

## **Report to Joint Consultative and Safety Committee**

**Subject:** Current staffing issues (Standing Item)

**Date:** 25 August 2015

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### **1. Purpose of the Report**

This is an information item highlighting to the Committee, any issues of particular interest that relate to the council's workforce.

### **2. Summary of current issues**

The summer months see much activity in respect to employee-related projects and events all of which are extremely positive.

2.1 As reported at the last JCSC, during March a survey was conducted across the whole workforce to find out about how our Performance and Development Review (PDR) scheme was working. The survey was produced in electronic format for those employees with an email address and ready access to a computer and in paper format for all other employees.

The survey showed that although the PDR system was being carried out well in most areas, there were "pockets" in the organisation where either PDRs weren't being regularly conducted or if they were, the quality seemed to be poor.

As a result of this feedback Senior Leadership Team (SLT) considered a number of recommendations for change, one of which was to improve clarity about the period within which all PDRs will be carried out annually (April to June). This has now resulted in a PDR completion rate of almost 99%.

2.2 A general employee survey takes place every two years with this year being a "survey year". Forms have been issued to each employee personally either through email contact or as a paper-based version attached to payslips. Although too early to report findings, the response rate has again been extremely good which gives confidence that the

results will be meaningful and changes that may be made as a result of the survey will reflect the comments of a high proportion of employees.

A summary of findings will be reported back to a future meeting of the JCSC together with proposed actions for improvement and change.

2.3 The collaboration arrangements between Gedling, Newark and Sherwood, and Rushcliffe Borough Councils continue to work well in relation to the shared Masters of Public Administration programme. A joint event took place on 27 July to showcase the opportunity to employees of the three councils and to ascertain interest for participation in the second cohort of this three-year programme. From this event sufficient numbers have come forward across the three councils to run a second cohort of this programme.

The first cohort, one year into their three years, recently gave presentations to the Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers designed to give an insight into their personal and professional development resulting from the programme.

2.4 At the last JCSC it was reported that the Chief Executive has been charged with conducting a review of the management arrangements for the Council and to bring forward proposals for improved ways of working and structural change.

It is now anticipated that an initial proposal will be brought to this committee in November to commence formal consultation. It is our practice to consult on major proposals over a 30-day period at the end of which time a final report would be brought back to this committee to ask that recommendations be made which will then be considered by the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee prior to implementation.

The consultancy work conducted by the Hay Group running alongside the staffing review is still ongoing. Most recently interviews have been held with Service Managers to better understand the nature of their post and those within their team. Work has also been undertaken with Senior Leadership Team to help identify "job families" that might be considered when looking at pay grouping.

As previously reported, any proposals for change would be brought back to this committee for consultation prior to progression to the Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee as a change of policy (pay and conditions). It is anticipated that a report will be placed before the JCSC later this year.

2.5 The last meeting of the JCSC saw the introduction of the “Refresh Board”; an “organisational development team” team set up specifically look at opportunities for improving both customer experience and the working lives of employees.

The work programme stretches over a three-year horizon but current work strands include:

- Production of revised standards for employees, managers and leaders of the organisation together with a proposal for a new “Councillor Standard”.
- Establish a “back to the floor” programme to allow senior managers to better understand the issues facing our services in order for changes to be made and blockages to be removed. The placements will be informed by the Employee Survey results to ensure that the best use is made of the opportunity.
- Consideration of the viability of an Employee Benefits Scheme. An options paper is to go before SLT at the start of September.
- Focus on the opportunities available to allow the workforce to volunteer time to local groups and organisations.
- The offer of practical support to the Council’s Sports and Social Club which currently relies entirely on the efforts of a small number of volunteers, often organising events in their own time.
- Establishing a regime of peer reviews, working with Newark & Sherwood DC and Rushcliffe BC to review a number of services each year. There would be a particular emphasis on improving the customer experience and improving efficiency. Good practice can be shared across the three organisations.
- Focus on “digitalisation”. A special meeting of the group is arranged for November to begin to consider this particular strand of development in more detail. It is expected that a number of major projects will emerge from this.

2.6 Another area of collaboration that brings a new experience to this council is our participation in the National Graduate Development Programme. This programme run and coordinated by the Local Government Association provides work placement and development opportunities to gifted graduates. A recruitment and selection exercise undertaken by the three collaboration partners in June has resulted in the successful recruitment of two graduates being shared over a two-year period across the three organisations. Locally it is planned that the graduates can provide extra resource on projects across the Council including the work to support the Refresh Board.

### **3. Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to note this report.