

HUMAN RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Head of Service/Contact:	Shona Mason, Head of HR & Organisational Development
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	Draft People Framework (29 procedure documents)
Other available papers (not attached):	None

Report summary

This report provides an overview of Human Resource and Organisational Development activity which supports the Council's wider team wellbeing, providing evidence of good practice and up to date employment policy.

Recommendation (s)

- (1) The HR Panel receives the report and outlines any particular areas for development or further reporting**

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 To ensure that the Council successfully delivers its key priorities, service plans and strategies it is imperative that the Council has an engaged, skilled and motivated team.
- 1.2 The team's wellbeing, ensuring that the Council undertakes sound employment practice and has up to date employment policies, is important to achieving this.

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- 1.3 The activity of the Human Resources and Organisational Development team supports the organisation in achieving its people aims with its service delivery plan centred on supporting the service plans of the wider Council and the Behaviour Framework, to achieve the Council's key priorities.

2 Background

- 2.1 In order for the HR Panel to consider areas of wellbeing, HR policy and best practice, this report will provide details of the following areas which the HR team have undertaken over the past six months in line with the service delivery plan:

- Council Wide Achievements – promoting all the good work the Council does
- Absence Management Update – how are the figures looking for quarter 1 - 6
- Job Evaluation – Update on status of the project
- Review of HR Policies – New draft People Framework for consideration
- Employee Data Check – Update on meaningful workforce monitoring
- Learning and Development and Apprenticeships – Update on progress to date

3 Council Wide Achievements

- 3.1 Over the past six months there have been a number of achievements across the Council. These achievements are down to the commitment, dedication and hard work of employees from all services. These achievements are celebrated corporately and are shared with employees via What's Hot, shared with Members via the Members Update and are displayed publically on dedicated notices boards within the Town Hall and at other locations. The achievements reinforce the hard work of our employees.

- 3.2 Highlights of the achievements over the past six months include:

- Increase of food recycling rates by 12%
- Increase in Council Tax & Business rates to over 99%
- Emergency response to a fire in Stoneleigh on 27 April
- Two elections in May
- Unauthorised encampment injunction secured
- Derby 2019
- Round the Borough Bike
- 108 highways and footpaths cleared of weed in June
- EEBC Building Control team award, Building Excellence Award
- Events to commemorate the Centenary of the Epsom riot

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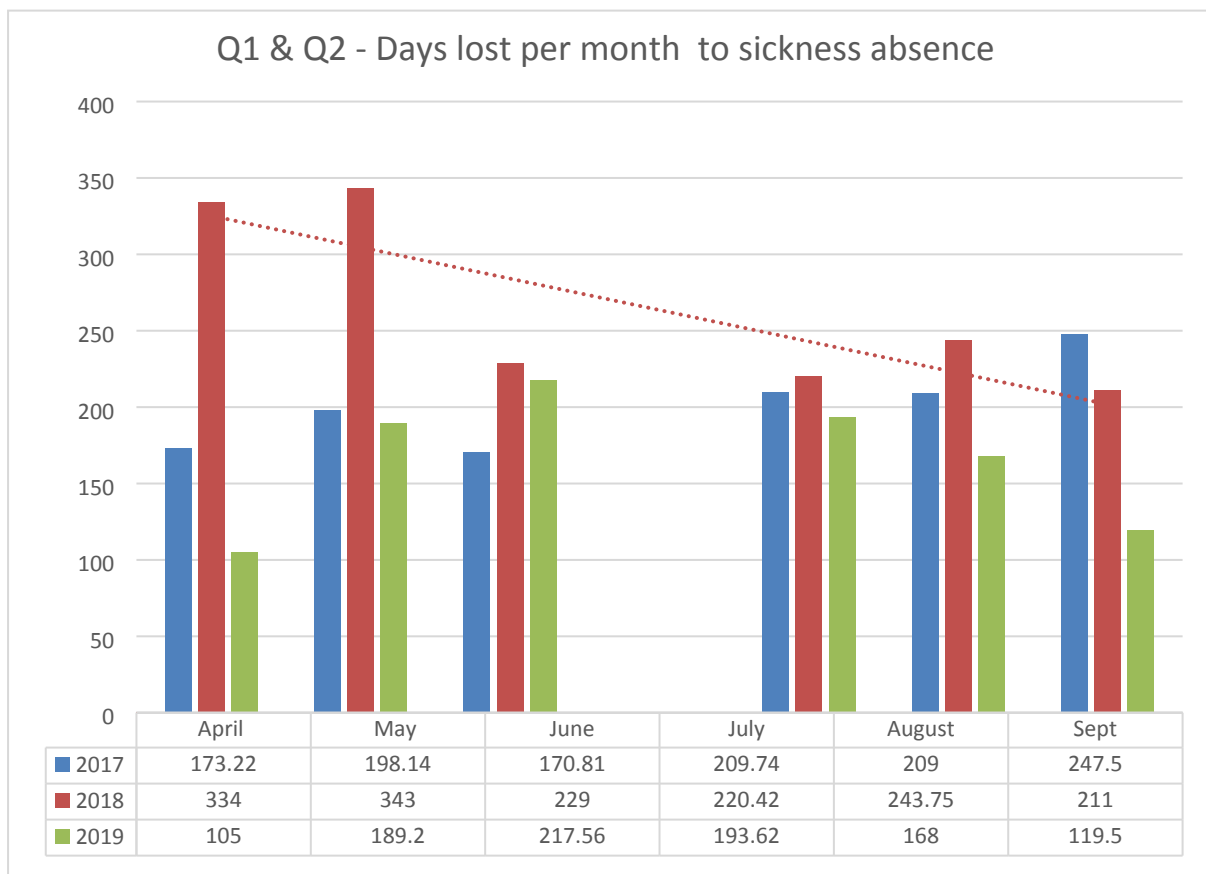
- Future40 public engagement with over 6000 recorded inputs from residents
- Growth of our Apprentice programme
- Closing of accounts
- Invited our second Syrian refugee family to the Borough
- Increased IT resilience
- Removal of concrete bollards outside a shop on Chessington Road
- New enforcement car entered service
- Introduction of Ringo in our car parks
- Increase sales of 28% for the Panto at September compared to the same time last year

3.3 The Leadership Team will continue to encourage the promotion of Council wide achievements.

4 Absence Management Update

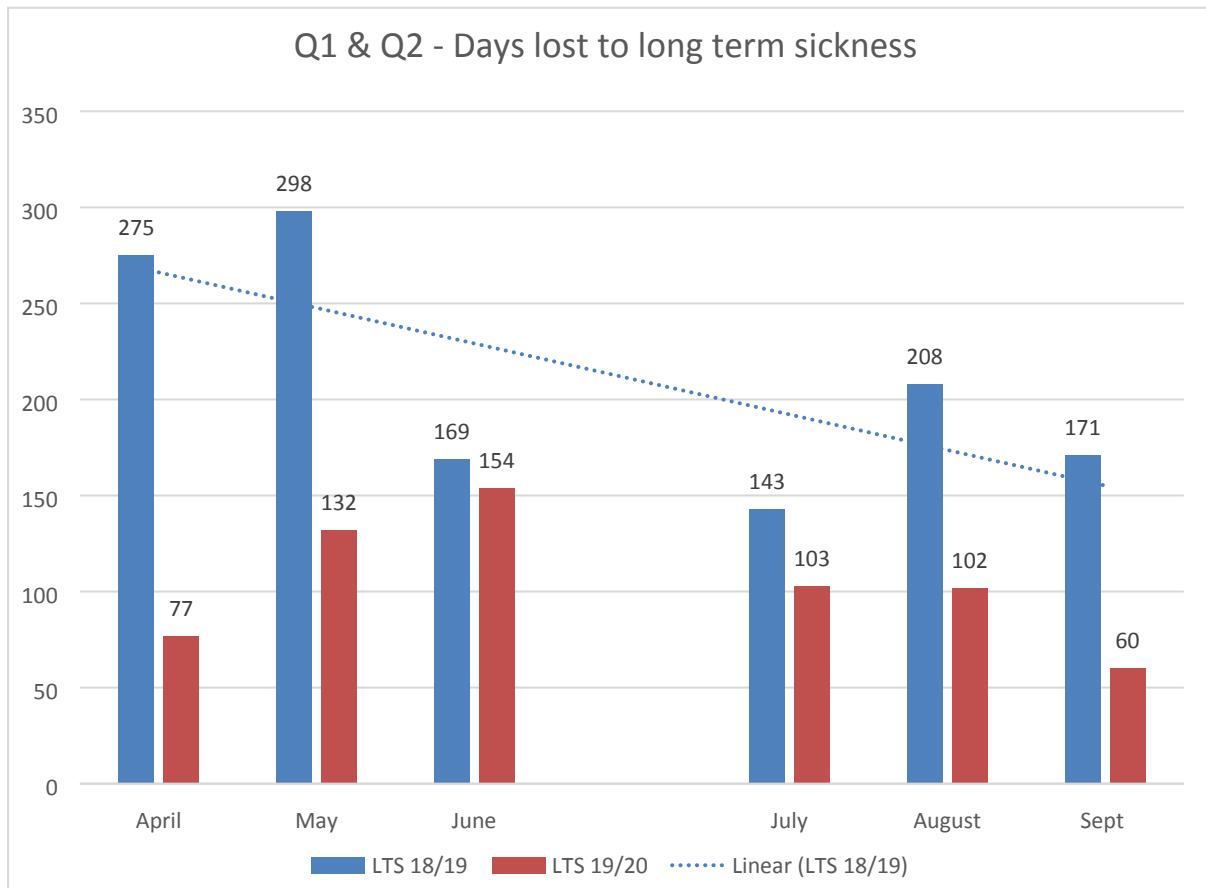
4.1 The HR team have worked with managers, employees and the Council's Occupational Health provider to reduce the levels of sickness across the organisation over the past few months.

4.2 The graph below shows the total number of days lost per month to sickness absence:



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- 4.3 As reported at the previous HR panel during 2018/19 long term sickness was particularly high and this year the HR team have been working with managers to reduce sickness absence overall but specifically focusing on long term sickness. The graph below shows the total number of days lost per month to long term



- 4.4 Stress, Depression and Anxiety continues to be the highest reason for long term sickness however the HR team have been working proactively to raise awareness and provide support in this area.
- 4.5 The team have undertaken a range of wellbeing activities to support employees and raise awareness during the past six months focusing on:
- Promoting World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2019
 - Holistic therapies – massage etc.
 - Ki gong sessions
 - Pilates sessions
 - Health checks – Blood pressure
 - Promotion of Rainbow Leisure Centre gym membership
 - Promotion of Simply Health
 - Promotion of Slimming World
 - Talking Therapies - Stress & Resilience and Mindfulness sessions

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- 4.6 The HR team will continue to provide further advice and support in the coming months and are working closely with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Officer to ensure there is a collaborative approach.

5 Job Evaluation

- 5.1 The HR team have been working with Managers to ensure that all roles within the Council have a new generic role profile which supports the job evaluation process.
- 5.2 Roles have been grouped into 20 job families in line with the Council's pay structure. Managers were asked to complete a generic template for each role within their service.
- 5.3 The Council has commissioned South East Employers to undertake the job evaluation exercise on its behalf due to the volume of roles to be evaluated, the expertise required and to ensure impartiality during the process.
- 5.4 During the past few months HR has been working with Managers and South East Employers to review the completed role profiles to ensure that they reflect the requirements of the role, there is consistency across the grades and contain adequate information for the job evaluation.
- 5.5 South East Employers have commenced the mapping process against organisational structures, the Council's pay structure and are completing the evaluations. We are anticipating that the mapping process will be completed by Christmas with South East Employers providing their initial assessment in the New Year.
- 5.6 Once the Council is in receipt of this information we will be able to cost the job evaluation exercise and evaluate the financial implications.
- 5.7 The project is currently on track with a view to informing employees of the outcome before the end of the financial year.

6 Review of HR Policies – People Framework

- 6.1 The HR team have undertaken a full review of all core HR policies and procedures and have developed a new draft People Framework (PF).
- 6.2 The new draft PF:
- Provides an outline as to how the Council will manage its workforce.
 - Includes best practices such as ACAS guidance which are documented and implemented as appropriate to our organisation.
 - Ensures that management decisions and action are consistent and uniform with employees being supported in their role to perform at their best.

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- 6.3 The draft PF comprises of five parts:
- Part 1 – Policy Areas /Scope (to be finalised)
 - Part 2 – Who does What – Roles & Responsibilities
 - Part 3 – Definitions (to be finalised)
 - Part 4 – Individual Procedures
 - Part 5 – Guidance Documents
- 6.4 The HR team have drafted a total of 29 new documents which make up the majority of the draft PF.
- 6.5 Over the past 18 months the HR team has delivered significant changes to the Council's Pay Structure, Performance Management scheme, Behaviour Framework and Job Evaluation scheme all of which are ongoing. These changes are the result of planned and systematic culture change to create an organisation which is flexible, adaptable and accountable.
- 6.6 The draft PF supports the organisation to achieve its objectives and create a culture of accountability and flexibility.
- 6.7 The HR team have been working to realign the PF with the new pay structure, performance management scheme and behaviour framework and to ensure that the draft PF is structured in a way that provides clarity and guidance for the managers and staff who have to use them.
- 6.8 Each procedure has been aligned with legislative requirements and ACAS codes of practice to ensure that the Council is meeting its legal obligations and to mitigate risk and any potential challenge
- 6.9 Due to the volume of the documents that have been developed the consultation process was split into two phases.
- 6.10 Phase 1 consultation ran from 3 July to 30 August 2019 and Phase 2 consultation ran from 17 September to 15 November 2019.
- 6.11 Phase 1 included:
- Part 1 Policy Areas/Scope
 - Part 2 Who does What - Roles & Responsibilities
 - Part 3 Definitions
 - Absence Management
 - Appeals
 - Capability
 - Disciplinary
 - Employee Pay & Reward
 - Grievance
 - Hearings

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- Induction and Settling In
- Investigations
- Mediation
- Performance Management
- Recruitment & Retention Incentive
- Relocation
- Suspension

6.12 Phase 2 included:

- Adoption
- Annual Leave
- Dignity at Work
- Flexible Working
- Maternity
- Ordinary Parental Leave
- Paternity
- Recruitment & Selection
- Safer Recruitment
- Shared Parental Leave
- Special Leave
- Working from Home

6.13 The key changes in Phase 1 included:

- Structure of policies into a framework
- Align all policies so they dovetail with each other
- Provide greater detail and clarify procedures
- Moving long term absence trigger from 10 days to 4 weeks
- Inclusion of definitions for greater clarity
- Inclusion of informal process in disciplinary procedure
- New Induction procedure setting out expectations

6.14 The key changes in Phase 2 included:

- Work and Family procedures updated to reflect changes in legislation
- Dignity at Work Procedure (formerly Bullying and Harassment) aligned with Grievance Procedure
- Flexible Working and Working from Home Procedures updated to reflect the Council's changing workforce
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure revised to provide a structured and consistent approach
- Clearer definition of types of Special Leave

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- New Annual Leave and Safer Recruitment Procedures
- 6.15 Consultation has taken place with the following groups to ensure a collaborative approach with rounded feedback:
- Leadership Team
 - Staff Consultative Group (SCG)
 - Working group of Heads of Service
 - Input from Legal Services
- 6.16 The consultation process has included a variety of methods including face to face meetings, briefing sessions, communications via eHub and attendance at team meetings. This approach was taken to ensure that the consultation was far reaching and feedback was received from all parts of the organisation.
- 6.17 Feedback has been collated throughout the consultation process with feedback provided verbally via the briefing sessions and attendance at team meetings, collated views from SCG, written submissions and individual emails.
- 6.18 There was a variety of feedback which included the following:
- Requests for clarification in some areas
 - Increased linkages to the Behaviour Framework
 - Technical and procedural amendments
 - Requests for enhancements to statutory and occupational allowances
 - Suggested amendments to language and grammar
- 6.19 The feedback has been reviewed by the HR team and where possible adopted into the new documentation.
- 6.20 On the whole feedback has been positive with the majority of employees confirming that providing greater clarity in each of the individual procedures is welcomed along with the PF approach.
- 6.21 There are still some outstanding procedures which need to be drafted and finalised ready for the final stage of consultation. These will be completed in the New Year and include:
- Inclusion & Diversity
 - Overtime
 - Politically Restricted Posts
 - Workforce Change
- 6.22 Part 1 and Part 2 of the PF will be reviewed and finalised once phase 3 has been completed.

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- 6.23 The current focus is on finalising Phase 1 and 2 ready for ratification at Strategy & Resources on 30 January 2020 with implementation planned from April 2020.
- 6.24 The final stage will be to finalise Part 5 – Guidance Notes and the forms and letters which are associated with all of the procedures. These have been drafted but will need to be uniform and updated to reflect the changes to the procedures as a result of the consultation feedback.
- 6.25 The HR team will be working with Managers and employees to effectively embed the PF within the Council during 2020-2021.

7 Employee Data Check

- 7.1 The Council has a legal obligation to ensure that the personal information it holds in respect of its employees is correct and up to date.
- 7.2 In compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the HR team's privacy notice, information about our employees is processed for the following reasons:
 - to promote and monitor equality of opportunity
 - to ensure that we are complying with our health and safety obligations
 - to check that employees are entitled to work in the UK
 - to exercise our contractual and legal obligations in connection with employment
- 7.3 Employees have the ability to review and update their personal information through iTrent Self Service at any time.
- 7.4 The HR team have undertaken a review of the sensitive information categories (i.e. information relating to religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation and disability) which are available in iTrent. These categories have been updated so that they are aligned with the Census, Jobs go Public (provider of the Council's new application tracking system for recruitment) and recommendations from the Council's Inclusion and Diversity group.
- 7.5 Following this exercise, and in line with (current) Government guidance relating to Brexit, employees have been asked to review and update their details in line with the revised categories. It is not mandatory for employees to disclose sensitive information about themselves. For each category, employees may choose the "Prefer not to say" option.

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- 7.6 The Council's workforce profile, including key statistics on ethnicity, gender, age and disability, is reported to the HR Panel on an annual basis. Ensuring that employee data is up to date and complete will mean that we are able to provide a full and accurate picture of our workforce. The alignment of our sensitive data categories with external sources will facilitate more meaningful benchmarking processes as discussed at the previous HR Panel.

8 Learning & Development and Apprenticeships

- 8.1 During 2019/20 the Council is seeking to build on learning and development opportunities by appointing to a Learning & Development specialist role. The appointment will allow the needs of the organisation to be better met and will support the ongoing development of the Council's managers and employees in developing key skills and knowledge.
- 8.2 Following an unsuccessful recruitment campaign in July 2019, the Learning & Development Advisor role was re-advertised, with an offer of employment being made in November 2019. This individual will be responsible for reviewing learning and development needs across the organisation and working to design and deliver a tailored training programme for the Council.
- 8.3 As an employer with an annual wage bill of £11+ million we have been paying the Apprenticeship Levy since April 2017. The funds in the Levy expire 24 months after they enter the account, with the oldest funds expiring first.
- 8.4 Whilst the qualifications undertaken by our apprentices can be funded from the Apprenticeship Levy, the Council is required to identify funds to pay their salaries.
- 8.5 In line with the Government target for public bodies employing more than 250 staff, we are required to employ at least 2.3% of our headcount as new apprentices each year. This equates to 7 new Apprentices.
- 8.6 During 2019/20., the Council has so far appointed 5 new Apprentices and currently has Apprentices in the following areas:
- Housing
 - Communications
 - Executive Office
 - Finance
 - Environmental Health
 - Business Support

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- 8.7 We are actively seeking further opportunities to increase our Apprenticeship offer. The HR team is working closely with managers to explore options which facilitate the spending of our Levy account funding. These include the conversion of existing vacant roles to Apprenticeships and the upskilling of our existing staff.

9 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 9.1 All HR and Organisational Development activities take place within agreed budgets.
- 9.2 Savings will continue to be made where possible ensuring the Council can provide a quality HR service in a cost-effective way.
- 9.3 As an example addressing high levels of sickness can directly impact on the efficiency of the Council improving overall productivity and reducing sickness related costs such as covering front line services.
- 9.4 ***Chief Finance Officer's comments: None for the purposes of this report.***

10 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 10.1 EEBC actively promotes equality of opportunity and values the diversity of its workforce. As an equal opportunities employer, it is vital that the Council ensures that all its policies, procedures and processes are open and fair and that staff are not discriminated against during their employment with the Council.
- 10.2 Over and above the need to ensure legal compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant statutory measures, the Council recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and of the creation of a working environment based on dignity, respect and professionalism. By monitoring key parts of the employee relationship from recruitment, induction, training, employee relations, salary and benefits and HR processes, the Council proactively works to ensure fairness and equality of opportunity for all.
- 10.3 ***Monitoring Officer's comments:*** It is imperative that the Council's employment policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure that they are lawful and fit for purpose. This review ensures that policies and procedures are up to date thereby reducing the possibility of successful challenge by employees exercising their rights of appeal.

11 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 None

12 Partnerships

- 12.1 None

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13 Risk Assessment

- 13.1 It is imperative that the Council follows fair and consistent HR procedures because the potential costs against the Council should it fail to implement a fair and robust process and procedure could be substantial should an Employment Tribunal claim be successful. As well as the financial costs, the reputational damage to the Council, as a public sector employer, could be considerable.
- 13.2 It is worth noting that there is no limit on compensation payable in successful claims of discrimination on the grounds of one of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

14 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 14.1 The Panel is asked to receive and note the contents of the report and annexes and identify any areas for development.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);