportunity to feedback on what is working well and make suggestions for improvements. We are currently reviewing the data from the first survey in October 2021, so we can produce engagement dashboards to share with directorates. Any organisational changes made because of this survey, will be communicated via a 'you said, we did' campaign. We are encouraging our employees to complete the surveys, playing an important role in organisational change at EFDC.
- We're preparing our third pulse survey to be launched in March 2022.
- **Perkbox Recognition** launched on 1 December 2020 and continues to gain momentum, we have had overwhelming engagement on the platform and this trend is continuing. Perkbox Recognition is now known as Perkbox Celebration, we have had over 1700 employee recognitions since launching the platform in December 2020.

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 leading. Embedding the changes that OWOW and the Accommodation Project started, empowering employees to evolve the culture of the organisation and ensuring we embed the changes to 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 understand the capabilities/functionality of these tools and can train others 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**, we will launch a Beyond the Pandemic Phase 2 survey in early 2022.
- **Enhancing skills and flexibility of our workforce** – A refreshed version of the organisational 'Values & Behaviours' is currently with SLT for approval.
- **'Inspiring Great Performance'** was presented to SLT in November. The option for a digital solution 'Clear Review' was chosen. This will be new project starting January/February 22.
- **A review of the Collective Agreement, Terms and Conditions and Employee Consultation** is ongoing.

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
- We carried out an audit of our existing communications activity in October, which identified where our most active content producers are within the organisation and the harder to reach areas.
- Next steps for December/January are to reach out to the areas that do not have much representation within our internal communications and to ask whether there is anything we can publish over the coming months. These will be our first steps in developing relationships with these 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
- The work to collate the information into an overview for the project sponsor and ICT is yet to be completed and will now take place in the new year.

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 supported the procurement, planning, and implementation for a new employee engagement platform (WorkBuzz) to replace Perkbox Insights
- A Communications plan was created and was delivered in time for the first WorkBuzz survey launch in September 2021
- Work has been done to collate the engagement scores and some high-level statistics for our wider management team and this was communicated in November
- High level engagement score stats were communicated to the whole organisation in November
- We are currently supporting completion of the second pulse survey in December 21 and preparing to share statistics and results in January.
- We are preparing to support our third survey launch in March 2022

Reason for decision:

The report is for consideration and overview focused on the continued delivery of the People Strategy 2022 aims. The people Strategy for 2023-2025 is currently under review and will be in first draft April 2022. There are no responses or decisions required at this stage.

Options considered and rejected:

Consultation undertaken:

Resource implications:

Legal and Governance Implications:

NA

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

Background Papers:

NA

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

Not required

Equality:

As no decisions are required an Equality Impact Assessment is not required