

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer – People & Technology****Corporate Services Committee: 17 August 2022**

Subject: WDC ‘People First’ Strategy**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the proposed ‘people’ route to support delivery of the Council’s ambitious strategic plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note:

The new ‘People First’ Strategy which puts people at the centre of council transformation.

3. Background

- 3.1 Since the last Strategic Plan, there have been a number of strategies implemented covering areas, such as wellbeing, workforce planning, learning and development, employee engagement and digital transformation.
- 3.2 Progress has been made across all areas, ensuring we have built strong foundations and infrastructure, such as:
- Wellbeing – This has been a key focus and has been given greater visibility to create an open and supportive culture, with great success with employees more open in both discussing and seeking help particularly with mental health. A peer network of wellbeing advocates and supporting managers has been created allowing a better understanding of areas for improvement such as adding and improving a number of supports/policies for employees, leading to improved attendance.
 - Workforce planning – Data is key and giving managers access to their team demographics was vital. To do this a console was developed allowing managers real time access to their people data, displaying the data in a user friendly way. This was designed in house and delivered helping to improve informed decision making alongside incorporating workforce planning with the service planning cycle.
 - Learning & Development – The pandemic saw a substantial increase in usage of the I-learn platform and completion of modules and this has

remained high with quality products available to all. The introduction of additional leadership development opportunities has ensured that leaders at all stages in their career have access to quality development opportunities. WDC have committed to a Trade Union Learning Agreement and the collaboration here has seen increased and TU funded opportunities for employees.

- Employee Engagement –The council wide rollout of Trickle as a key engagement tool has allowed front line employees to raise issues and access information via an App on their phone. WDC have also undertaken a workforce exercise reviewing workstyles, to ensure effective delivery whilst supporting the workforce through a pandemic.
- Digital Transformation – To introduce a holistic approach to transformation, Fit for Future Reviews were introduced. This involves taking subject matter experts into services and undertaking a critical review of all aspects using a service design approach which is putting users at the centre of the review. The review looks at various areas of the service such as HR, online presence, process improvement and data. Alongside this ongoing work to improve digital skills continues, and building capacity in using a service design approach and other supportive skills such as PM, change and LEAN skills. WDC has also undergone maturity assessments in relation to both digital and data and the findings from these are being used to inform the way forward.

3.3 Over the last five years, the team have been building the infrastructure and growing the capacity and capability required to enable an ambitious organisation to deliver; focusing on skills, processes, supportive tools and policies. All these support a people first ethos and ensure this is role modelled council wide. Moving forward the team will focus on ensuring that our people have the opportunity to use the infrastructure detailed above to drive forward their services to maximise the opportunities and potential they can unlock. This will build and reinforce a holistic people first approach as there is overlap and similarities across the areas above.

3.4 This paper sets out the next steps and this will involve bringing all the above strategies, detailed at para 3.1, together under one umbrella strategy ensuring a holistic strengthening of “People First” to enable a joined up, collaborative approach to progressing each of the areas, delivering business as usual whilst combining efforts, specialist knowledge and resources to deliver some focused and radical changes aligned to the employee cycle.

4. Main Issues

4.1 The new ‘People First’ Strategy rationalises a number of strategies, making them more visual and accessible to improve understanding and encourage engagement. It creates opportunities for collaboration, improved support for employees, drives digital skills adoption and

improvements across services for our citizens and employees. It looks to create space for innovation, creativity and a focus to drive, role model and encourage change that only people can deliver.

- 4.2** It is proposed that, under the new 'People First' Strategy, each area (detailed above at para 3.1) will have a clear plan and commitment on delivery of key strategic aims, which are linked to the service delivery plan for each of the strands (Appendix 1).
- 4.3** In addition, there will be an ambitious improvement cycle. Drawing on areas of expertise, collaborating to ensure there is diversity of thought and bringing together differing views/perspectives to widen the lens in order to enrich the end result. This will maximise our ability to identify otherwise missed opportunities and lead to more impactful and focused improvements, leading to better outcomes for employees, users and citizens (Appendix 2).
- 4.4** There are five areas of the employee cycle, these are recruitment, on-boarding, development, retention and recognition and one of these areas will be targeted each year, as the transformation topic. Each will have a lead manager who will ensure visibility and monitor progress. This concentrated improvement focus will enhance the day to day activity detailed in Appendix 1 and is in addition to and will strengthen the yearly progress in the areas identified.
- 4.5** There are several supporting frameworks that have been in place for many years and these will require to be updated to support the 'People First' Strategy such as:
 - ACHIEVE framework;
 - People Management framework;
 - Influential Leaders Framework; and the
 - Leadership Model.
- 4.6** The above list is not exhaustive and the review will include the integration of modern leadership with digital skills. The intention is to make the aim/strategy and supporting frameworks simple, visual and easily accessible to improve understanding, further development awareness and encourage usage. Using the strategy as a reference point for ethical leadership, encouraging services as change and transformation is undertaken in their own areas, they will use the 'People First' strategy as the standard test.
- 4.7** The benefit of joining the five strategies and creating an opportunity for the subject matter experts to simplify these, combine their effort and skills simultaneously, will lead to a more focused approach and improve impact and understanding. Collaboration is essential and encouraged, removing waste and duplication and sharing best practice council wide.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** The aim and intention of the new strategy is to be ambitious, helping clarify the people first culture the organisation has been building and seeks to exemplify as a major employer. In addition, it aligns similar areas and ensures impact can be maximized, with tight resource, whilst simplifying the range of supporting documents and plans to allow improved understanding and accountability thus ensuring People & Change are better equipped to deliver excellent services in the future.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications at this stage however it should be recognised that employees who feel valued, engaged, well supported, have access to flexibility, a range of excellent supports and people centred policies demonstrate improved productivity, cope better with change, have better attendance and this has a positive impact both in attracting new recruits and retaining employees.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There is a strategic risk for workforce and this is managed via the strategic risk register.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** EIA completed (519), no issues identified.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** While this is a new overarching strategy, it captures work already subject of consultation with stakeholders including our Trades Unions. The strategy has been shared with our Trade Unions at the Convenors meeting 28 July.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The proposals outlined in this report directly contribute to strategic priorities by ensuring that our employees have appropriate opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, keeping up to date with current methodologies and ensuring that they are fully equipped to meet the future demands of delivering services.

Name: Victoria Rogers

Designation: Chief Officer, People & Technology

Date: 20th July 2022

Person to Contact: Alison McBride Strategic People & Change Lead

[Alison. McBride2@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.McBride2@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

Appendices: Appendix 1 – WDC Key Priorities
Appendix 2 – People First - 5 Year Improvement Plan

Background Papers: N/A

Wards Affected: N/A