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**REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE 25 APRIL 2023**

**SUBJECT: 2021-2023 WORKFORCE PLANNING REPORT**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the progress made against the interim workforce strategy and plan for the period 2020-2022 and to consider the proposed workforce and organisational development (OD) strategy for the period 2023-2026.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (24) (c) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the recruitment, training and development, health, safety and welfare policies and practices of the Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:**

- (i) Consider and note the progress made against the 2020-2022 Interim Workforce Plan;
- (ii) Approve the proposed Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy for 2023-26 as set out in Appendix A and Workforce & OD Plan for 2023/4 as set out in Appendix B;
- (iii) Agree that the culture work is progressing as a core part of business as usual; and
- (iv) Agree the Culture Working Group is brought to a close.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council's Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy and plan respond to the agreed Council priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan and set out the work required to support and achieve those priorities.
- 3.2 The underpinning principle is that people are the key to delivering high quality and improving council services. The workforce planning process helps ensure the workforce is skilled and equipped, managed and deployed effectively. This helps the council ensure it can meet both the current and future demands on services.

#### **4. CURRENT ISSUES AND PRIORITIES**

- 4.1 Moray Council operates within an environment of significant challenge and change. Increasing demands and reducing budgets mean the Council has to find new ways to meet current and future need, prioritising which services are delivered and how. The changes to ways of working that are being experienced as well as the need to accelerate the pace and depth of transformational change as the Council reshapes into the council of the future mean the Workforce Strategy requires to focus on key themes that support these demands.
- 4.2 The Chief Executive's report to Moray Council on 8 March 2023 (paragraph 10 of the minute refers) set out the extensive pressures, demands and priorities the Council is responding to including the bleak financial outlook requiring considerable prioritisation of resources and focusing of agendas and priorities. The requirement for committed and decisive leadership was reported in the most recent Best Value Follow Up Report, as was the pace of transformational change whilst monitoring staff capacity and wellbeing. There are ongoing demands as part of the recovery and renewal journey from the pandemic and the uncertain strategic context, longer term financial pressures, lack of certainty and flexibility over long term funding and the possibility of major service reform make operating business as usual difficult.
- 4.3 Supporting the workforce through change and transformation will remain a key priority, however with leaner structures and reduced capacity, empowerment of the workforce to help create a culture of innovation and initiative that enables the development of flexibility and adaptability within teams will also be important. Developing leadership skills and capacity that encourages transformation, effective communication and engagement and improved performance through collaboration and partnership working will underpin the organisational development required.
- 4.4 Recruitment challenges have also played a prominent role in recent years. While there are known issues in particular service areas, these have become more widespread during and since the pandemic. Work to enhance the Council's approach to developing talent to meet future demand will be required and this should link with the Moray Economic Partnership Talent Attraction and Retention plans.
- 4.5 In planning for future sustainability, potential areas and opportunities for savings, efficiencies and service rationalisation will require extensive redesign in terms of what the council of the future looks like. There is a need therefore within the Workforce Strategy and Plan to focus on leadership capacity, preparing for and implementing transformational change, while ensuring a resilient workforce within a culture that promotes wellbeing.

## **5. PROGRESS ON 2020-2022 INTERIM WORKFORCE PLAN**

5.1 The last Workforce Strategy and Plan reported to Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee on 18 November 2020 (para 29 of the minute refers), noted that the anticipated scale of the pandemic was such that an interim workforce and organisational development strategy and plan were proposed and agreed. Since then, there continued to be a residual impact on progress of planned work, largely due to demands of the longer term response to the pandemic as the Council moved out of the emergency response phase and into recovery.

5.2 Nevertheless, there has been progress in most areas of the plan. This is summarised below.

### **5.3 Workforce Transformation and Change**

- (i) Workforce implications of service redesign and change have been managed through agreed procedures across services.
- (ii) Support to Health and Social Care Moray continues.

### **5.4 Employee Engagement and Culture**

- (i) Employee engagement and culture activity gradually increased over the period and a fuller programme is planned for 2023-24.
- (ii) The Culture Working Group met virtually and agreed actions have been progressed, namely the workload management toolkit pilots and mental health pulse survey. Given that the original work of the Culture Working Group has now all been absorbed into the business as usual work of the OD teams and progresses effectively in partnership with the trade unions, there is no longer an agenda for the Culture Working Group to discharge and it is proposed to bring the Group to a conclusion. Should any requirement emerge from future workforce surveys, a similar joint approach could be considered as a short term measure to effectively tackle relevant issues.

### **5.5 Developing Leadership Capacity**

- (i) The blended approach of development activity has continued and work on the future leadership requirements is referred to in the workforce plan for 2023-24.
- (ii) The strategy for the development of Elected Members was agreed and implemented.
- (iii) Comprehensive induction programme completed for newly elected councillors.

### **5.6 Workforce/Employee Development**

- (i) Identified training needs have been met through the centralised training function.
- (ii) The number of ERDPs is now included in all Service Plans.
- (iii) Review of the Senior Manager Performance Framework - on hold.

## 5.7 Health and Wellbeing

- (i) The national absence figures for 2020-21 indicated improved sickness absence rates ranking 24 out of 32 for sickness absence days per teacher and 10 out of 32 for local government employees. Management of absence cases continues to be supported on a targeted basis.
- (ii) A separate report to this Committee contains a more detailed analysis of the work of the team during 2022.

## 5.8 Workforce and Succession Planning

- (i) There has been limited work in this area, other than support to services on specific challenges where requested.

## 5.9 Recruitment and Retention

- (i) The scale of recruitment challenges being experienced across the organisation sparked the need for focused work and an action plan was developed based on research and emerging operational issues with progress being made on some items to date.

## 5.10 Reward and Recognition

- (i) Since the last workforce planning report the Living Wage has been fully consolidated into the Council's pay and grading structure.
- (ii) Living Wage Accreditation has been achieved.

## 5.11 Other Actions

- (i) Employment Policy Framework – policies reviewed: Secondment Policy, Flexible and Early Retirement, Lone Working, Flexible Working.

# 6. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The work noted in this report supports the Council in achieving the objectives and priorities in the Corporate and 10 Year Plan, and sets out how the Council will meet the challenges in making best use of our workforce and resources. The actions will also ensure continued progress towards the aims of ensuring an engaged workforce with a positive workforce culture.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report although it remains possible that bullying and harassment could lead to legal challenges against the council.

The work that is ongoing and planned in relation to employee engagement and workforce culture continues to provide a solid foundation from which to develop further work to address any workforce related and cultural issues that may arise.

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**(d) Risk Implications**

The workforce Strategy and Plan are based on assessment of the issues and risks anticipated in relation to the Council's workforce and identified actions to address these. Previous reductions in size mean that the HR and OD teams are already stretched. With the workforce changes anticipated the focus will be on legal requirements first and foremost. The actions in the workforce plan have been prioritised and if necessary activity will be reduced or ceased on those actions ranked lowest.

The risks associated with workforce culture are around the consequences of leaving the culture issues unaddressed and the complexity and challenge of dealing with behavioural issues. The developmental nature of the work combined with the long term nature of establishing a cultural shift in behaviours means there are long term maintenance requirements to be accommodated before a permanent step change in culture can be achieved.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. However, it will be challenging for the HR service to deliver the actions in the workforce plan and this will be monitored carefully.

As the Council seeks to transform and modernise and prepares its financial plans, it is likely that specific workforce issues will emerge. Work will be undertaken as proposals are developed to identify the specific workforce issues and these will be managed through the well-established change management and Transform processes. Account will also be taken of the whole council strategic management of these workforce issues as they emerge by involving the HR team in the planning of the required changes.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no equalities or socio-economic impacts arising from this report.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

No climate change or biodiversity implications have been determined as a result of the content of this report.

**(i) Consultations**

The content of this report has been considered by the central management team, senior management team and will be considered for discussion and consultation at the next scheduled Trade Union / Officer Group and Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers meetings.

A copy of this report will also be provided to the managers of the Personnel Forum.

**8. CONCLUSION**

**8.1 Workforce planning is a key responsibility for the Council in supporting the delivery of services. The Workforce Strategy and plan set out how this will be managed. Progress against the actions since October 2020 has been positive with work undertaken against the majority of work streams despite a residual impact from the pandemic during this period.**

**8.2 The next stages of the workforce planning activity as set out in the Workforce Strategy for 2023-26 are focused on managing the workforce implications of transformation, modernisation and improvement, alignment with the shape of the council of the future, responding to the requirements of the financial and budgetary constraints, ensuring leadership capacity and addressing recruitment and retention challenges.**

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Background Papers:	Corporate Workforce Report 2021-22 Workforce Plan Conclusions (2021-22)
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