

Scrutiny and Overview scoping – Organisational Development Strategy

Proposed item for Scrutiny

Organisational Development Strategy

Service area - Human Resources

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Simon Edwards

Officer support – Susan Gardner-Craig, Human Resources Manager.

Background

The Organisational Development Strategy was included as a priority for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its training session held in January 2014. Four members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee met on 5 March 2014 and identified the following areas of interest relating to Organisational Development:

- How training need is addressed/established and delivered (on both an individual basis and as an organisation)
- How the effectiveness of training is monitored;
- What best practice looked like at other Councils;
- The Council's approach to succession planning;
- The Council's approach to mentoring and coaching;
- The Council's approach to staff rewards and recognition.

These Members met with the Human Resources Manager, Susan Gardner-Craig on 20 March 2014, to discuss these areas of interest, gather information and identify any next steps.

The HR Manager is undertaking work to update the Organisational Development Strategy, specifically the Action Plan which was set up in September 2011. Once updated, it will be presented at the relevant Portfolio Holder's meeting. Value could be added by Scrutiny Members reviewing this Action Plan.

Meeting with HR Manager, 20 March 2014

Cllrs Lynda Harford, Bridget Smith, Kevin Cuffley and Roger Hickford met with Susan Gardner-Craig (HR Manager) on 20 March 2014, to discuss and gather information around the areas of interest listed above:

Training needs, delivery and monitoring of effectiveness:

- Training and learning needs are looked at on an individual basis via Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) with Line Managers, which take place in April and October each year. The PDR process has been reviewed and new forms developed to help facilitate useful and effective reviews. The new forms look at what has been achieved and how achievements have been made, objectives are reviewed and set, management support and training needs are discussed and identified and a learning and development plan produced.

- Line Managers are equipped with the skills required to conduct effective PDRs with their staff through the performance review workshops for Managers and the Leadership Development Programme which has modules designed to develop these skills for line managers. Around 60 Line Managers have been on the Leadership Development Programme. The training is being provided by an external trainer.
- Those being appraised attend half day sessions to equip them with the skills to get the most out of the PDR process.
- Once identified by individuals with their Line Manager, learning needs are brought to HR's attention. From this, HR identify any corporate training needs and organise relevant corporate training courses – for example this year, letter and report writing has been corporate training. HR also identifies any potential needs by considering any upcoming issues for the Council which may require up-skilling of staff, or issues which may arise with the introduction of new legislation.
- Individual training requests are considered by EMT. EMT considers whether supporting the training would add value to the organisation. Last year, ten training requests were submitted, all of which were approved. This represented some high level qualifications requiring attendance at university/college and equated to a cost of around £30,000. The number of requests and cost this represents varies from year to year.
- Individuals being supported by the organisation to undertake significant training are required to sign a training agreement, whereby the cost of the training must be paid back if the staff member leaves the organisation within a certain time on completion of the training.
- The effectiveness of training is monitored via the PDR process and outcomes monitoring within individual service areas.

Effectiveness of Line Management

- The effectiveness of Line Managers is monitored via:
 - A grandfathering process for quality assurance of PDRs, whereby the PDR forms are reviewed by the Line Manager's Line Manager.
 - Staff surveys temperature check the organisation and identify where there may be dissatisfaction with a Line Manager.
- There is evidence from the staff survey and reviews that the Human Resources Manager has carried out, that the PDR process is improving across the organisation.

Mentoring and coaching

- The organisation wants to use more coaching and is joining the Regional Coaching Pool. In order to join, at least two fully qualified coaches are needed within the organisation. Jean Hunter is a qualified coach and Susan Gardner-Craig is undertaking the training at the moment. A Coaching Skills Programme is being put together at the moment in order

to train around 12 further coaches. Once a member of the Regional Coaching Pool, coaches can be borrowed from the pool by the organisation and the resource paid back by providing coaches to other organisations. The organisation currently buys in coaching when needed, which is costly. This cost will be reduced by joining the Regional Coaching Pool.

- There is no formal buddying programme for new staff. This is an area to be explored further by HR.

Recruitment and retention of staff

- The organisation recognises the importance of training and up-skilling, in order to retain good quality staff.
- Recruitment and retention of staff has become an issue in some service areas, particularly in Planning. Where Planning is concerned, this is not a unique problem to SCDC with Local Authorities across the UK struggling to recruit Planning Officers. There is currently a national shortage of Planning Officers and many are leaving the public sector for the commercial sector, where salaries are higher.

Rewards and recognition

- Job evaluation was carried out two years ago across the organisation and the end of the pay protection period is approaching, with 68 staff members losing pay in April 2014.
- Much has been done over the last two years in order to support staff members following job evaluation, such as with learning opportunities and secondments. This will continue.
- Staff achievements are recognised through awarding with the 'Going the Extra Mile' award. This provides recognition across the organisation of an individual's outstanding work.
- The organisation subscribes to the staff benefits scheme 'Perkz' . This gives staff members access to discounts on holidays, shopping, cinema etc.
- Market supplements to salaries can be paid where justified. If there have been two failed attempts to recruit to a post, salary levels can be compared to salaries for the equivalent post elsewhere in the market. If it is proven that the salary offered by the organisation is out of kilter with that offered across the market, a market supplement can be applied to the post for a year. This is reviewed after a year and can be extended if it is proven the action is justified.
- A relocation scheme is available for new staff members.
- Planners have been offered training to gain Royal Institute of Town Planning qualifications.
- The Planning Department has a 'career planner' whereby planners will work in different areas of the department, thereby gaining an understanding of the whole service area.

Apprenticeships

- Links with local colleges and schools are being established.
- Apprenticeships are available for the 16+ and 18+ age groups.
- The organisation currently has three apprenticeships and it is believed further apprenticeships could be supported in the following service areas:
 - Accountancy
 - Revenues and benefits
 - IT
- Contact Centre and Customer Service apprenticeships may also be options.
- An NVQ for current Contact Centre staff, subject to a training agreement retaining staff for two years following training, may also be an option.

Workforce planning

- Each service area looks at their service plan and determines the number of staff required in order to deliver that service.

Member training

- Members need to think about what issues are coming their way and what decisions they will be making, and consider what would enable them to be in a better position to make these decisions (such as workshops with Directors of relevant service areas).
- Succession planning needs to be looked at within individual groups.
- More advanced training is needed. There tends to be too much focus on basic training.
- It would be useful for Members to be able to participate in Officer training. Some trials of this will be undertaken, inviting Members to join officer training, such as IT training. This would be a good use of the training resource, covering more with the corporate training budget. John Garnham will be providing some risk management training in the near future, which could also be extended to Members.
- Training on Member/Officer relations should be reinstated if possible.
- The expertise of Members could be tapped into, with Members providing training to Officers and other Members around their areas of expertise.

Next steps:

- The HR Manager will update the Organisational Strategy's Action Plan. Once drafted, Scrutiny will review this.
- Apprenticeships to be explored further. It was suggested that Members could spend some time with an apprentice.