

Wales Audit Office Report
Evaluation of the Council's Review of People Performance Management

Progress Update – 11 September 2020

Background

This report will be the third annual update provided to the Audit Committee since the Council's Corporate People Performance Management Review Working Group undertook a review of the Council's People Performance Management Framework and presented its findings to the Council's Corporate Management Team in October 2017.

The attached report provides Members with an update on the work that has been undertaken and comments on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has required the authority to be more flexible and place greater reliance on I.T. solutions to effectively deliver its services without compromise.

In respect of the above, the updates to each of original recommendations will take into account what actions have been required by the authority accordingly:

Recommendation 1 Directors/Heads of Service undertake a desk top review of service structures, particularly within high risk customer facing areas, to identify any potential risk areas to reduce the likelihood of similar failings occurring as a result of flat structures.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: Under the Delegated Powers set out in the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive and Directors have specific responsibility in determining all matters related to staffing and structures. The Corporate Management Team has considered & discussed the recommendations highlighted by the report and has ongoing input into the development of re-structuring or realignment as appropriate. This is an ongoing process to respond to service needs including the delivery of significant PBB savings. The Corporate Management Team is satisfied that the current structures are appropriate to deliver the Council's services.

Since the review, work has been undertaken to prioritise those services areas that had been highlighted e.g. Waste and Leisure. Both these areas have been, or are in the process of being realigned. This work was ongoing before being highlighted during the Review and is being monitored by HR Business Partners at the relevant Departmental Management Teams.

A high-level review of the how the Council responded to COVID-19 is underway, and the TIC team has a programme of work that supports Service Managers in challenging existing processes,

systems and staffing structures. In addition, a “New Ways of Working” framework is being developed in response to our COVID-19 experiences, which will present further opportunities for managers to re-examine their staffing structures to ensure they are fit for purpose moving forward.

Recommendation 2 Directors/Heads of Service to undertake a desk top risk assessment of dispersed service delivery teams including agile working and remotely located teams as well as teams with a distinct identity or external/individual brand (i.e. Families First) to identify potential risks of disconnection from the corporate organisation.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: The Leadership & Management Development Framework has been developed and there are various tools and resources available to support capacity and capability when managers have remotely located teams. In terms of agile working, the Learning and Development team now provides a programme of development aimed at supporting managers to manage an agile workforce which includes tips on how to maintain good communication when managing dispersed teams.

In addition IT colleagues are providing relevant IT solutions that ensure managers are able to keep in touch with staff that are working from dispersed locations e.g. Microsoft Teams.

As a result of COVID-19 a New Ways of Working framework is being developed that will build on the successes already achieved through agile working. To support the New Ways of Working the Managers Toolkit for remote working is being further developed to support managers to lead and manage remote teams effectively.

Recommendation 3 Building on the existing review of the induction process it is recommended that ‘new manager’s guide’ be developed to complement the new ‘employee guide’ currently under development. The ‘new manager’s guide’ is to be used during induction to identify areas of training and development and is to include a checklist for managers signposting them to the relevant technical and people management information, tools and support. This checklist should include but is not exclusive to:

Technical management:

- Financial regulations
- Procurement rules
- Corporate priorities
- Code of conduct
- Budget management
- Performance management
- Relevant checks and balances
- Legal/statutory requirements

People management:

- Workforce planning
- People management
- Emotional intelligence
- Recruitment and selection (including job profile development)
- Appraisals and reviews
- Induction and probation
- Agile working
- Declarations of interest
- Managing change

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: The Heads of Service Forum has been engaged to support the development of a framework, and an evaluation has been undertaken of the Future Leaders Programme with a view to making it available across a wider organisational base. A range of tools and resources are currently available to underpin the new leadership and management behaviours and the recent Investors in People Review supports the approach for extending leadership and management competencies at all levels. This work will continue to be overseen by the PSGB.

The Induction process is currently under review in light of the New Ways of Working in response to Covid-19. This includes an induction for new managers. Our Recruitment Strategy will be now be reviewed in light of Covid-19 and the move to remote working.

Recommendation 3a Ensure that managerial training needs identified at induction stage are streamlined into, and reviewed during, the appraisal process.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: Funding was identified in March 2018 to allow the Council to develop a new "on-boarding" system to be accessed via its HR system, which will allow for customised induction and support for new managers. This piece of work has now been developed and has been presented to senior managers within People Management for their input. The system will provide the ability for staff development to be monitored alongside appraisal discussions.

A new, updated Appraisal Process has been developed, which will enable managers to build on the strengths of employees and develop skills required.

Recommendation 4 Introduce workforce and succession planning as a key element of the Executive Board and Heads of Service Business Plan sessions to reinforce work currently being undertaken by HR business partners and strengthen accountability.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: Workforce planning is an integral element of the business planning process. HR Business Partners have been working with Departmental Management Teams to provide comprehensive workforce data to assist with business and workforce planning. A Toolkit for Managers has previously been developed and briefing sessions for managers have been provided.

Recommendation 5 Review the process for creating job profiles in order to increase the focus on behavioural standards/core competencies and reduce task orientated criteria. Develop clear guidelines/support for managers for creating job profiles of this nature.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: A Leadership and Development Framework has been developed and various tools and resources are available to support capacity and capability in this area. This includes service areas adopting a leadership and management academy for those aspiring to become leaders and managers. Further work will now be undertaken to extend the organisation's competency framework across all levels, reflecting the outcomes of the recent Investors in People Review.

The Heads of Service Forum has been engaged to support the development of the framework, and an evaluation has been undertaken of the Future Leaders Programme with a view to making it available across a wider organisational base. A range of tools and resources are currently available to underpin the new leadership and management behaviours and the recent Investors in People Review supports the approach for extending leadership and management competencies at all levels. This work will continue to be overseen by the PSGB. This can be evidenced by the Evaluation of Future Leaders Programme Development Programme for Heads of Service and the Investors in People Review 2018.

Additionally, the Leadership & Management Development Framework has been developed and various tools and resources are available to support capacity and capability in this area. This includes Service areas adopting a Leadership & Management Academy for those aspiring to become leaders/managers. Further work will now be undertaken to extend the organisations competency framework across all levels reflecting the outcomes of the recent Investors in People Review. Again, this can be evidenced by the Leadership & Management Behaviours Competency Framework (UCF), Future Leaders Programme Evaluation and the Investors in People Review 2018.

In addition, a more streamlined electronic job profile template has been introduced and guidance for managers has been produced.

A draft competency framework applicable to all levels of the organisation has been developed via a cross-divisional working group. Work is now underway to integrate this into the recruitment, development and appraisal processes.

Recommendation 6 Review the appraisal process to focus on behaviours and core competencies and develop a suite of tools to support managers to flexibly implement appraisal principles within different structures and service profiles.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: There has been a focus on the delivery of skills-based development for managers/supervisors in conducting appraisals, supporting individual performance and development. Service and professional occupational groups have been a priority and the evaluation of this will be measured in the forthcoming post IiP Review. The outcomes and the skills gap to support this measure will be evaluated/monitored through the Investors in People review and the People Strategy Work Stream. This is evidenced by the In-House and commissioned learning and development

modules. In addition, the Council's HR system has been further developed to provide managers with an online appraisal tool, which automates the process.

A new appraisal process has been developed and is currently being piloted in two areas of the Authority. Feedback to date has been positive. The new process focusses on the strengths of employees and encourages managers to ensure that they have a meaningful conversation with staff to support their development and performance.

Recommendation 7 In line with recommendations of the Internal Audit Review of Declaration of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality 2017, the guidance on declarations of interest should be reviewed and, if appropriate, updated. The use of meta compliance and/or Resource Link should be explored as a means of ensuring the necessary awareness of the requirements with managers and staff.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: Since the Review, consideration has been given to best practice across Public Sector in Wales and as a result a new Employee Code of Conduct Guide has been developed along with an online declaration process so that employees can declare any relevant interests, gifts or hospitality. The online process will allow declarations to be actively monitored. Once agreed by the Corporate Management Team, briefing sessions linked to our core values will be held with managers to explain why the process is important.

Recommendation 8 All internal audit recommendations to be monitored via PIMS, subject to successful system testing.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: All Internal Audit recommendations are now on PIMS and are monitored using this system.

Recommendation 9 A risk register to be developed by the People Strategy Group based upon the recommendations made in the report.

Status: Complete

Actions undertaken: The PSGB has incorporated this into their work programme for consideration and, as it is now being recorded on PIMS, there is no requirement for a bespoke Risk Register (See above). Workstreams were established to progress the highest priority areas and have reported back to the PSGB.



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