

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Accounts and Audit Committee  
**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Joanne Hyde, Director of Human Resources

### Report Title

**Annual Governance Statement – 2011/12 – Update**

### Purpose of the Report

To provide the Committee with an update on progress in delivering improvements in the following control issues identified in the 2011/12 Annual Governance Statement:

**Continue to develop the agenda around workforce planning, leadership, management and workforce development.**

### Recommendations

The Accounts and Audit Committee are asked to note the report.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information

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### **1. Introduction**

There have been significant developments in the wider leadership, management and workforce development agenda since the launch of the new Human Resources service in April 2011, together with on-going improvements to streamline processes and to provide further efficiencies.

This paper gives an overview of current HR projects and a range of initiatives that are underway or in development.

## **2. HR Projects Update**

**SWiTch** – Project SWiTch has delivered a core HR and Payroll system, which was successfully launched in July 2011. Manager and employee self-service functionality has now been rolled-out to around a third of council employees and the second phase will focus on introducing this facility to schools and hard-to-reach groups, such as catering and care. The Learning and Development module will go live on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and, in order to support this, all training records will be migrated from historical databases into the new system. Self-service for learning and development – such as course bookings linked to Personal Development Reviews and improved access to training opportunities – is due to be developed over the next 6-months, although work across the 3 councils (Trafford, Stockport and Wigan) will determine the priority areas for the collaboration. Comprehensive establishment information, which details budgeted hours and hours in use, is provided to Directors and Senior Managers each month; this gives vacancy ratios and informs discussions regarding service demands, recruitment needs and structures.

**Training and Development** – Detailed training plans for each Directorate and cross-council have been developed and agreed and the delivery of these is based on priority i.e. statutory, mandatory or service-critical. Trafford is the lead authority for the AGMA training procurement framework and preferred suppliers are in place for each category of statutory/mandatory training. A sub-group is being formed in order to further develop the framework and to evaluate usage to date, monitor take-up across AGMA and assess the level of savings achieved. Work is continuing to determine the most appropriate training delivery methods and to channel shift, where appropriate, in order to make further efficiencies. To support this, an AGMA e-learning framework with Virtual College has been launched and Wigan Council is currently leading on the further development of this initiative. Trafford has also, this month, taken responsibility for chairing and re-launching the AGMA OD group and the first meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> March. A 12-month work programme is currently being developed and potential areas for collaboration include employee engagement, competency frameworks and the need for skills transfer in ever-changing environments.

## **3. Organisational Development (OD) Initiatives**

The following initiatives are on-going or planned:

### **3.1 Internal Apprenticeships**

The Council's internal apprenticeship programme was launched in October 2011 with the aim of providing opportunities at the Council for residents across the

board, but with a particular focus on young people aged 16-24 and care leavers, where the Council is the Corporate Parent.

52 apprentices have been recruited onto the programme to-date across a broad range of disciplines; 39 of these are still undertaking their apprenticeships and a further 5 have secured permanent employment with the Council. We are also in the process of recruiting to a further 6 apprenticeship vacancies.

Of the 39 current apprentices, 10% (4) are care leavers, 74% (29) are aged 16-24 and 67% (26) are residents of the borough.

To further support our care leavers, helping them with the transition into employment, we are currently developing a pre-apprenticeship programme. In addition, taster sessions will be held during the school holidays, to enable young care leavers to gain an understanding of the work environment and the range of roles and careers open to them.

To mark National Apprenticeship Week (11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013), a range of promotional activities have taken place, including an 'Are you Ready for Work' event, hosted by Trafford College on 27<sup>th</sup> February, Events City - the largest regional jobs fair aimed at Y11 upwards - on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March, Care and JCP Apprenticeship promotional events, a Key 103 branded tour bus, with have a go activities, podcasts and materials promoting apprenticeships, visited 2 schools per day across Greater Manchester, including 2 Trafford schools (Sale High on 13<sup>th</sup> March and Wellacre Academy on 15<sup>th</sup> March), an apprenticeships fair for Y11 at Ashton-on-Mersey High school and an event with ITV/MACE showcasing construction skills.

The Council's Human Resources service also leads on the external apprenticeship agenda and there have been a number of successes to-date, including the launch of Trafford's Construction Apprenticeship Programme in November 2012 resulting in 14 apprenticeship placements, 34 residents securing apprenticeship placements through the Greater Manchester Commitment to Youth Employment and an 18% increase in apprenticeship starts in Trafford, rising from 1600 in 2010/11 to 1891 in 2011/12.

### **3.2 Employee Survey**

An employee survey was conducted during 2012 and, following this, cross-organisational focus groups were held with staff and managers. The purpose of the focus groups was for attendees to consider the themes from the survey in greater depth, with a view to making suggestions for improvement. The survey covered 8 subject areas: The Organisation, My Job, Senior Managers, Communication, My Immediate Manager, Health and Wellbeing, Change and Training and Development.

Much of the feedback received evidenced that there is a need to raise awareness amongst staff of existing provisions and mechanisms already in place i.e. leadership development training for managers, employee recognition schemes and health and wellbeing activities. In addition, many of the suggestions for improvement are already in development, for example, a review of the Performance Development Review process and the introduction of coaching and mentoring schemes.

The employee survey has provided a valuable source of information, which will enable the Council to re-visit its objectives and inform future strategies. A draft, detailed improvement plan will shortly be presented to the Corporate Management Team for approval.

### **3.3 Employee Value Proposition**

In addition to our internal employee survey, the Council has also agreed to work in partnership with the Local Government Association to undertake a web-based Employee Value Proposition (EVP) survey and be part of a wider case study and benchmarking project on employee engagement activities within local government.

EVP is an innovative approach to assessing and managing employee engagement, to significantly improve people performance, well-being, productivity, efficiency and effectiveness within organisations. There are 12 EVP elements; psychological contract, employer contribution, employee contribution, perceived organisational support, job engagement, efficacy, organisational engagement, overall satisfaction, conversational practice (solutions and performance focused), job pressure, workplace tensions and personality and these form the basis of the questioning in the employee survey.

There are a number of benefits to the organisation in participating in this activity; the results should complement the findings from the internal employee survey and further inform the action plan and would also provide valuable information to support the review of the PDR process and associated training needs analysis. In addition, determining what employees believe both their and the Council's contribution should be to the 'employment deal' will help to inform and work towards the development of the new People Strategy.

The project plan for the roll-out of this survey – which includes the timeline, identification of the staff groups to be surveyed and promotion/communication approach – is currently being finalised.

### **3.4 People Strategy**

An indicative timescale of summer 2012 was originally provided to the Accounts and Audit Committee for the development of a Workforce/People Strategy. However, it is now aimed to have this ready for implementation early in the new financial year; this will ensure that it is informed by the findings of the employee and EVP surveys, is fit for purpose in line with the new shape and size of the organisation and is aligned with the Council's move towards locality working. In addition, thorough research and benchmarking has been undertaken, both across AGMA and on a national level.

### **3.5 Leadership Development, Mentoring and Coaching**

Over the last 12-months, a leadership development training programme (Leading Change through Challenging Times) has been delivered to managers across the organisation. To-date, 50% of nominated managers have attended the training and sessions continue to be held on a monthly basis. Managers are provided with a practical toolkit, including change and stress management tools and techniques; in addition, the training is also used to emphasise other cross-council initiatives i.e. the employee survey.

Following on from the successful roll-out of this training, we are also keen to further equip managers through the provision of coaching skills. Coaching is proven to be a highly effective way of developing individual and organisational performance and can deliver considerable benefits, helping managers to get the most from their teams, boosting employee engagement and developing high-performing teams.

The aim is for a nominated group of managers, together with members of the training and development team, to attend a 'Train the Trainer' programme, following which they would assist in delivering a 2-day Coaching Skills course to managers across the organisation. Nominations to attend this programme are currently being sought.

In addition to coaching skills, 43 managers across the organisation have recently been trained as mentors. These managers are in the process of being matched with young job seekers across the borough and each will also be matched with one of our internal apprentices.

### **3.6 Work Experience, Trainee and Internships**

A structured work experience programme is currently being developed, with a view to providing 1-week placements to schools across the borough (with a particular focus on those schools located within areas of deprivation) around June-time and also placements to students at Trafford College from September for 1-day a week. In addition, the Council has signed up to the 'Lawyers in

Schools' initiative and members of the Legal team will be visiting Trafford schools, to talk to pupils who are interested in a career in law and promote the profession within the local government environment. This programme will then be further developed to offer work experience opportunities within the Legal team, leading to trainee and apprenticeship opportunities.

The Council is also working in partnership with Trafford College, Pure Innovations and the Central Manchester Foundation Trust to provide 10-month work experience placements for up to 10 learning-disabled adults. It is anticipated that Trafford will provide supported employment placement to 2 individuals within this cohort.

In addition, a bid proposal for a paid internship scheme for ex-forces people was submitted to the Ministry of Defence Community Covenant Grant panel on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013. The panel is due to meet on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and a decision is expected shortly after this date. If approval is received, the scheme will offer 25 3-month paid internships; 18 with the Council, 5 within the Leisure Trust and 2 within Trafford Housing. The bid also includes a wide package of training and support for the individuals, including job search and interview skills, CV-writing, ICT training and access to counselling. In addition, the interns would also educate existing employees through the organisation of a physical or mental challenge event, which would help to promote the work of the Armed Forces and the individuals would also undertake volunteering activities to support the community.

#### **4. Conclusion**

It is recognised that the development of our workforce – both internal to the Council and across Trafford – is critical to the successful economic growth of the borough and the Council is continuing to drive a range of initiatives in order to maximise these opportunities.

The Accounts and Audit Committee is recommended to note the report contents and significant progress to date.