

Agenda Item	4
Report No	RDB/2/20

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Redesign Board

Date: 27 November 2020

Report Title: Workforce Planning & Development – Progress Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Resources & Finance

1.	Purpose/Executive Summary
1.1	This report provides Members with an update on the progress of the Workforce Planning and Development Project.
1.2	At the Redesign Board on 8 October 2020, the Executive Chief Officer for Resources and Finance reported on progress against the key project objectives. Those objectives are:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Council’s Workforce Planning Strategy – to ensure ongoing currency and fitness for purpose 2. Identification of Workforce Data Required – assessing what data is already held, what is required to enable managers to effectively manage their teams (right people, right place, right time), identifying the gaps and taking action to rectify 3. Identification of Management Tools – assessing what is in place, what managers need, revising and adding to the tools as required
1.3	It was reported that the project is being taken forward by a Project Team with membership drawn from across Council services. Councillor Caddick and Councillor Bremner, Vice Chairs of the Redesign Board, and John Gibson (UNISON) are the Redesign Board representatives on the Project Team.
1.4	Since the last meeting of the Redesign Board, the Project Team has completed the analysis of a survey of all staff with a supervisory or management role. The survey achieved a response rate of 253 out of 677 staff (37.4%). The key feedback from the survey is summarised in Appendix 1 .
1.5	The Project Team has also planned, organised and facilitated a series of workshops with a cross section of supervisors and managers. Altogether 48 staff

	attended one of 10 workshops. This has provided valuable qualitative feedback on the practical experiences and views from line managers on the current Workforce Planning Strategy. We are still finalising a report on outputs, conclusions and recommendations from these sessions. High level feedback will be available for presentation at the 27 November 2020 Redesign Board meeting.
2	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the progress of the Workforce Planning and Development Project.
3	Implications
3.1	Resource A failure to manage workforce planning and change puts at risk the Council's capacity to make most effective use of resources.
3.2	Legal Care is required that large scale and complex workforce change is managed in line with current employment legislation and Highland Council policy.
3.3	Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) Equalities Impact Assessments will be conducted in relation to Service Workforce Plans.
3.4	Climate Change / Carbon Clever There are no Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications identified.
3.5	Risk Having a sustainable workforce is included as a risk in the Corporate Risk Register. There are also resource challenges associated with delivering against the Project Plan whilst simultaneously addressing the resilience impacts associated with an ongoing pandemic.
3.6	Gaelic There are no Gaelic implications identified.
4	Background
4.1	Our most important resource is our staff, and they are at the centre of the services that we provide. Given the changing nature of the organisation we need to make sure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time to deliver Council priorities and essential front-line services.
4.2	At its simplest, Workforce Planning involves identifying the number of employees and types of staff skills required to meet the Council's strategic objectives, priorities and service delivery requirements.
4.3	An effective Workforce Planning Strategy needs to recognise the wider environment in which the Council operates (e.g. COVID19 and Financial considerations) and should be informed by the right data and management information. Implementation by managers should be supported by the correct management tools and processes.

4.4 Progressing the Workforce Planning & Development project is in line with the programme managed approach being applied across the Recovery Action Plan, with links and interdependencies being made with related priorities such as Service Redesign and Leadership, Culture & Performance.

4.5 These relationships are summarised below:

Workstream	Purpose
Workforce Planning Strategy	Having the right staff with the right skills in the right places to meet future service needs
Workforce Data	Providing the right information across a range of staff related data sources, to enable effective management of staff to meet Council priority activities
Service Redesign	Providing the right staff structures, job roles and skill sets required to deliver future Council objectives
Leadership, Culture and Performance	Includes actions to: retain, develop and attract talent; leadership development and employee review; as well as establishing and maintaining core values and culture
Workforce Plans	Establishing plans informed by an assessment of future business needs against current workforce profile in order to plan to meet future needs
Financial Plan	Involves assessing the Council's future staffing and other budgets and assessing alignment with workforce requirement identified through Workforce Planning

5 Review the Workforce Planning Strategy

5.1 The Highland Council has an existing Workforce Planning Strategy approved in August 2017. For reasons, including COVID19, reviewing this strategy is one of the key aims for this Project.

5.2 A Redesign Board Workshop was held on 7 August 2020. This took the form of a “PESTLE” review of the Workforce Planning Strategy to provide insight into the factors impacting on workforce planning and development. PESTLE is a business process / technique to help focus discussions, ideas etc. within perspectives of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental.

5.3 The following summarises some of the key factors from the 7 August 2020 workshop:

- Increased costs and reducing budgets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in home working, enabled and supported through improved use of Technology • Reduction in travel – reduction in carbon impact, reduction in cost, reduction in lost time • Ageing population - emphasis required on initiatives for succession planning and developing staff
5.3	This has been followed up with a survey to capture the views of those who are currently supervising/managing staff. The survey was completed by 253 staff, providing a 37.4% response rate (industry standards on surveys suggest that a good response to an internal survey is between 30-40%). Key finding from the survey are attached at Appendix 1 .
5.4	Following on from the survey, a total of 48 staff attended one of 10 workshop sessions during October. The aim was to explore the key themes of the existing Workforce Planning Strategy and to understand what changes managers considered we needed to make to deliver effective Workforce Planning and Development (e.g. data, management tools, support). These workshops also explored some of the “lessons learned” during the Covid19 emergency which managers think are important to consider as part of the Council Recovery process.
5.5	Levels of interest in attending, feedback from both facilitators and attendees, and initial analysis of the outputs from the workshops, all demonstrate a real commitment and enthusiasm from managers who took part. The general feedback is that management and supervisory staff are deeply committed to planning for future workforce needs. Further information on the key outputs will be presented at the meeting.
5.6	Taking the Redesign Board Workshop, the staff questionnaire and manager workshops together, the general conclusion is that the existing Workforce Strategy contains the right objectives and does not require any significant change. The main issues arising are around the challenges staff and managers face in implementing the strategy, particularly at this time. The evidence gathered so far suggests that it would be useful to establish a clearer distinction between the strategic and operational objectives of the strategy, and provide greater support to front line managers to focus on the operational objectives.
6	Identification of Workforce Data Required
6.1	This is subject to separate but related Project Management arrangements.
6.2	The Workforce Data Project has been established with a key aim to deliver quick and easy access to comprehensive, accurate and real-time workforce related data that aids workforce and financial planning, decision making and monitoring at a corporate and service level and performance reporting (local and national), provided through an effective service delivery mechanism.
6.3	The Workforce Data Project is progressing in line with its Project Plan, timescales and responsibilities.
6.4	Aligned to the Workforce Planning Project, the work of the Data Project includes consideration of data needs and how these can be met. This will be informed by the following key outputs from the Workforce Planning Project:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire findings • Manager session findings • Individual ECO discussions 																								
6.5	The Workforce Data Project is also assessing what short-term improvements can be achieved to provide ready access to management information.																								
7	Identification of Management Tools																								
7.1	The third objective of the Project is the identification, design and provision of management tools to support Services and managers to undertake Workforce Planning and Development.																								
7.2	Engagement with managers through the survey and workshops has already provided a lot of valuable information, and the outputs from the workshops, when fully analysed, will provide a better understanding of what existing management tools are being used, their relative fitness for purpose, and importantly where there are improvements and gaps to be addressed.																								
7.3	Initial assessment from across the engagement sessions suggests strong alignment of manager views with work already identified as required to establish a flexible and sustainable workforce.																								
7.4	Officers are working with representatives from the Improvement Service to benefit from their workforce planning expertise, including accessing tools/resources and insights from perceived best practice.																								
8	Next Steps																								
8.1	The next steps will be reviewing and analysing the outputs from all the engagements sessions, and formulating a series of recommendations to the Redesign Board on the changes required to the Workforce Planning Strategy and the supporting work required to implement the strategic and operational elements of the strategy.																								
8.2	<p>The key project milestones and dates for the work are as follows, with regular reports being provided to the Redesign Board.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref.</th> <th>Milestone</th> <th>Timescale/Period</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Review completed of the Workforce Planning Strategy</td> <td>Sept 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Changes recommended and made to the Workforce Planning Strategy</td> <td>Nov 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Workforce Planning data requirements identified</td> <td>Dec 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Workforce Planning data requirements delivered (via Workforce Data Project)</td> <td>Mar 21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Workforce Planning management tools identified</td> <td>Dec 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.</td> <td>Workforce Planning management tools delivered</td> <td>Mar 21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.</td> <td>Project close and review/document lessons learned</td> <td>Apr 21</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ref.	Milestone	Timescale/Period	1.	Review completed of the Workforce Planning Strategy	Sept 20	2.	Changes recommended and made to the Workforce Planning Strategy	Nov 20	3.	Workforce Planning data requirements identified	Dec 20	4.	Workforce Planning data requirements delivered (via Workforce Data Project)	Mar 21	5.	Workforce Planning management tools identified	Dec 20	6.	Workforce Planning management tools delivered	Mar 21	7.	Project close and review/document lessons learned	Apr 21
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	Designation: Executive Chief Officer: Resources and Finance																								

Date: 16 November 2020

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Background Papers:

Appendix 1

High level summary of staff questionnaire

Understanding your team

Overall managers have a good knowledge of their staff, they are aware of the skills and competencies within their teams and an understanding of training and development needs and career plans.

Most managers meet with individual team members at least once a year to discuss their performance and development. The standard format for Employee Review and Development does not meet the needs of some managers / staff groups. In some teams, particularly where line managers have a high number of direct reports, managers stated they have difficulty having formal review meetings with them all individually on a regular basis.

Managers use the information they have to support staff development and training, manage performance, and improve services delivery. This information is used by managers to support the health and wellbeing of their team.

Managing your team

Managers have a clear idea of what their team should look like in the next 12-months, however, are less clear on what their service should look like in future years.

Managers need more support with developing appropriate strategies to fill identified gaps, comparing the current workforce profile with the future workforce to identify critical gaps, and in identifying internal/external factors that may affect the workforce now and in the future.

Understanding future priorities is a challenge for managers in staff planning, and many feel unsure of the Council's future priorities and the future priorities within their service.

Managers feel that establishing stable staff structures through Service Redesign will help them be clearer on staffing levels, skills and the workforce required to deliver future services.

Managers find that budget uncertainties impact on staff planning and the ability to recruit.

Current workforce demographics are a concern in several areas.

Workforce Planning – Recruitment

Managers find the recruitment process to be challenging when filling gaps within their structure. This is particularly acute during periods where vacancy controls /recruitment freeze apply.

Managers identify challenges to filling some posts due to lack of suitable applicants and skills shortage in the local area.

Workforce Planning – Data

Many managers use workforce data such as absence records, ERD's, and training records. Managers may also use service/team related workload monitoring (capital plan, case load management) and performance monitoring.

There appears to be inconsistency in the availability and use of workforce planning data. Some managers reported that they receive or have ready access to workforce data on a daily or monthly basis. Others reported that they use their own management records held locally. Different levels of managers require different levels of data.

Key data gaps identified by managers are: team demographics, performance monitoring, and financial and operational cost reporting in relation to staffing.

Managers would like improved training and guidance on systems to understand what information they should be monitoring/updating, and on exercising their HR responsibilities.

Managers would like an improved or more efficient IT system(s) for workforce/ team data, ideally a single / integrated system that incorporates most/if not all workforce data including timesheets and annual leave.

Workforce Planning – Future

Managers would welcome clear guidance on the extent of delegated powers and discretion on what changes they can make to their team and more time to think strategically about workforce planning.

Managers identified a lack of opportunities/career development as an issue for many staff. At present managers find it difficult to balance the desire to allow training and development opportunities for staff with challenging workload / operational demands.

A lack of career paths / career opportunities can affect our ability to recruit and retain suitably qualified staff in some Services.