

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

19th October 2022

Report of the Head of People and Organisational Development – Sheenagh Rees

Matter for information

Wards affected: all wards

The Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027: The Future of Work Strategy

Purpose of the Report:

To inform Cabinet of the Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027: The Future of Work Strategy which will be considered at the next Personnel Committee on the 24th October 2022.

Executive Summary:

The report provides background to the development of the draft Strategic Workforce Plan 2022 – 2027 which is attached at Appendix 1. The plan was developed over a number of months during which we listened to what's important to our employees and managers at every level and our trade union partners. We also worked with Audit Wales and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) to ensure our people practices are the best they can be. A consultation in relation to the plan was launched in August 2022, and all employees have been encouraged to provide feedback, either by email to futureofwork@npt.gov.uk or by attending one of 10 focus group sessions arranged. Face to face consultation also took place with our recognised trade unions across the council. The feedback has been collated, analysed and considered and the report sets out how we will respond to this feedback, including amendments to the Delivery Plan.

Background:

The Council's Workforce Plan 2017 – 2022 ended in March 2022. Work to develop a new Strategic Workforce Plan for 2022 – 2027 began in 2021, aligning to the development of the Corporate Plan which was launched in April 2022. We co-produced the plan with key stakeholders; this included:

- Engagement activity to help us understand what's important to employees at every level and our trade union partners. We used surveys, workshops, drop-in sessions and focus groups.
- We worked with Heads of Service and Accountable Managers to understand what matters to them and their priorities for their teams and the services they delivery. This has been used to develop and determine our workforce priorities for the next 5 year period.
- We worked with our trade union partners to ensure the workforce plan is underpinned by fairness and transparency.
- We informed our approach with the outcome of an **Audit Wales** review of workforce planning across the council, carried out in 2021 / 2022. This highlighted strengths in our established approach and recommended areas for improvement.
- We worked with the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) via their **People Development Partner (PDP) Scheme** which seeks to recognise organisations that are demonstrating a real commitment to better work and working lives. As part of the scheme, the CIPD carried out a People Impact Survey to determine how the council's current people capability aligns to CIPD standards. This provided us with feedback on our strengths and key areas for improvement, feeding in to the priorities set out in the draft plan.

Summary of the Strategic Workforce Plan

The Strategic Workforce Plan supports the council's strategic priorities and describes what the workforce will need to look like to deliver these priorities. By aligning the Strategic Workforce Plan to the council's Corporate Plan, we will ensure that the plan focuses on embedding the council's purpose, vision and values across the council's workforce.

The aim of the strategy is simple: we want to have the right number of people, with the right skills and attitudes, in the right place, at the right time, to deliver council services.

Our workforce priorities are:

- **Resourcing Neath Port Talbot**
- **Developing and Retaining Talent**
- **Employer of Choice: Employee Experience and Engagement**
- **Developing the Future of Work**
- **Knowledge and Skills Development**
- **A Safe Workplace: Supporting the health and well-being of our employees**
- **An Inclusive Workplace where all employees can be themselves**
- **Actions to support the council's well-being objectives**

Attached to the Strategic Workforce Plan is a delivery plan which sets out what the council plans to achieve in the first 12 months of the plan, to 31st March 2023.

The Council has established a Future of Work delivery team to supplement the resources of the People & Organisational Development Service; this team includes HR, OD and Engagement professionals, as well as a seconded trade union officer. This additional capacity will help ensure that the ambitions of the strategy will be realised over the course of the next 3 – 5 years.

We will be monitoring the progress of actions to deliver this plan to see if our actions are having the right impact or not. We will also review the plan every year to check that it remains fit for purpose. The OD Programme Board chaired by the Chief Executive, will oversee progress of this plan and the other enabling project identified in the Corporate Plan, and regular update reports will also be provided to the Personnel Committee.

Consultation:

Internal consultation across the council's workforce began in August 2022. The draft plan was widely shared with every employee receiving a link to the plan via Yammer or GovNotify. A summary video was prepared, which

is available on the internet, and trade unions have been consulted in face to face meetings. Articles in the Sway and agenda items at Corporate Director Group, Corporate Management Group and the regular Accountable Manager briefing have encouraged participation in the consultation. 10 Focus Groups have been held, attended by employees from across the council and from a range of occupations and levels, to provide feedback in facilitated sessions led by the trade union officer who has been seconded to the Future of Work (FOW) Team. Employees have also been able to provide feedback via a dedicated email address: thefutureofwork@npt.gov.uk.

Summary of Feedback:

The feedback received from all the consultation activities described above has been collated, analysed and summarised by the trade union representative seconded to the FOW team, supported by his FOW colleagues. This is important as it underlines the transparency of our approach and continued commitment to partnership working with our trade union colleagues. A high level summary of feedback is set out below, and more detailed summary of the feedback can be found at **Appendix 2**.

- The Strategy has widespread support across the range of respondents, including trade unions, managers at all levels and employees at all levels. The workforce priorities set out in the strategy have been confirmed through the consultation exercise.
- “Front line” employees found it more difficult to relate to the strategy than “office based” employees, and this was also raised by the teaching associations who liked the document itself, but could not see how the values and priorities relate to school based employees.
- The majority of feedback relates to either operational issues, including how managers implement policy and process consistently and fairly, consistency of communication and our systems, applications and processes, and / or suggestions around delivery actions to support the workforce priorities.

- An important point raised through the consultation relates to the challenge of implementing the strategy; that top down support will be required if this strategy is to be successful, from Corporate Directors and at every level throughout the council.

Response to the feedback:

- It is clearly important that we develop a Communications and Engagement Plan to support both the implementation of the plan, and ensure that across our council employees understand how it relates to them. An important first step will be to feedback on the consultation exercise.
- Regular updates will ensure employees know how we are implementing the strategy and the delivery, and whether we are doing what we said we will do. For example, taking on board feedback received, we will feedback in detail around the work of the Recruitment Taskforce, to ensure that there is widespread knowledge about the work of this team and confidence that we are listening to what's important to our employees and managers, e.g. we are already developing actions to address points raised around job evaluation, pay and grading, career pathways, succession planning, etc.
- An action in the Delivery Plan focuses on rolling out Yammer to every employee in the council, as well as ensuring that we are using this new workplace tool effectively. We will ensure that employees know what the plan is and how they can help us shape how we develop Yammer.
- We will also focus on developing actions within the Delivery Plan around the cascading of key workforce information across the council; whilst corporate tools such as Yammer support this, it is important that we have effective cascading of information from senior levels to employees at operational delivery level.
- The development of comprehensive employee development programmes over the 5 year lifetime of this strategy will support the

embedding of council values across the whole workforce. This includes the role of our leaders and managers at every level, being absolutely clear about the leadership role they are expected to provide, role modelling the council values.

- By March 2023, we aim to have developed our strategic approach to Leadership and Management, and worked with our senior management team to define what leadership means in NPT. A climate check of where we are now will give us a baseline assessment, and this activity will provide a solid foundation to build on, providing comprehensive development programmes to support our leaders and managers do their jobs effectively and competently. This is clearly not a quick fix situation, this will take some time to have impact, but overtime will start to address issues raised in the consultation relating to consistency, fairness, the embedding of values including the approach to occupational health and safety, but also ensuring that our managers and leaders feel supported and that they really are equipped and empowered to do their jobs.
- We will include the development of a Corporate Induction into the delivery plan for 2023 / 2024.
- We intend to develop our approach to employee performance management and appraisal and how it supports career development and talent management over the lifetime of this strategy.
- We will include actions in this year's Delivery Plan relating to mentoring and work shadowing.
- This year we will establish a working group to look at how our approach to our employment framework can be more inclusive – so employees do not feel that they are overlooked in our strategic or operational approaches.

Financial impacts:

The Council spends 45% of gross expenditure on its workforce.

Integrated impact assessment:

A full impact is not required as at this stage there is no identified adverse impact on any protected group; there may of course be equality impacts through the consequential implementation of actions set out in the Delivery Plan. Regular monitoring, including equality monitoring, will help the council to identify if any adverse equality risks do occur in practice and take action to remedy this. This monitoring will also consider if actions are having the positive impacts intended on protected characteristics and review our delivery plan accordingly. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce impacts:

The strategic workforce plan sets out the priorities for the council's workforce over the next 5 years. It describes how we intend to recruit, retain, develop, motivate, engage, reward and recognise our workforce.

Legal impacts:

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts:

Workforce planning seeks to mitigate any identified workforce risks. For example the plan identifies the threat that the challenging and competitive recruitment market poses to employers across the UK, and the actions the council is taking to mitigate this threat.

Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the Strategic Workforce Plan and that it will be considered at a meeting of the Personnel Committee on the 24th October 2022.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – The Strategic Workforce Plan: the Future of Work Strategy

Appendix 2 – Summary of Consultation Feedback

List of Background Papers:

None

Officer contact:

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