

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 27 March 2019
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Report title	Our People Strategy 2019-2024	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Governance	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Meredith Teasdale, Director of Education	
Originating service	Organisational Development	
Accountable employee	Paula Warrilow	Strategic Organisational Development and Apprenticeship Lead
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Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	26 February 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the new Our People Strategy 2019-2024 content and action plans, which forms one strand of the new Council Plan.
2. Endorse the use of employee working groups to configure appropriate change aligned to the action plans in the strategy, in accordance with the restorative approach the Council is seeking to embed.
3. Endorse the introduction of the Our People Employee Forum which will be the governance process for the strategy, set up to measure the success of initiatives and update where appropriate.

Recommendation for noting:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note that this strategy and the associated actions plans have been written for employees, using employees' feedback. It is written in the second person so employees can relate to it directly.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Our People Strategy 2019-2024 is a document written to support new ways of attracting, supporting and managing employee, as the Council seeks to address the challenges of delivering local government services in the 21st century. The overarching outcomes required from the strategy are that all employees will feel empowered and valued, and be adaptable.
- 1.2 The action plans written within the strategy have been developed with service specialists and employees from across the Council. To embed appropriate culture change across the Council, it is important to include employees in the decisions and outcomes expected so they buy into the changes, as they have been part of creating them.
- 1.3 The Our People Strategy is required to support new ways of working, to help to make the savings identified across the Council services. To ensure that we make the most of the skills and knowledge that the workforce across the Council have and to ensure that we give every opportunity to all employees working across the organisation.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Our People is one of the five streams of work identified in the new Our Council Plan (2019-2024). It reflects recognition at a senior level, which has been underpinned in conversations with employees, that the organisation needs to focus its energy on supporting and developing its workforce to face the expected challenges in the local government sector over the next few years.
- 2.2 Between August and October 2018, 29 organisational development engagement sessions took place at sites across the city, with 468 employees attending. The sessions were designed to understand employees' views and inform the development of the Council's Our People Strategy.
- 2.3 In addition, an employee survey was also circulated to gain further feedback. The online survey was available via Survey Monkey. Employees without access to the internet had the opportunity to complete a paper copy of the survey. 730 employees in total participated in the survey, meaning that around a quarter of the Council's workforce contributed.
- 2.4 Both the survey and the engagement workshops highlighted much positive feedback about working at the City of Wolverhampton Council. They also identified a range of areas in which the Council could improve the employee experience and develop the support provided.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The document has been created in two sections: the overarching strategy and the action plans. The creation of a draft strategy started in November 2018; action plans were then created with support from employees and subject specialists in January/February 2019.

Photographs were taken of employees for inclusion in the strategy and to encourage employees to read and engage with it.

3.2 Amendments have been made according to feedback and the final document is attached.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

4.1 Following the feedback from employees at the face to face engagement workshops and the questionnaire analysis, it was quite evident that there were areas in which the Council could improve its support for employees and managers.

4.2 Option 1 – do nothing. This would not provide any improvement for employees working within the service areas across the Council, as it is unlikely that appropriate change would take place. There is a need to change the way services deliver and employees work, which will not happen under some of the current processes.

4.3 Option 2 – the Organisational Development Team, Public Health and Human Resources to create and manage development change. Although this is possible it is not in keeping with the restorative approach the Council is aiming to embed through the Our People Strategy.

4.4 Option 3 – launch the Our People Strategy as an integral part of the Council Plan, embedding the review and working groups into 'business as usual'. It is important that employees are included in decision-making and ideas for change to ensure that culture change is driven from within and not just top down.

5.0 Reasons for decisions

5.1 The Our People Strategy has a clear message for the organisation, in that the workforce will need to work in different ways going forward. This will support and develop employees to enable them to deliver the services needed by the City, and enable the Council to address current challenges in a constrained financial context. Following the engagement workshops, it was evident that employees want to be part of creating a great place to work and a successful Council for the residents of the city. The Our People action plans give guidance and ideas to start to make changes and the working groups will provide a mechanism to achieve it. The Our People Forum will enable a record of the journey to be created and for employees to have their say on the work being carried out.

5.2 The outcomes of the Employee Forums will be a quarterly updated Our People document, highlighting where actions have been delivered, or new ideas are suggested. Case studies will also form part of the document so that good practice can be showcased.

5.3 Each strand will be set up on the project management system Verto and a highlight report generated for internal review regularly.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 Overseeing delivery of the Our People Strategy will be a core component of the work of the Organisational Development team. At this stage no additional budget requirements have been identified in relation to particular projects from the action plans. Should that be required, a business case will be generated, and any budgets sought will be in accordance with the Council's budgetary approval policies and procedures.

[ES/18032019/X]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

[TS/18032019/Q]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 As part of the development of the strategy, engagement was undertaken with the equality and diversity employee forums. An equality analysis was also undertaken and the implementation of the new strategy will help the Council fulfil its commitment to advance equality of opportunity and eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment. The employee forums will be able to play a role in monitoring the fulfilment of the various action plans and identify new actions where a need arises. There will also be crossover with the existing equality and diversity action plans, which will support the aims of the Our People Strategy.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 People working outside of the Civic Centre may in some cases find it difficult to access training or opportunities. Continual engagement is underway to look at the best solutions.

10.0 Human resources implications

- 10.1 Some HR policies will fall into scope of the action planning section on the strategy. HR is working closely on all elements of the strategy.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 11.1 There are no Corporate Landlord implications arising from this report.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 Health and wellbeing is one of the strands of the Our People Strategy. Modern employers take a holistic approach to employee wellbeing, recognising that the various strands of people's lives are interwoven and that there are benefits to both employer and employee in supporting healthy lifestyle choices.

13.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Our People Strategy 2019-2024