

**CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD**

CABINET MEETING: 16 JUNE 2016

EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES

AGENDA ITEM:

PORTFOLIO: CORPORATE SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE

Reason for this Report

1. The need for an Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy has been identified as a priority via a number of sources including the Employee Survey and the commitment made by Cabinet in July 2015, as part of a review of the Attendance & Wellbeing Policy. This report outlines the proposed Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy for the Council, which is attached as Appendix 1.

Background

2. The Council's Workforce Strategy 2015-18 and Employee Charter were agreed by Cabinet in April 2015. The focus of these documents was to set out a general direction of travel in terms of a range of workforce issues so that employees could better understand the organisation's challenges and priorities, and recognise the importance and value of their contribution and involvement.
3. Aligned to the Corporate Plan and the Organisational Development Programme, the Workforce Strategy and Employee Charter are also underpinned by the Council's vision, together with its values of Open, Fair and Together.
4. The key workforce issues highlighted in the Workforce Strategy included:
 - Workforce Planning - a process for identifying and addressing the gaps between the workforce of today and the human resources needs of tomorrow.
 - Performance Management - strengthening the link between the contribution of employees (including behaviours) and the delivery of Council priorities.

- Employee Voice – creating a positive and enabling culture to ensure that the “employee voice” (views, suggestions) is listened to and acted upon.
 - Trade Union Partnership - recognition of the importance of maintaining positive relationships with trade unions and employees.
 - Learning & Development- improving the skills of our workforce in order to meet the needs and expectations of our customers and the changing requirements of the Council.
 - Health & Wellbeing - developing an approach which ensures the health and wellbeing of employees is maintained.
 - Employee Charter - a statement setting out what the mutual expectations are between the Council, managers and employees.
5. The Employee Charter sets out the mutual perceptions and obligations between the Council, managers and employees within a framework that helps focus expectations and promotes positive relationships and good employment practice as a necessary part of achieving the Council’s vision, values and priorities. A general understanding of the Employee Charter formed part of the objective setting process for 2015/16 PP&DR process for all employees.
6. In recognition of the need to further embed the Workforce Strategy and Employee Charter across the organisation, a new Workforce Strategy Programme was set up in January 2016 under the Enabling & Commissioning Services Portfolio. The broad aim of this programme is to deliver outcomes for and with employees, within a culture that supports a flexible, skilled, engaged and diverse workforce.
7. There are 5 projects underway within this programme (with identified Senior Management Team Leads) and whilst all have a particular focus, they are interrelated with each other as well as linkages with other ODP projects. The projects within the Workforce Strategy Programme also emerged as priorities from the Council’s Employee Survey findings and they are as follows:
- Learning & Development (SMT Lead - Andrew Gregory)
 - Health & Wellbeing (SMT Lead Christine Salter)
 - Performance Management (SMT Lead Sarah Mc Gill)
 - Employee Voice (SMT Lead - Paul Orders)
 - Workforce Planning (whilst this did not emerge from the employee survey, it is an organisational priority as confirmed by WAO follow on visit.)

Health & Wellbeing Project

8. The overall aim of the Health & Wellbeing Project, lead by Christine Salter, is to agree the direction and overview of the development of initiatives and policies to help improve and maintain the health & wellbeing of employees across the Council.
9. There are 4 areas of activity being progressed at present, including:

- Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy - this provides an overarching framework within which the health & wellbeing of employees will be progressed.
- Corporate Health Standard - this is a national quality framework and award funded as part of Welsh Government's Healthy Working Wales programme for employers to improve health and well being in the workplace.
- Specific support initiatives: Time to Change Wales, a Welsh Government funded initiative to help tackle mental health stigma and discrimination in the workplace by adoption of an action plan and formal signing of pledge as a commitment to staff for action.
- Employment policy review/update activity emerging: a number of policies/guidance notes are emerging as needing to be updated or developed to align with the health & wellbeing agenda /ODP and better support staff.

Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy

10. The Council is facing a significant period of organisational change in terms of overall structure and size in addition to consideration of what services will be delivered in future and the mechanism through which delivery will be achieved. Change is recognised in the HSE Stress Management Standard as a potential negative factor in employee well being. Change impacts employees in different ways and in some cases can have an adverse effect on employee health & wellbeing which could result in increased levels of sickness absence. Whilst the focus on reducing sickness absence remains important, a growing number of organisations are taking a more holistic approach to the issue and have put in place health & wellbeing strategies designed to look at the broader issue of seeking to prevent employees from becoming unwell as far as is practicable.
11. It is also recognised that employees are key to the delivery of our vision for Cardiff and have an impact on our residents' experience of the Council. When employees are healthy, motivated and have a sense of wellbeing, then the experience and outcomes for our residents improves. As a large part of the Council's workforce are also residents of the City, improving the health and wellbeing of employees will also support improvements in health and wellbeing across the City.
12. The three year Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy (attached as Appendix 1) provides a broad framework to help improve the health and wellbeing of our employees and has been subject to consultation with a number of stakeholder groups including Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny, Trade Unions, Equality Networks and Directorate representatives. It will be subject to annual review by the Health & Wellbeing Project Team and modified to reflect progress, measure impact and identify future activities for inclusion. The views of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the proposed Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy were sought at their meeting on 7 June. The response from the Chair on behalf of the committee is attached as Appendix 2 (to follow).

13. In addition to providing an overview and outlining the objectives to be achieved, the strategy also defines what we mean by health & wellbeing and provides some clarification as to why it is important. This includes the fact that health & wellbeing was identified as a corporate commitment for the organisation following feedback from the 2015 Employee Survey. Further, a commitment to health & wellbeing is a key theme within the workforce strategy and it contributes to the Council's corporate plan priority of "people in Cardiff are healthy" as many of our staff are also Cardiff residents.
14. The potential benefits for the organisation, employees and citizens of implementing a Health & Wellbeing strategy are also included along with identification of respective roles and responsibilities for progressing the actions required. It will be important that we measure the effectiveness and/or impact of the strategy so a number of measures to be used have been identified although they can also be amended over the life of the strategy. An important consideration is that the Council already has in place a number of policies, procedures and initiatives available to support staff and it will be important that individuals are more aware of what is already exists and how they can access.
15. There are a range of actions proposed for 2016/17 in order to help further provide opportunities for employees to manage their own health and well being so a prescriptive approach is not proposed in this respect. These actions also link with other proposals and action plans relating to the Corporate Health Standard and Time to Change Wales initiative.

Reason for Recommendation

16. The need for an Employee Health & Wellbeing strategy has been identified as a priority from a number of sources including outcomes from Employee Survey.

Financial Implications

17. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any costs associated with the Strategy will be met from within existing resources.

Legal Implications

18. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must: (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.
19. Equality Duty - the Council has to satisfy its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including the specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these

legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.

HR Implications

20. The Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy provides the framework within which employee health & wellbeing will be progressed. The potential benefits to the organisation, employees and citizens are specified within the strategy itself and we will measure the impact throughout the organisation. Whilst reducing sickness absence rates will continue to be a priority, a more holistic approach to health and wellbeing issues is being taken. Improved access to appropriate support and information will enable employees to have the opportunity to look after their own health and wellbeing. Subject to agreement of the strategy by Cabinet, an action plan will be developed to ensure that the actions proposed are clear, responsibilities for delivery within timescales determined and monitoring processes put in place. Through an agreed communications plan, the contents of the Strategy will be brought to the attention of all employees and publicised widely in relevant formats through a variety of media.

Trade Union Comments

21. The Trade Unions support the principles of the proposed Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy as a positive step towards providing information and additional support to Council employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy attached as Appendix 1.
- (2) Note the contents of the Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee response from 7 June meeting, attached as Appendix 2.

Christine Salter
Corporate Director Resources

Appendix 1: Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016/19.

Appendix 2: Response from Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee (meeting on 7 June 2016).