

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 5 April 2022
Subject: Corporate Services Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Darshan Sunger

Recommending:

That the report of the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder be noted

People Team

Common Operating Model

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

- Legal Team – consultation ends on 11 March 2022
- Housing Asset and Property Team - service review - consultation commences 15 March 2022

People Strategy 2020 – 2022

Attracting, On-Boarding and Retaining Talent

- iTrent have redesigned the Employee Self Service (ESS) module and this is now available (as of 28th February). The new design includes summary cards on the main dashboard for quick access to information such as payslips, new organisational chart view, improved response to size of device being used and includes improved accessibility ensuring it is compliant with the latest web content accessibility guidelines.
- Our exit interview questionnaire has been launched, the Register of Interests questionnaire has been delayed, the new launch date will align with the launch of the Onboarding portal (original date was the 1st October).

Developing our skills and behaviours

- Our eLearning system Litmos continues to be built. In addition to previous Subject Matter Experts mentioned we are now working with Council Tax & Benefits, and Community, Health and Wellbeing for volunteers, to explore how the system can be used for these specific group's learning needs. A report went to the last Stronger Council Select Committee recommending the use of Litmos for members learning and development needs (to be managed by the Member Contact team).
- Skill Pills - A new series of Skill Pills is being run for all employees between June – Dec 2022. These are 60–90 minute sessions accessible by all employees. They will cover a variety of topics to support digital skills development.

- The 21/22 Leadership Programme comes to an end in April 22, there will be a full evaluation via the Litmos LMS. This insight will be used to plan the next phase of management and leadership development for all managers/ leaders.
- Great success to report with our Apprentices; EFDC have had the first apprentice to achieve a Level 4 IRRV in Council Tax/ Benefits. This apprentice came to EFDC 6 years ago as a 16-year-old straight from school. Also, one of our construction apprentices, who was taken on straight from college has now (9 years later) been successfully appointed as Operations Manager at Qualis.

Engagement and Wellbeing project

- A new Mental Health First Aid training cohort will start in April 2022. On completion this will bring the total of MHFA's at EFDC to over 90 (far exceeding the 60 recommended by MHFA England). There was a Menopause Mentors workshop in February where 30 MHFAs learnt information and skills to support those going through Menopause.
- Perkbox sign up is currently 91% of the organisation, we have a total of 554 activated employees logged into the site to access the fantastic employee benefits and tools with over 7617 perk redemptions so far. The free monthly treat is the most popular downloaded perk with 877 redemptions followed by Tesco's 518 and M&S 285 redemptions.
- Our third Workbuzz survey opened on 1st March 2022, employees can tell us what's working well and make suggestions for improvements. Managers have now been sent data from the December 2021 survey which include engagement dashboards which will filter through to 'you said - we did' engagement for the future. We encourage our employees to complete the surveys and be an important part of organisational change at EFDC. We also encourage managers to check out their dashboards and raise awareness of the surveys in team meetings and 1-1's with employees.

Our Ways of Working (OWOW) – Creating Our Tomorrow

- The People Team are continuing to improve our Employee Engagement and Wellbeing, including a new 'Creating Our Tomorrow' survey for May 2022.

Business Support

Local Land Charges (LLC), HMLR Project

- HMLR issued a delivery plan to EFDC on 21st February 2022, with an estimated go live date of December 2022. EFDC are yet to sign the plan off, as we are reviewing some of the individual milestone dates.
- Data correction work is continuing, with an estimated 14,000 records left to update. HMLR have taken responsibility for correcting around 9,000 of those records, as a supportive measure.
- EFDC and HMLR are meeting on 10th March to discuss EFDC signing off the delivery plan. Once signed off, EFDC will receive one third of the £75,000 transition payment. Given the volume of data corrections required in the proposed time frame, we will use some of that payment to fund additional hours across the team.
- HMLR will inform the MHCLG once this final phase of the project is in flight, this allows a 12-week grace period on the monitoring of our LLC search turnaround times, which are usually expected to be a maximum of a 10 day. Although we are given this grace period, we do need to balance the project with BAU, as we do not want there to be a detrimental impact on those purchasing properties within the district. The team will hold daily huddles to review the project progress as well as the LLC search turnaround times and move resource around as required.

Projects

Purchase cards

- We are due to pilot the new purchase cards and online portal with our current card holders, before rolling out to eligible Officers across the rest of the organisation.
- Once this solution is fully rolled out we will see a decrease in up to 60% of our orders that are dealt with via the manual purchase order and invoice process.

Print to Post

- The Council continues to migrate service areas over to the PSL print to post solution, with Legal and Parking next to migrate.
- A report is going to Cabinet in April recommending the direct award of the print to post contract to our current supplier.

Accommodation – Commercialisation of our bookable spaces

- We have an excellent opportunity to partner with IWG and Epping Regus (our tenant on the top floor of the Civic Offices) for the advertising and booking management of our Conference Suite at the Civic Offices.
- Regus is IWG's brand and they are the world's largest flexible workspace company, operating across 120 countries, in 3,500 locations, with over 7 million users. Some of their clients include Amazon, Apple and Disney.
- A Portfolio Holder (PFH) report with additional detail is being drafted for Cllr Philip as the PFH for Finance.

Soft Facilities Management

- The new Corporate Cleaning contract is in place for the Civic and Corporate estate and the team are working with the supplier to review the hours of cleaning required, with the view to decrease our current expenditure.

Storage and Archiving

- The North Weald archive store has now been emptied and the North Weald Airfield storage is due to be emptied over the next couple of weeks, which is the final phase of this project.

Multi-Functional Devices (MFD) replacement programme

- The original timeline of this project has been slightly delayed due to some resource changes within the Project Management Office; however, the Project Manager is working with Business Support to go out to the organisation to understand what our internal print requirements are. Once captured, we can carry out a review of which items need to be printed/which items can be managed electronically, then look into which of the printed items could migrate to our print to post solution, then see what we are left with internally to put into a tender briefing.

Corporate Health and Safety

- Risk Assessment training for managers is still on course for completion as planned. All guidance and templates are now uploaded to the Health and Safety intranet pages.

- Initial meetings and work have taken place as part of the Incident Management Team review. Unfortunately the first meeting was interrupted by a genuine emergency but further meetings are organised to accomplish the tasks.
- A draft Health and Safety Policy has been submitted for consideration.

Contingency Planning

- Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) are taking place for events across the district the most resource intensive is the Ride London event in May. The Civic will be used as a local Command, Control & Communications venue for event organisers, Police and Ambulance as well as our own teams who are supporting the event with Community engagement activities. The Civic will be closed to all staff this weekend and Regus have been made aware, due to road closures access will be impossible by vehicle. This is all under control and managed well by an internal team including Health & Safety/ Contingency Planning.

Insurance

- The Council's Insurance Programme and Leaseholder Building Insurance went live on the procurement portal on 21 February 2022. We are in clarification questions period and all bids must be returned to the Council via the procurement portal by 8 April 2022. Evaluation will then take place and the successful bidder will be awarded on the 30 May 2022.
- A new Motor Risk Group has been established to review and update our policies and procedures.