

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee - 12 October 2023

Subject: Workforce Strategy

Report of: Director of Human Resources, Organisation Development and Transformation

Summary

This report provides the Committee with an overview of the Council's Workforce Strategy and the priorities we are delivering against which ensures the Council is in the best position to deliver the Corporate Plan, Our Manchester Strategy and to continue to deliver excellent services to residents.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the Council's Workforce Strategy and priority areas.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Our workforce strategy sets out five strategic priorities that will build a talented, diverse and thriving workforce that has the capacity and capability to deliver the Corporate Plan, Our Manchester Strategy and provide great services to residents.

The strategy ensures that our workforce has the capacity, skills and knowledge to support the Council's zero carbon ambitions. This is specifically demonstrated in training our workforce in Carbon Literacy.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments

The Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to consider equality across their work. The Council's workforce strategy makes clear our commitment to ensuring our workforce is diverse at all levels and our workplace is inclusive. The Workforce Equality Strategy sets out specific activities and interventions which:

- Advance equalities and address inequalities.
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	As one of the largest employers in the city, the Council can contribute to this outcome through its workforce of whom the majority are also local residents. The workforce strategy will set out the Council's approach to providing jobs within the Council in an inclusive way that ensures a diverse workforce that reflects the communities served.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	As one of the largest employers in the city, the Council can contribute to this outcome through its workforce of whom the majority are also local citizens. Our workforce strategy will set out the Council's approach for ongoing development of skills and talent.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	As one of the largest employers in the city, the Council can contribute to this outcome through its workforce of whom the majority are also local citizens. Our workforce strategy will set out the Council's ambitions in this regard.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Workforce strategy sets out the ambition for the Council's workforce in terms of skills, knowledge and ways of working. Initiatives detailed in our workforce strategy will have a positive impact on the Council's ability to achieve all of its priorities and thus should have a positive impact on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Workforce strategy demonstrates how the Council will support its employees to contribute to this outcome; ensure employees are properly equipped with the skills required to use technology effectively and deliver services appropriately in the future.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This is Manchester, we do things differently here. At Manchester City Council, we're proud to do local government differently: as you'd expect from a city with our international reputation for diversity, creativity, culture and passion.
- 1.2 As one of the largest employers in the city, employing over 7,500 staff, and delivering over 100 different services, it is important that the Council has a workforce strategy that ensures that we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time, to deliver for the residents of Manchester.
- 1.3 The Our Manchester Strategy sets out our vision for Manchester to be in the top flight of world-class cities by 2025 and our Corporate Plan sets out what we must deliver to achieve our vision. Our workforce strategy is an exciting, bold and ambitious plan which sets out five strategic priorities that we will deliver against to build a talented, diverse and thriving workforce that has the capacity and capability to deliver great services to residents and enable the Council to meet its strategic objectives.
- 1.4 Our people are our biggest asset and crucial to bringing our strategic priorities to life and ensuring we deliver our objectives. As a Council, we have achieved great things, and we must celebrate our dedicated, hardworking and talented people who have supported the Council to make such progress and improvements:
 - Awarded Council of the Year in 2022
 - Children's Services judged 'Good' by Ofsted.
 - Won the 'Innovation in Childrens and Adults Services' at MJ in 2023
 - In 2022, Adult Social Care took part in the Care Quality Commission national pilot and received an indicative rating of 'good'
 - The Council was the first local authority to achieve Silver accreditation from the Carbon Literacy Project
 - Corporate Finance won a Diversity and Inclusion award (public finance)
 - Corporate Procurement won a low carbon and sustainable procurement award
 - Accredited as a Good Employer by the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter
 - Accredited as a Real Living Wage Employer
 - Achieved Disability Confident Leader Status
 - Hosted a Leadership Summit for the Top 500 leaders within the Council.
 - The 2023 Awards for Excellence Event received 1,060 nominations.
 - 59% engagement rate in the Staff Survey 2022
- 1.5 We must recognise that the local government workforce continues to face challenges in terms of reduced government funding, increased pressure on services, delivering more with less combined with talent and skills shortages and challenges with competing with the private sector. This makes the challenge even harder, however, we are confident that our bold and ambitious

strategy will ensure that the Council is an employer of choice and has the right capacity, capability and diversity to deliver for the residents of Manchester.

- 1.6 It is important our strategy also addresses the variety of factors that influence the Council and our people. These include changing priorities, increasing demands on our services, decreases in funding, new ways of working, emerging digital skills and technology, changes in the demography of residents and amendments to legislation which all require us to provide new or different services.

2.0 Workforce Strategy

- 2.1 Our workforce strategy is for all of us. It sets out our overall workforce vision, provides strategic direction, sets clear outcomes that we are aiming to achieve and is the 'golden thread' which aligns our workforce to the delivery of the Corporate Plan, Our Manchester Strategy and the residents of Manchester.
- 2.2 Ultimately, the workforce strategy ensures that we address our current and future challenges and opportunities and ensures that we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right level and at the right cost.
- 2.3 The five strategic priorities within the workforce strategy are:
1. Attract, develop and retain diverse talent
 2. An inclusive employer that represents the communities that we serve at all levels
 3. Develop world-class leaders and managers
 4. High performing workforce that delivers great services for our residents
 5. Healthy, engaged and thriving workforce.
- 2.4 These priorities have been developed through understanding the challenges and opportunities that the Council faces, working with our Directorates to understand local priorities through annual workforce planning, understanding our workforce intelligence and staff survey findings and being clear about what we want the Council to look like in the future.
- 2.5 Whilst the workforce strategy sets the overall strategic priorities for the workforce; the priorities are collectively delivered through the following plans/strategies:
1. Talent Plan
 2. Workforce Equalities Strategy
 3. Organisation Development Plan
 4. Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- 2.6 Each of the plans/strategies are interconnected and collectively deliver the strategic priorities set out within the workforce strategy (see Appendix A). The following section illustrates how this works in practice:

- The Health & Wellbeing Strategy will predominantly deliver priority 5 (healthy, engaged and thriving workforce) however, it will also contribute towards building a high performing workforce and inclusive workplace as we know that effective workplace wellbeing leads to improved performance & productivity and healthy & safe cultures improves inclusion and sense of belonging (CIPD, Wellbeing at work, 2023)
- The Workforce Equality Strategy will predominantly deliver priority 2 (inclusive employer that represents the communities that we serve at all levels). However, we know that by developing an inclusive workplace culture where our employees feel valued and respected that this leads to employees experiencing higher levels of wellbeing (therefore contributing to priority 5 – healthy, engaged and thriving workforce)
- The Organisation Development Plan takes a system wide approach to addressing the underpinning challenges and opportunities of the Council. This is done with a view to improving the performance of the council and its workforce. Key elements are improving the working experiences of staff, ensuring the Council has the skills and capabilities to be successful and adapt well to change, and the extent to which the values and behaviours are embedded which drive the strength-based way of working.

3.0 Workforce Priorities

3.0.1 This section provides an insight into the plans which will support the delivery of the priorities outlined in the workforce strategy.

3.1 Attract, develop and retain talent

3.1.1 This priority is primarily delivered through the Council's Talent Plan. The plan sets out how we will attract, develop and retain diverse talent at all levels of the Council and focuses on four key areas:

1. Improving approaches to recruitment and retention
2. Strengthening pathways into MCC employment
3. Strengthening internal pathway
4. Maximising Graduates, Apprenticeships, Work Experience and Internships.

3.1.2 Below is a list of some of the actions across the four areas:

- Developing an attractive employer brand and improving how we market the Council
- Continuing to review our approaches to inclusive recruitment
- Ensuring recruiting managers have the skills to recruit the right person, with the right skills, at the right time, in the best interests of the Council.
- Strengthening our relationships with Schools, Colleges and Universities to raise the awareness of the employment opportunities that the Council has.
- Strengthen our relationships with local communities so that we are able to attract more local diverse talent.
- Deliver targeted recruitment campaigns and events in our local communities

- Developing Talent Pools to enable us to fairly and transparently identify and develop talent.
- Establish organisational career pathways which drives internal progression.
- Continue to deliver positive action programme e.g. Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic leadership pathway.
- Increase the number of graduates (this year, we increased the corporate programme for 4 to 15)
- Increase the number of external apprenticeships
- Develop a coordinated approach to work experience and internships
- Set and monitor targets.

3.2 An inclusive employer that represents the communities that we serve at all levels

3.2.1 This priority is primarily delivered through the Council's Workforce Equality Strategy. The Workforce Equality Strategy which sets out a plan to be a place where our workforce fully reflects the rich diversity and talent of the communities we serve at all levels and is a place where everyone can be themselves and thrive by 2025.

3.2.2 Our strategy sets out the importance of ensuring our diverse employees are protected from discrimination in any form, have access to development and can progress through the council's structures, are treated with respect, have good and fulfilling work to do and can bring their whole selves to work.

The strategy sets out six summary aims:

1. Our workforce fully reflects our communities at all levels
2. We talk openly and frequently about equality and inclusion
3. Staff have access to develop and fulfil their potential
4. Staff will feel free to bring their whole selves to work
5. Policies and processes are fair and do not discriminate against any group or community
6. Managers and leaders understand how to support their employees, monitor equality, and address any issues quickly

3.3 Develop world-class leaders and managers

3.3.1 Our leaders and managers play a critical role in ensuring that we deliver our ambitions and priorities.

3.3.2 The 'Good Managers Guide' launched earlier this year (May 2023) set out seven basics of being a good manager in Manchester. Developed with staff, for staff, the guide provides managers with the tools and support they need to create high performing teams that support our communities, residents and businesses.

3.3.3 The Good Manager Guide is centred on all line managers being clear on their role as a line manager in Manchester, that they are supported with training,

advice and the right guidance, and that they know when they're getting it right and support when things aren't going as planned.

3.3.4 Our Leaders help themselves and others to do the right things. They model the behaviours they expect of others and understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and health and wellbeing. They listen with attention and hold themselves and others to account for the impact and outcomes their teams, services and strategies are responsible for.

3.3.5 Building on the work that has been developed for our managers the refresh of the Organisation Development Plan 2023-25 (due this autumn) will prioritise how we further develop and support our leaders to deliver now and for the future. This will include defining what it means to specifically lead in our organisation, with clear expectations, with support, advice and the right guidance.

3.4 A high performing workforce that delivers great services to residents

3.4.1 One of the priorities of the Organisation Development Plan (2021-23) was creating an approach to performance development that is meaningful and authentic. Taking a human centred approach, our workforce helped to shape a set of principles focused on people being clear on what is expected of them, understanding when things are and aren't going well, and ensuring that everyone has the necessary support in place as required. As a result of this, a new one to one and annual appraisal process titled 'Our Conversations,' has been introduced into the organisation and forms part of the offer made available via the Good Managers Guide (rollout from May 2023). It is too soon to measure the impact of this work, however to date over 1200 managers (out of approx. 1500) have engaged in the briefings. Further work will be delivered over the next 6 months to look at the impact of this work alongside the 2023 staff survey.

3.5 A healthy, engaged and thriving workforce

3.5.1 This priority is primarily delivered through the newly refreshed Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The strategy is a key building block which sets out our vision, the things we will do to strengthen the support to staff and how we will transform so that wellbeing is:

- a central part of our strategic priorities
- essential to everything that we do
- Championed at all levels.

3.5.2 This strategy adopts a strategic approach to health and wellbeing – we have identified six priority areas that we will focus on to achieve our vision, address our biggest challenges and shift our approach to early intervention and prevention and that we are led by intelligence.

3.5.3 Our health and wellbeing vision is to create a healthy, engaged and thriving workforce by prioritising and promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of our diverse workforce.

3.5.4 The six health and wellbeing priorities are:

- Promote and encourage good mental health and wellbeing
- Empower staff to make good physical health and lifestyle choices
- Embed good wellbeing practices in our leadership and management
- Strengthen health and wellbeing communication and engagement
- Grow our inclusive and accessible financial wellbeing offer
- Support good work in a great organisation

3.5.5 Below is a list of some of the actions across the six priorities:

- Strengthen our mental health support, guidance and training for staff and line managers:
- Develop training and guides for managers on:
 - understanding Mental Health
 - Health & Safety Executive Stress Management Standards
 - spotting early signs, early intervention and prevention and facilitating a good return to work.
- Senior Leaders to have a workforce wellbeing performance objective which reflects the wellbeing level of their service
- To roll out 'Mental Health at Work' to raise awareness and understanding of mental health in the workplace.
- To provide targeted support to groups (e.g. men, Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic) with high levels of mental health related absence
- To provide targeted support to services with high levels of mental health related absence
- Establish a corporate health and wellbeing group to oversee the delivery of this strategy at a directorate and service level.
- Support our leaders and managers to embed, promote and prioritise wellbeing within services, service plans and delivery.
- Establish a network of ambassadors for Health and Wellbeing across all services who will advocate, promote and signpost wellbeing resources.
- Align our staff benefits and discounts to the cost of living crisis (e.g. discounted food and travel)
- Review our existing policies and practices to ensure wellbeing is embedded or that these support the delivery of our wellbeing aims.

4.0 Measuring our success

4.1 It is important that we understand if our workforce strategy is making a difference – we expect the strategies to make the following improvements:

- Improve recruitment and retention of talent
- Better workforce planning
- Reduce vacancy rates

- Reduce reliance on agency workers
- Increase diversity at all levels
- Improve inclusion and sense of belonging
- Improve manager and leadership capability
- Improve performance and productivity
- Improve workplace wellbeing
- Reduce sickness absence (with a focus on mental health absence)

4.2 We will monitor the progress and impact that we are making through the following arrangements:

- Workforce Intelligence – our workforce dashboard provides an overview of a range of measures which includes vacancies, turnover, agency, sickness absence, diversity levels.
- Staff Survey – to understand the feelings and experiences of our workforce across these outcomes.
- Compliments and Complaints – feedback from our residents and service users.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee is to consider and comment on the Council's workforce strategy.

6.0 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 – Workforce Strategy diagram