

Employment Matters Committee

6 June 2024

Workforce Strategy 2024-28

Report from: Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer

Summary

This report sets out a refreshed Strategic Workforce Strategy 2024-2028. The Plan is intended to supplement the One Medway Council Plan and the Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. The Committee is requested to note the Council's Workforce Strategy, as set out in at Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The Committee is requested to agree the proposed key actions in the Workforce Strategy and timescales for delivery in each case.
- 1.3. The Committee is requested to provide comments on other areas for improvement and associated key actions that they feel are necessary to ensure our workforce is able to meet the priorities and actions associated with the One Medway Council Plan and the Financial Improvement and transformation Plan.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1 This strategy is a key document that supports the delivery on the One Medway Council Plan which was approved by Full Council on 15 May 2024 and the Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan which was agreed by Cabinet on 30 April 2024 (decision 70/2024).

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2021 Medway Council had a Workforce Plan, that enabled us to start some critical activity across the workforce. Limited resource has meant some of the work areas highlighted in 2021 have been delayed, however it should be noted the Workplan was due to run until 2025. With a change in Chief Executive, and a change in the administration the plan has been refreshed to support the One Medway Council Plan and the Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan priorities.

4. Strategic Workforce Strategy 2024-2028

- 4.1. The refreshed Workforce Strategy is ambitious against the resource to deliver; however, the delivery will lean heavily on senior leaders across the organisation, and the whole workforce, not just HR. It is deliberately practical to ensure this is not just about HR, but about every single one of us who work at Medway Council. However, the actions associated in the strategy require significant culture change, and this cannot be underestimated.
- 4.2. The refreshed Workforce Strategy is built on the previous one, which gives us a strong foundation to continue to push forward. We have already started and are implementing a pay review, career progression and career frameworks, leadership training, enhanced our employee value proposition, and new values.
- 4.3. The workforce strategy focusses on 3 main priorities:
 - Workforce 2028
 - Enabling our people to develop
 - Engaging, rewarding and wellbeing
- 4.4. Each priority has a number of goals and sets out some high level actions.

5. Further considerations

- 5.1. Doing more of the same will not help the Council remain competitive or fit for the future, with any Workforce Strategy it is really important the structures are in place to ensure optimal delivery and efficiency of services. Whilst the Council lacks the senior HR resource to review this, or indeed the organisational appetite, it is something that shouldn't be ignored, and will require further consideration once the financial position becomes sustainable.

6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. Workforce strategy has changed, it is no longer solely focused on headcount or cost efficiency planning, which would often take place during budget forecasting. The Council's workforce needs are incredibly complex. What was once a war for talent is increasingly becoming a war for skills, which is translating into more targeted workforce strategies and a play for a skills approach.
- 6.2. A static, yearly process isn't enough, we need to make analytics-driven decisions, plan for what-if scenarios and analyse how our workforce needs to evolve as technology and the market changes.
- 6.3. In short, workforce strategy must evolve, it cannot be a static document and it must happen throughout the year as needed, not just as part of the annual or quarterly budgeting processes. For it to work it needs to be collaborative,

Workforce strategy spans every service across Medway Council. It requires an organisational wide commitment and a leadership directive.

- 6.4. The Workforce Strategy has been written to do all of the above and is essential to our delivery of our priorities in the One Medway Council Plan, and the Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan.

7. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Medway Council fails to respond to the changes in the way we work, digital technologies and increased public's expectations of the speed and convenience of the services they use	This workforce Strategy looks to address the changes ahead	Agreement and regular tracking of actions associated with workforce planning	CII
Loss of staffing Employee engagement - moral and satisfaction	The risks arising from not implementing the Workforce Strategy will also impact our employees, and will relate to the morale and satisfaction.	Progress the MedPay Review Benefits to employees, non-salary related through our people promise Use of an external benchmarking system to market test our roles Continue to monitor exit interviews Meaningful pay awards	CII

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

8 Consultation

8.1. Consultation has been with staff, and Trade Unions colleagues and has been with Corporate Management team.

9. Climate change implications

9.1. [The Council declared a climate change emergency in April 2019](#) - item 1038D refers, and has set a target for Medway to become carbon neutral by 2050.

9.2. Any action associated with the strategy will be decided in the context of our target, for example a review of millage and staff benefits.

10. Financial implications

10.1. The main financial impact is regarding the Medpay review, this is managed under a separate project stream.

11. Legal implications

11.1 All legal implications to employment are captured under the relevant project stream. For example, changes to pay and conditions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Workforce Strategy