

**Calderdale MBC**

**Wards Affected      All**

**Cabinet                      7 August 2023**



## **Adoption of the Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan**

### **Report of the Interim Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the Workforce Strategy and the Delivery Plan and to consider whether the Council will support the adoption and implementation of this.

#### **2. Need for a decision**

- 2.1 Should Cabinet support the proposal outlined in this note, then the Workforce Strategy would go to Full Council for sign off as it is not within officers' delegation.
- 2.2 As we reset, refocus, and build back stronger following the pandemic we need to ensure our approach fully reflects the challenging times ahead with regard to flexibility of staff and the difficulties we have in recruiting and selecting people within the public sector. With external support we have developed the Workforce Strategy which will ensure the Council is fully prepared for the next 5-10 years to ensure our workforce is able to deliver the Council's Vision and priorities. We need to build leadership and management capacity supported by a flexible, agile, and motivated workforce that's able to respond quickly to the changing nature of public sector, local Place based challenges and staffing shortages in certain professions.
- 2.3 Achieving equity at the Council is driven by equality legislation and the moral and ethical reasons around ensuring fairness. There are also clear business benefits of having a diverse and equitable workforce. This strengthens our support for communities, helps our workforce to understand our communities (70% of our workforce are also residents of the borough) and helps our communities access our services. The Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan gives us a clear framework to support and advance the equality agenda and progress actions to address disparities. The Strategy also enables us to embed equity into our core curriculum, 'Our people will be able to bring their whole self to work, because their voice is as important as anyone's'.
- 2.4 Councillors are asked to note the intense pressure and difficulties the Council is facing with regard to recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce during challenging times. We continue to strive to attract and retain a diverse workforce that is representative of the communities that we serve. We know that embracing difference enhances the capability of the Council and the value of the skills and perspective that a diverse talent pool will bring to the workplace and the value this will add to the services we deliver. This builds upon recommendations from the 'Buying Our Care' March 2023 report. The workforce of the future is being developed as part of the work we are doing with the People Board.

- 2.5 The Workforce Strategy will be the framework by which the Council continues to be a great place to work and an inclusive employer of choice. Calderdale is a fabulous place to live and work and we listen to the voices of our staff and communities. We are committed to equity, justice and kindness and provide an environment where all staff can bring their whole selves to work. We want to retain our talent within the borough, by ensuring the Council has fabulous opportunities for Apprenticeships, care leaver opportunities, Graduate programmes and skills development and career pathways for all to enable growth and development and harnessing the talent of our population. Employing a skilful, imaginative and creative workforce for all our communities is fundamental to our vision for place and in line with the Council's priorities and objectives.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council that:

The Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan be adopted.

## 4. Background

- 4.1 In Autumn 2022, we engaged an Organisational Development specialist to help the Council develop a Workforce Strategy fit for the future. With this external support we have developed a Workforce Strategy to ensure the Council continues to be a great place to work and an inclusive employer of choice. Following Cabinet in August 2023, the Strategy and Delivery Plan is planned to go to Governance and Business Committee in September 2023.
- 4.2 As we reset and refocus we need to ensure our approach fully reflects the challenging times ahead with regard to flexibility of staff and the increasing difficulties we have in recruiting and selecting people within the public sector. The Workforce Strategy will ensure the Council is fully prepared for the next 5-10 years to ensure our workforce is able to deliver the Council's Vision and priorities. We need to build strong leadership and management capacity supported by a flexible, agile, and motivated workforce that is able to respond quickly to the changing nature of public sector, local Place based challenges and staffing shortages in certain professions.
- 4.3 There continue to be significant changes in the labour market largely brought about by the ongoing effects of the pandemic and the recovery and reset that has been taking place over the last two years. This has impacted on organisations throughout the UK and has meant that the market has seen a record number of vacancies and yet the supply of candidates is increasingly restricted for a number of reasons contributing to a highly competitive market.
- 4.4 One reason for the highly competitive labour market is that a low unemployment rate means fewer people are available and looking for work. Another key reason is that there are fewer people in the labour market than before the pandemic and much of this is due to the early exit from the labour market by older workers. A third reason is that employers are trying their hardest not to lose staff. The official redundancy rate is at a record low, and forward-looking redundancy intentions are below pre-pandemic levels. Retention is therefore seen as being equally as critical as recruitment in enabling organisations to manage and retain their workforce.
- 4.5 We continue to have 'difficult to fill' posts in line with the local, regional and national landscape e.g. Social Workers, Solicitors, Occupational Therapists and more recently Social Care jobs have become hard to recruit to. We are also noticing an increase in other jobs that have traditionally not been a problem recruiting to and we know the salary levels within the Council are lower than other neighbouring authorities.
- 4.6 Employers are looking for creative and alternative ways to drive recruitment and retention. Many are adopting the most obvious strategy of increasing salaries for new appointments and the existing workforce. However, with the current high levels of UK inflation, this means that most people will be looking at a real-terms pay cut in 2023. In addition, organisations are advertising more jobs as flexible and are looking at opportunities to upskill existing staff.
- 4.7 From the Buying Our Care report March 2023 one of the recommendations was that the Council's revised Workforce Strategy should address the need for the Council's workforce to be more diverse and representative of the communities it serves. It recommended that a report on actions proposed should be presented to the AHSC Scrutiny Board by July 2023 and a further report presented to the Scrutiny Board in March 2024 on improvements achieved through the Workforce Strategy.

- 4.8 The Council has a positive attitude to staff and team development which forms a solid basis for taking forward learning arising from the issues raised in *Buying our Care*, particularly around cultural competency. Opportunities for cross learning across the Council, in particular involving Adult Services and Wellbeing Directorate, Children and Young People's Services Directorate and the Safeguarding Team should continue to be taken and advanced. Learning from outside the organisation should continue to play an important part in testing our own practice. It is important that we have the right staff in the right roles and with the right skills to support and deliver this work.
- 4.9 In the past couple of years, because of the changing mindset/attitudes in a challenging pandemic and people readjusting their priorities and mindset, we are having to work harder and be more creative in our campaigns to recruit as the market reacts to the demand and increase in salaries.
- 4.10 We know that pay is only one aspect of what attracts people into jobs. The CIPD's definition of Good Work<sup>1</sup>.

Good Work:

- Is fairly rewarded.
  - Gives people the means to securely make a living.
  - Gives opportunities to develop skills and a career and gives a sense of fulfilment.
  - Provides a supportive environment with constructive relationships.
  - Allows for work–life balance.
  - Is physically and mentally healthy for people.
  - Gives people the voice and choice they need to shape their working lives.
  - Should be accessible to all.
  - Is affected by a range of factors, including HR practices, the quality of people management and by workers themselves.
- 4.11 We want to retain our talent within the borough, where possible, by ensuring the Council has fabulous opportunities for growth and development, harnessing the talent of our population. Employing a skilful, imaginative and creative workforce for all our communities is fundamental to our vision for place and in line with the Council's priorities and objectives.
- 4.12 We intend to market our services using our existing workforce to talk about their own experience of working in the public sector, sharing their stories and promoting the great opportunities available to develop their career and also to talk about the flexible modern facilities that our workforce enjoy. We are working in collaboration with other providers to work and support each other to grow our own talent and create clear pathways to retain staff who are ambitious and want to grow.
- 4.13 **Our Vision** for Calderdale in 2024 is to be a place where you can realise your potential whoever you are, whether your voice has been heard or unheard in the past. A place where **talent** and **enterprise** can thrive. A place defined by our innate **kindness** and **resilience**, how people care for each other, are able to recover from setbacks, are full of hope. Calderdale will stand out, be known, and be **distinctive**. A great place to visit, but most importantly, **a place to live a larger life**.

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<sup>1</sup> [CIPD Good Work Index 2022: survey report](#)

- 4.14 Our workforce strategy sets out our aspirations for our workforce over the next five to ten years to deliver the Council's priorities. It recognises that whilst we need to take some actions in the short term, the workforce challenges we face can only be addressed by medium and long term vision with clear strategic intent.
- 4.15 The Delivery Plan underpins the Workforce Strategy with a prioritised programme of actions to meet challenges around workforce planning, recruitment and retention, review of pay and benefits/reward and employee engagement, equity and improve employee relations. Each of the six Themes identified in the Delivery Plan has a Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) member as Lead, together with identified Human Resources and Organisational Development Lead officers. This ensures a level of commitment and accountability.

**1. Culture, Values & the Council Deal**

'We will have a culture that people are proud of and that everyone feels ownership and responsibility for maintaining'

**2. Work & Performance Improvement**

'Our people will be given the direction, trust, empowerment, and support to do the right things to help deliver Calderdale Council's purpose'

**3. Talent, Learning & Development**

'Our people will have the opportunity to grow and develop their career as far as they want to go to deliver Calderdale Council's purpose'

**4. Reward & Recognition**

'Our people will be recognised and rewarded for doing the right things to deliver Calderdale Council's purpose'

**5. Leadership**

'We will be led by people who are passionate about Calderdale Council's purpose and are committed to helping people maximise their potential'

**6. Equity**

'Our people will be able to bring their whole self to work, because their voice is as important as anyone's'

- 4.16 We have established forms of engagement with our staff including the Employee Reference Group, and networks for our staff communities of interest to reflect our commitment to Equalities and Inclusion including our Staff Race Equality Network, Disability Network and LGBTQ+ Network. The chairs are key to our strategic work and forums and the Networks will continue to be encouraged and supported to evolve and strengthen as their involvement and engagement increases.
- 4.17 We have excellent officer and Member relations with mutual respect, trust, passion, strong leadership and genuine goodwill and commitment to Calderdale.

**5. Options considered**

- 5.1 To adopt the Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan and ensure commitment to achieving this – this supports one of the 3 corporate priorities on tackling inequality and sends out a clear message to the organisation and to the Borough about the

importance of this. This would require performance monitoring against the delivery plan and the Transformation Board and People Board will monitor progress.

- 5.2 To not adopt Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan – this would not be in line with the Corporate ambition and vision and there would be risks in non-adoption ie this would mean we are unable to meet and deliver on the Council's priorities. Our workforce strategy sets out our aspirations for our workforce over the next five to ten years to deliver the Council's priorities. It recognises that whilst we need to take some actions in the short term, the workforce challenges we face can only be addressed by medium and long term vision with clear strategic intent.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 The cost of the Workforce Strategy cannot be fully evaluated until the further work planned over the course of the next year is carried out. A key part of this (and one that may contain the greatest financial implications) will be the benchmarking of the Council's pay against the market prior to a new, more competitive grading structure being developed and agreed by April 2024.
- 6.2 It is anecdotally recognised that salary levels at Calderdale are lower than neighbouring authorities so it is likely that the Council's pay bill will rise as a result of this review (unless some of our jobs are currently found to pay more than the market). Potentially reducing any additional cost though might be an increased pipeline of better paid diverse talent (especially graduates and apprentices) resulting in more internal promotions and secondments and the lower use of expensive agency and temporary workers.
- 6.3 There may also be some scope to fund the other potential costs highlighted by the report (e.g. establishing a fully funded and structured graduate and apprenticeship programme) through cost efficiencies such as the introduction of the new HR Payroll system and re-prioritisation of training budgets.
- 6.4 If costs however cannot be contained within existing budgets or the anticipated savings flowing from the strategy are insufficient, then savings will need to be brought forward by directorates as part of the MTFS/budget setting process.

## **7. Legal Implications**

### **7.1 Public Sector Equality**

We have a duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

- 7.3 Adopting the Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan will support the Council to increase the progress it makes towards the [Corporate Equality Objectives](#)

7.4 Further to this, the implementation of the Workforce Strategy will support the Council to mitigate the following risks:

- Failure to meet Public Sector duty under the Equalities Act 2010.
- Failure to attract and retain diverse talent, Calderdale's workforce will remain underrepresented, and disparities not addressed.
- Discriminatory practice/unconscious bias will go unchecked leading to a breach in Equalities legislation and public sector duty.
- Services provided to communities will be provided by a workforce lacking understanding of equality/diversity and inclusion breaching equalities legislation.

## **8. Human Resources and Organisation Development Implications**

8.1 The Workforce Strategy focuses the organisation on six key themes, one of which is Equity and designed to challenge inequality in the workplace, improving life for staff and therefore the services they provide to the public.

8.2 It includes championing a racially diverse workforce, having a clear focus and programme of initiatives and providing equality training for all staff. This is a key strand of the Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan and will be incorporated into the Organisational Development programme.

8.3 There are no initial additional staffing implications arising from this report. It is anticipated that any resource requirements associated with the implementation of the Workforce Strategy will be met from existing resources. Where existing capacity is not sufficient or additional external expertise is required for the workstreams then appropriate authorisations will be sought and this links back to the Financial Implications outlined above.

## **9. Consultation**

9.1 The development of the Workforce Strategy was carried out in conjunction with and following consultation with a range of stakeholders and the Staff Networks will be further involved in the implementation of this. The Race Equality (formally BAME) Steering Group have played a significant role in identifying disparities and areas of focus for the Council and work collaboratively with HR/OD to progress actions.

## **10. Environment, Health and Economic Implications**

10.1 The Council's workforce is instrumental in supporting the people's wellbeing, environment and economy. In order to do this effectively our workforce needs to be reflective of local communities and have the necessary skills, values and behaviours to deliver the Council's priorities and functions. The goals of our Workforce Strategy address the key determinants of workplace health and wellbeing, including good leadership and management, appropriate reward and recognition, opportunities to learn and fairness and equity.

10.2 Diversity and inclusion are always a priority for the Council. Work has stepped up to tackle inequality. The Vision aims to realise the potential to make the borough's five key qualities (enterprising, talented, kind, resilient and distinctive) mean something for all communities, regardless of who they are and the Workforce Strategy will

support in the achievement of this – complementing the Cabinet priorities of equality, climate change and strong, thriving towns and places.

## 11. Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 The Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan which incorporates six key themes including Equity represents the progression of our ongoing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as a Council, and our goal to create a fairer and more equal society.
- 11.2 We want to ensure our policies, processes, and organisational culture celebrate and champion the diversity of our whole workforce.
- 11.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

## 12. Summary and Recommendations

- 12.1 As we reset and refocus we need to ensure our approach fully reflects the challenging times ahead with regard to flexibility of staff and the increasing difficulties we have in recruiting and selecting people within the public sector. The Workforce Strategy will ensure the Council is fully prepared for the next 5-10 years to ensure our workforce is able to deliver the Council's Vision and priorities. We need to build strong leadership and management capacity supported by a flexible, agile, and motivated workforce that is able to respond quickly to the changing nature of public sector, local Place based challenges and staffing shortages in certain professions.
- 12.2 **Our Vision** for Calderdale in 2024 is to be a place where you can realise your potential whoever you are, whether your voice has been heard or unheard in the past. A place where ***talent*** and ***enterprise*** can thrive. A place defined by our innate ***kindness*** and ***resilience***, how people care for each other, are able to recover from setbacks, are full of hope. Calderdale will stand out, be known, and be ***distinctive***. A great place to visit, but most importantly, ***a place to live a larger life.***
- 12.3 Our Workforce Strategy sets out our aspirations for our workforce over the next five to ten years to deliver the Council's priorities and to demonstrate our values and commitment to equity, justice and kindness. It recognises that whilst we need to take some actions in the short term, the workforce challenges we face can only be addressed by medium and long term vision with clear strategic intent.
- 12.4 The Delivery Plan underpins the Workforce Strategy with a prioritised programme of actions to meet challenges around workforce planning, recruitment and retention, review of pay and benefits/reward and employee engagement, equity and improve employee relations.
- 12.5 This report seeks to gain support for the adoption and implementation of the Workforce Strategy and Delivery Plan.

**For further information on this report, contact:**

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**The documents used in the preparation of this report are:**

1.    Workforce Strategy
2.    Workforce Strategy Delivery Plan
3.    Equality Impact Assessment
4.    [CIPD Good Work Index 2022: survey report](#)

**The documents are available for inspection at:**

Halifax Town Hall, Crossley Street, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 1UJ