

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

15 June 2022

Report of the Director of Central Services & Deputy Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 **WORKFORCE STRATEGY UPDATE**

- 1.1 The Workforce Strategy (formerly known as the Human Resources Strategy) provides an overview of the Council's approach to managing its employees. It is usually updated annually to identify "improvement priorities", such as changes to the Council's HR policies.
- 1.2 The Workforce Strategy was last updated in June 2019. Due to the pandemic the authority's approach to strategic Human Resource planning had of necessity been agile. The HR Manager attended the weekly meetings of MT to support in "real time" MTs decisions regarding the rapidly changing needs of the deployment of staff, the engagement of part time staff and changes to the Council's permanent establishment.
- 1.3 The updated Workforce Strategy attached as **Annex 1** to this report reviews progress in achieving the previously identified improvement priorities and identifies actions to be implemented in the period April 2022 – March 2023. The updated Workforce Strategy in Annex 1 also contains the statutory equality monitoring required by the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.4 Members will be aware of the Local Government Association's Peer Challenge Review which took place in January 2022 and the subsequent recommendation (reported to Cabinet on 27 April 2022) in respect of the Workforce Strategy: -
- 'Recognise and reinvigorate the workforce, with a focus on the right skills and right resources in the right place to deliver the transformation agenda. Develop a new Comprehensive Workforce Strategy incorporating the Council's new ways of working post COVID-19.'*
- 1.6 The latter element of the recommendation i.e., relating to the new ways of working post COVID-19 will be addressed at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee when it is proposed to update Members on the trial working arrangements and bring forward proposals for longer-term working.

- 1.7 The report of the Peer Review team also made a specific recommendation in respect of the Corporate Strategy, namely to “*Co-develop a refreshed Corporate Strategy, based on resident engagement, with clear outcomes, focussed on delivering for the community*”. Once this piece of work is finalised then it will be appropriate to review the Workforce Strategy to ensure that it is in consonance with the new Corporate Strategy.

2. Overview of updates to the Workforce Strategy

- 2.1 Section 2 of the updated Workforce Strategy details the changes to the way that the majority of staff carry out their role by working remotely. This is a key priority for HR and work is underway in developing a long-term policy to ensure that staff can be deployed remotely without any impact on productivity.
- 2.2 Section 3 of the Workforce Strategy details progress against the previously identified improvement priorities.
- 2.3 Section 4 of the Workforce Strategy reports the outcomes of equality monitoring of staffing issues in 2021/22. The Council’s Management Team have not discerned any evidence of discrimination against any of the protected characteristic groupings listed in the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.3 Section 5 of the Workforce Strategy advises the Committee of the improvement priorities that have been so far identified for 2022/23.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 The reporting of the outcomes of the Council’s HR equalities monitoring is a statutory requirement of the Equalities Act 2010.

4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 4.1 All of the actions listed in Section 5 of the attached Annex will be resourced from existing budgets. Every opportunity will be taken to resource items such as training from relevant workshops that are provide best value for money.

5 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 The Workforce Development Plan in Section 5 of the Workforce Strategy complies with one of the recommended requirements of the Annual Governance Statement (part of the statement of accounts). It is imperative that the Council can demonstrate that its staff are appropriately qualified and suitably skilled.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The reporting of the outcomes of the Council’s HR equalities monitoring is a statutory requirement of the Equalities Act 2010.

7 Policy Considerations

7.1 The Pay Policy Statement

8 Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is commended to note the outcomes of the equality monitoring as reported in Section 4 of the HR Strategy and to recommend the Workforce Strategy to Council for approval.

Background papers:

Nil

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