

OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM

Thursday, 12th May, 2022

Present:-

Councillor Flood (Chair)

Councillors	Blakemore	Councillors	Hollingworth
	Borrell		Kellman
	Caulfield		Kelly
	L Collins		Snowdon
	Coy		
	Dyke		

Councillor Jean Innes, Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Customers +

Rachel Appleyard, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer ++

Charlotte Kearsey, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

Gemma Masoud, Head of HR +

Rachel O'Neil, Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services +

Attended for Minute No. 3 & 4 +

Attended for Minute No. 5 ++

1 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations of interest were received.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fordham and Catt.

3 CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND CUSTOMERS - PEOPLE PLAN

The Cabinet Member – Business Transformation and Customers, Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services and Head of HR attended

to present a report about the Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) People Plan.

CBC had approved its workforce strategy, People Plan 2019 – 2023, in December 2019 and the strategy was attached at Appendix A of the officer's report.

The People Plan 2019 – 2023 focused on the development of five Strategic priority areas, which, when achieved, would ensure that the Council had enabled creative, flexible, and productive ways of working and increased the capacity, resilience, and wellbeing of the workforce. The strategic priority areas were:

- Developing great leaders,
- Managing change well,
- Developing capacity and skills,
- Supporting employee wellbeing,
- Recognition and reward.

Successful delivery of the strategy would be demonstrated by achievement of the following success measures:

- Employee survey response rates increase by 5% or more,
- Improvement in rankings is achieved in six of the Investors in People themes,
- Sickness absence data averages at no more than 8 days per employee,
- Completion of annual action plans.

A high-level summary of the activities which had been undertaken to progress delivery of the strategy was attached at Appendix B of the officer's report.

Each year an action plan was developed to ensure that the Council would be able to successfully deliver against the five strategic priorities set out in the People Plan. The action plan which was being delivered in 2021/22 was attached at Appendix C of the officer's report.

Since 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the way the Council functioned. The activities in the People Plan had been updated to reflect the emerging needs of the workforce as a result. Whilst additional actions had taken place, the strategic priorities identified in the People Plan had remained relevant throughout the pandemic. The

introduction of new ways of working had been accelerated to enable the continued provision of essential services from home. Many of the CBC staff volunteered to support those in local communities who were in the greatest need during the pandemic, by delivering medicines, food and supporting wider community response teams. As a result new skills had been developed, ensuring that there were effective business continuity and succession plans in place.

To ensure the council remained operational throughout the pandemic a working group, the resources task and finish group, was established to lead on the internal response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This group provided the Council's leadership team with recommendations relating to wellbeing, change management, developing capacity and skills and reward and recognition.

The primary concern for CBC over the last 18 months had been the safety and wellbeing of our workforce. Early decisions were taken to ensure that the CBC workforce could work from home wherever possible from the start of the pandemic and this had been continued throughout the pandemic. The Council had taken a cautious approach during the pandemic which had ensured that the workforce had remained safe.

During the pandemic the senior leadership team were clear that those staff who were not able to work were treated fairly and that staff would not be penalised for lack of availability of work. The council made the decision to furlough staff where services had to be closed and took the decision to pay those staff an average of their previous three months' salary at 100%. In addition, all staff who had variable payment roles were also paid an average of the previous three months' salary.

An employee assistance programme was procured so that staff members had access to counselling and financial advice all day every day, as a communication survey had highlighted that this was a concern for staff. The Mental Health First Aider programme was also launched so that CBC could provide support and guidance in the workplace. It was recognised that Elected Members also needed support during the pandemic so a referral process for Occupational Health support was made available.

In recognition of the huge change in working practices at the outset of the pandemic, the Council quickly worked in partnership with a provider to deliver online training about new ways of working for managers. A series

of webinars was hosted with 'People, Impact and Change' to assist CBC managers with the changes they were experiencing, including:

- Successful remote working
- Effectively navigating change
- Engaging others remotely

The Council had several different ways to obtain employee feedback. Regular two-way feedback was sought through PDR and monthly performance discussions held with individual employees and at team meetings. Annually, an employee survey (or the survey completed by Investors in People on behalf of the Council) would be completed which provided the leadership team with oversight of employee engagement levels across the organisation. The latest employee engagement survey was completed in December 2021, when the Investors in People survey was completed. The online survey results benchmark favourably with the last assessment (completed in 2018), with most indicators 0.2 – 0.4 points above the 2018 survey. Results of the survey were detailed in Appendix E of the officer's report.

Chesterfield Borough Council had been identified as a Gold Standard organisation in the latest Investors in People assessment. The report which detailed the findings from the assessment was attached at Appendix E of the officer's report. Recommendations for areas of further development had been provided by the Investors in People assessor. The recommendations would be used to develop the final action plan and inform the shape of the next workforce strategy. Strategic reviews of progress against the Investors in People standard would take place in 12 and 24 months, with reaccreditation taking place in 2025. Service managers would now be provided with the details of their survey results and would develop improvement plans with clear actions to address the areas that CBC staff had identified for improvement.

The potential barriers were identified and included the national review of pay scales to achieve the Chancellor's target National Minimum Wage of £10.70 by 2024. Any work that Chesterfield Borough Council completed to develop a reward and recognition strategy would need to be cognisant to the external national negotiations underway. Many of the CBC HR policies were due to be refreshed which may result in recommended changes to existing policies.

Members noted the significant achievement of the Council being identified as a Gold Standard organisation in the latest Investors in People assessment.

Members advised that they had heard of significant shortages of candidates in private sector recruitment and asked if there was the same issue facing public sector recruitment. The Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services advised that there was not a problem overall but there were issues in specific areas which were more specialised. Different recruitment approaches were being considered and the Kickstart Scheme had successfully been utilised.

Members enquired if the Council had experienced issues retaining staff and the Service Director explained that there were a lot of loyal staff at CBC but the Council needed to be mindful that there was an aging workforce so it was important to look ahead.

Members asked if a fixed requirement for staff to return to working in offices had been introduced and the Service Director explained that the hybrid working approach was being taken by the Council but it would be kept under review to ensure it was not being detrimental to the mental health of staff.

Members asked if workplace assessments had been carried out for staff working from home and the Service Director confirmed that they had.

Members enquired about the opportunities for aspiring leaders to achieve new qualifications. The Service Director explained that training was in place for employees who were starting to manage staff and if they wanted to go forward to a qualification then the Council would try to support them with apprenticeship funding. There was also an opportunity for staff to try different areas in a guest role.

Members noted the success which had been made against sickness absence but noted that it was still quite high. The Service Director explained that CBC was lower than the national average for Local Authorities and with hybrid working staff were not taking sick leave where they would have previously. It was important to track staff performance which managers were improving but it was likely that there was more work to do in this area.

RESOLVED –

1. That the People Plan update be noted.
2. That the formal thanks of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum be given to staff.
3. That an update on the interim Hybrid Working Policy and Reward package be brought to a future meeting of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.

4 **CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND CUSTOMERS - UPDATE ON ARVATO AND KIER TRANSITION - LESSONS LEARNT (MONITORING)**

The Cabinet Member – Business Transformation and Customers, Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services and Head of HR attended to present a monitoring report about the transition of Arvato and Kier staff.

The transfer of Arvato services was completed successfully and on 17 January 2021. The transition project ended formally in March 2021.

After the conclusion of the project, the Council had taken some time to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the transferring services and was now working closely with the staff who had transferred to make ongoing improvements.

A lessons learned report had been produced for the Arvato transition and was attached at Appendix A of the officer's report.

Areas identified for improvement had been transferred to the responsibility of the Service Directors for Digital, HR and Customer Services and Economic Growth to deliver as part of their business as usual service delivery.

Appendix B of the officer's report provided an overview of the discussions held with Customers, Revenues and Benefits employees at the start of the reshape of services. This highlighted areas for improvement which would ensure that employees would feel integrated into Chesterfield Borough Council and which, when addressed would ensure that structures were fit to deliver the Council's future aspirations.

Members welcomed the savings which had been achieved.

Members congratulated the Service Director – Digital, HR and Customer Services for managing the TUPE process alongside her day-to-day responsibilities.

Members enquired if there had been staff turnover and the Service Director confirmed that there had been staff turnover, some of which had been progression of staff from customer services adviser in the Call Centre to working in other departments.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Arvato and Kier Transition Monitoring update be noted.
2. That the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum monitoring of the Arvato and Kier Transition be concluded.

5 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer submitted a report which included the details of the proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Work Programme for 2022/23.

RESOLVED –

That the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23 be approved and recommended to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs).

6 FORWARD PLAN

The Forum considered the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

7 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Forum considered the Scrutiny recommendations implementation monitoring schedule.

RESOLVED –

That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

8 **WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY FORUM**

The Work Programme for the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum was considered.

RESOLVED –

That the Work Programme be approved.

9 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS**

There was no update.

10 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum held on 24 March, 2022 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.