

Employment Matters Committee

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Recruitment Strategy 2024-26

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Summary

This report sets out a refreshed Recruitment Strategy 2024-2026. The Plan is intended to supplement the Workforce Strategy, 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 Recruitment Strategy, as set out at Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The Committee is requested to agree the proposed high level key actions in the Recruitment Strategy and timescales for delivery in each case.
- 1.3. The Committee is requested to propose other areas for improvement and associated key actions that they feel are necessary to ensure our recruitment and selection processes, procedure and system changes, enable us to meet the priorities and actions associated with the Workforce Strategy, One Medway Council Plan and the Financial Improvement and transformation Plan.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1. EMC members are supportive with matters impacting the workforce, arguably our most valuable asset, and this strategy is a key document that supports the delivery of the Workforce Strategy, the One Medway Council Plan and the Financial Improvement and Transformation Plan by ensuring that we continue to attract key personnel to fulfil the priorities contained within these. This strategy is supported by an action plan which contains key performance indicators and will be managed by annual performance reporting.
- 2.2. The update on progress will be provided annually by the Chief Organisational Culture Officer, to Corporate Management team.

3. Background

- 3.1. In the past few years the employment market has become more competitive than ever, with high demand for the most skilled and talented people. Supply in certain key statutory service areas (i.e. social work, educational psychology, building control and planning) is often low with staffing agencies offering inflated salaries for temporary work. This has led to a transient workforce becoming the norm, and an unsustainable reliance on locum staff in certain areas, at huge cost, increasing the Council's budget pressures. The advent of hybrid working has also intensified the competition for candidates, as potential employment for much of the top talent can now be hybrid, with less travel required than it was in the past; opening wider geographical areas for applicants to work within. Online advertising for roles is fierce and fast-paced; and Medway Council needs to be outwardly attractive, recognisable and easily accessible and welcoming for all. Showcasing why employees should want to choose us as their next employer – our values and behaviours, how we embrace diversity, our supportive culture and our full employee value proposition, are all things they will consider. Medway Council must rise to these crucial challenges if we are to meet our priorities contained in the Workforce Strategy, the One Medway Council Plan and the Financial Improvement and Transformation Plans.

4. Recruitment Strategy 2024-2026

- 4.1. This refreshed Recruitment Strategy gives us a clear pathway of activity for the next two years, but is ambitious against the resource we have to deliver it; however, with recently increased resourcing levels in both the Talent Acquisition Team (corporate recruitment) and TRACS Team (Temporary Recruitment, Adults & Children's Services) plus additional HR systems support, we are confident we can successfully implement the new jobs platform, Tribepad. This will be a key foundation for us to build on and work to ensure that Medway Council has an attractive 'front door' for us to showcase who we are, what we holistically offer and how we support, develop and retain our staff.
- 4.2. We recognise the value of recruiting a diverse, multi-cultural workforce and are committed to meeting our social and legal obligations to maintain and encourage diversity through our recruitment practices. This Strategy will challenge us to prove how we are doing with these key aspects of work. Through the new recruitment platform, Tribepad, we will be able to produce our attraction data, with ensuing metrics on equalities data, from application, through to shortlisting, through to hiring. We will also be able to speed up our recruitment journey and enhance our onboarding experience for new starters – helping to 'keep them warm' whilst they complete their notice periods.
- 4.3. The Recruitment Strategy is built on the LGA's Six P's Model creating a structured and effective recruitment journey. Plan, Promote, Process, Partnerships, People, Pledge. This is a framework which gives us a strong foundation to push forward with. Alongside the Six P's framework, we have additional tools to aid our attraction strategy i.e. our new values and

behaviours, our employee value proposition, the MedPay Performance, Progression & Pay review plus bespoke career progression frameworks and enhanced leadership training. All these aspects together enhance our Strategy to effectively fulfil its aims.

4.4. The Recruitment Strategy focusses key improvement priorities for 2024-26, with actions to support, which are detailed in the body of the Strategy and Action Plans 1 and 2) Appendix 1.

4.5. Each action will support the priority aspirations detailed within the strategy.

5. Further considerations

5.1. Doing nothing is not an option, because the recruitment market and top talent within it, are being swept away by innovative and creative recruitment advertising from other organisations. Raising our profile and recruiting successfully is a crucial activity to help us achieve our aim of recognition as an 'employer of choice' in the local area, and to ensure we have high calibre staff for the continued delivery of quality services to the residents of Medway.

5.2. None of the above activity comes without cost, and although we have met the initial costs to purchase the Tribepad software (fixed for 3 years) within existing advertising budgets, due to solid negotiation and partnership working, the one-off implementation and integration costs of £7,150 are a budget pressure for this year only. An increase in advertising budget will be required to sustain our footprint in the market, and attraction abilities, in the future (current contract ends July 2027).

6. Advice and analysis

6.1. Recruitment strategy has changed, it is no longer solely focused on posting an advert and enjoying the luxury of selecting the best candidate from those who apply. The talent market has choices, and they are picky with their choosing. Our workforce needs are incredibly complex, within our 64 different service manager led fields of work. What was once a war for talent is increasingly becoming a war for skills, which will require more sophisticated attraction strategies and targeted campaigns, with intelligence led decision making, facilitated by data from a first-rate recruitment platform.

6.2. A static, one-size fits all, recruitment process is not 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. Our recruitment practices must evolve, they are no longer fit for purpose and cannot drift with 'post and pray' advertising. Collectively, the assets we have created through recent organisational change programmes i.e. Medpay PPP (new job profiles, career progression frameworks etc) plus Our Ways of Working Policy, Press Pause campaign, competitive COLA increase, and Employee Value Proposition; collectively identify the rich depth of organisational benefits that new employees to the organisation can benefit

from, but these are no use if we are not promoting them well. We must work with our recruiting managers, spanning every service, to ensure that we are advertising their individual roles well, to inform candidates, effect the best reach and generate the most interest possible. For this to work it needs to be a Council-wide collaborative exercise with recruiting managers and interview panels, playing their part, with non-biased recruitment on true merit. This will require an organisational wide commitment and leadership support.

6.4. The Recruitment Strategy has been written to do all of the above and is essential to the delivery of our priorities in the Workforce Strategy, 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 recruitment market, not meeting job applicant aspirations and not-attracting new talent.	The Recruitment Strategy looks to address the changes required	New recruitment and attraction platform, plus regular tracking of all actions associated with improving attraction and recruitment.	CII
If attraction strategies are not improved, Medway Council's reliance on locum and temporary staffing solutions to deliver services will increase	Further increasing budget pressures to meet the costs to deliver statutory services with high numbers of agency staffing	As above, plus additional resourcing in the TRACS team, to continue to increase permanent recruitment.	CII
No meaningful understanding of the impact of our recruitment activities will mean we cannot drive forward our diversity aspirations, address improving our	The risks arising from not implementing the Recruitment Strategy, aside from financial, will also impact our existing employees, and will relate to their morale and	Use of new recruitment platform, Benefits to employees, non-salary related through our people promise	CII

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
young talent attraction and help to future proof our organisation.	satisfaction when they are over-burdened due to lack of resourcing within their teams and services. We will also not have the data and intelligence to understand how effectively we are managing our recruitment functions, increasing our recognised workforce key areas i.e. diversity, disability, young people and males.	Integration and implementation of the new Tribepad platform. Once fully implemented use the data reporting to monitor our effectiveness in key strategic areas.	

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

8. Consultation

- 8.1. Early consultation has been with HR staff, and early engagement with Trade Unions colleagues at the bi-weekly meeting. Completed Strategy will now go back to Trades Unions colleagues for further input ahead of final review by Corporate Management Team. This strategy could potentially go to Business Support and Digital Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if requested.

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. Any action associated with the strategy will be decided in the context of our target, for example, the use of virtual interview processes.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. The main financial impact is regarding the reduction in locum and temporary staff use, which will be improved by the attraction and retention of more

permanent staffing within the organisation, therefore reducing our turnover figure to the ambition within the Workforce Strategy of 10%

11. Legal implications

11.1 All legal implications relating to recruitment and employment are captured under the relevant HR policies and any contract of employment.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Recruitment Strategy

Appendix 2 - Diversity Impact Assessment