



EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 26 SEPTEMBER 2019

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - i) provide the Employment Committee with an overview of the issues and challenges facing the County Council in relation to recruitment and retention; and
 - ii) provide the Employment Committee with information on the progress made on the work undertaken so far and to outline the next steps.

Background

2. Recruitment and retention is one of the key projects to support the implementation of the Council's People Strategy 2017-2020. Several issues have been identified, both locally and nationally, which need to be addressed for the Council to be able to continue to recruit and retain a high performing workforce. These include:
 - i. Posts which are difficult to recruit to due to market forces. These include, amongst others: Social Workers, Engineers and Solicitors;
 - ii. A need to update the Council's branding in the job market so it can attract a diverse workforce and ensure it retains a competitive edge;
 - iii. The recruitment process is outdated and requires modernisation; and
 - iv. A perceived or actual lack of opportunity for employees, in a number of areas, to be able to progress their careers which has led to some leaving the organisation.

Progress to date

3. A number of key pieces of work have already been completed. These include:
 - i) Conducting some research into why people join, stay and leave the Council which has been used, together with some national research to inform our decision making on what needs to happen;
 - ii) A revised employment offer has been implemented for Children and Families Social Workers which has resulted in the number of vacancies reducing from 37 to 14 (between October 2018 and March 2019);
 - iii) Market premia payments, which is an increasing trend for a number of Councils, is in place for some posts in the Council and has assisted in both attraction and retention of staff and reduced turnover;
 - iv) An Incentives Policy, which has the support of the trade unions and has been approved, will provide a more flexible approach to attracting and retaining key staff. New initiatives include: golden hellos, retention payments and additional annual leave, which are in line with the offer from a number of other Councils;
 - v) A successful recruitment open day for Environment and Transport jobs was held, which was attended by 199 people and, to date, has resulted in 11 vacancies being filled. Therefore, the intention is to support other departments in holding these;
 - vi) A successful pilot within Environment and Transport which trialled the use of CVs and 'Flexible Hiring'. These will now be introduced for use in the following months; and
 - vii) A new recruitment website, which effectively promotes the Council as an 'Employer of Choice' has been designed and will be launched in December 2019.

Next steps

4. The following work is in progress and a further update will be provided in due course:
 - i) Pay - a piece of research work is underway to ascertain the importance of pay in the overall Council's employment package, taking into consideration the other benefits which working for the Council gives to prospective and current employees;
 - ii) Review of assessment and selection methodology - research indicates that a good selection process does not just hinge on

conducting an interview and a test. There are other methods the Council could consider which would support the organisation in selecting the best candidates to work for them;

- iii) Career grade guidance – feedback from the Council’s staff survey and other data surveys that have been sourced indicate that job candidates together with current employees are in favour of having the opportunity of being able to progress their careers through a career graded scheme. Having these in place, where appropriate and viable, would assist the Council in being able to retain good staff. There may also be a further opportunity to link these to an apprenticeship offer and these will, of course, also support the Council in its succession planning;
- iv) Hard to recruit posts – in the same way the Children and Families department have developed an employment offer for Social Workers, there are several other posts in the Council that are hard to recruit to, mainly due to external market conditions. The plan is to review these to determine what the Council’s employment offer could be to attract and retain staff in these areas; and
- (v) Corporate induction – a new modern induction programme will be devised which will capture and engage all new starters. It will include, for example, our values and behaviours, expectations regarding performance, the support on offer for learning and development, smarter working opportunities and staff benefit scheme.

Recommendations

- 5. The Employment Committee is asked to consider and note the contents of the report.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications/Other Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments will be carried out in relation to specific policies and procedures where appropriate.

Officer to Contact

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