

CABINET – 14TH JANUARY 2021

Report of the Scrutiny Commission

ITEM 8 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2021-2024

Purpose of Report

To consider the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission in relation to the People Strategy 2021-2024.

Recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission

That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission welcomes and supports the recommendations set out in the report of the Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services.

Reason

The Commission, having carefully considered and asked questions on the report felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.

Meeting Discussion

- i. The Council had carefully considered the needs of staff members and would ensure flexible arrangements were in place, allowing for working patterns that would suit the circumstances of each individual. It was acknowledged that home working was not always practical, although generally improved the work-life balance of the workforce. The Covid-19 pandemic had meant that agile working practices had been employed quickly and had allowed the Council to develop an idea of how best to undertake modern ways of working.
- ii. The Council had considered the effect of home working on mental health and had devised a number of initiatives to help alleviate any negative impact, including the encouragement of regular virtual meetings. The Council would work proactively in order to ensure the needs of staff members were considered as a priority and the practices detailed in the People Strategy 202-24 would ensure employees were able to highlight concerns where appropriate.
- iii. An individual Equality Impact Assessment was not suitable for the People Strategy 2021-24 in its entirety as the scope was too broad. However, Equality Impact Assessments would be undertaken to actions in the People Development Plan where appropriate.
- iv. The increase in home working had meant a reduction in sickness levels amongst staff and this was due to the previous office culture and the open plan nature of the office environment.

- v. There were no risks identified which were associated with the implementation of the People Strategy 2021-24 in its entirety, although a risk management matrix would be utilised in order to assess the risks of individual actions in the People Development Plan where appropriate.
- vi. The Council would review the recruitment process and this included the potential use of CVs, as opposed to online application forms in order to assess candidates. It was acknowledged that recruitment across various sectors was changing and that many organisations were now using CVs as a means of identifying suitability of candidates.
- vii. The Covid-19 Pandemic had had a significant impact on the development of the People Strategy 2021-24 and would likely continue to impact it following the implementation of the strategy. The apprenticeship opportunities that had previously been available had been affected, in that there was difficulty in meeting the training requirements of new apprentice, given social distancing measures, home working practices and the virtual working environment. The apprenticeship schemes would last for 2-3 years and the current climate was not suitable for the Council to commit to this.
- viii. The new behavioural framework developed would reflect the modern working environment and the expectations of Managers associated with this. It would focus on measuring the needs and productivity of staff working remotely and the new Management Charter would enable Managers to develop new skillsets in order to support this.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

Scrutiny Commission Procedure Rule 11.12 sets out the procedure by which a report of a Scrutiny Committee should be considered by Cabinet.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The information on this in the Cabinet report is not affected by the recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

There are no further financial implications associated with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission.

Risk Management

There are no specific risks associated with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission.

Key Decision: Yes

Background Paper: Scrutiny Commission Minute 109 2020/21, 11th January 2021

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