

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 27 September 2022

Statement from: Councillor R D Butroid – Executive Councillor for People Management, Legal and Corporate Property

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Attraction and Retention Framework

The main area of focus at the present time is the County Council's ability to manage the challenges around attraction and retention. Following the introduction of a new Attraction and Retention Framework, services are making use of the short, medium, and long-term solutions available to them to improve their attraction and retention of staff.

Short term solutions we have implemented include making it easier for people to apply by using CVs in place of application forms and streamlining the process from advert to selection to make it quicker; for example taking one reference instead of two (excluding safeguarding posts) and closing adverts earlier than the closing date when we have sufficient suitable candidates. We have developed a welcome pack which is due for launch imminently, and in the autumn, we will launch our updated recruitment pages on the corporate website.

From a retention perspective we are introducing 'stay interviews' and updating the exit interview process. Longer term solutions include shortening recruitment processes further with efficient policy driven processes; including agency to permanent, temporary to permanent, student placements, relief workers, fixed term, secondment to permanent recruitment; as well as recruitment and retention incentive payments and additional apprenticeship posts through our 'Grow our Own' model. This has recently seen the Council commit to a significant investment in Trainee Social Workers, with fifteen individuals commencing training from September 2022 with the aspiration to match this year on year for the next three years.

Apprenticeships

As of 1st August 2022, the total number of apprentices was 300 on role, which is an increase from 262 as of 1 January 2022. 72% of the apprenticeship training provision is being delivered by local providers. The Council is supporting 20 apprentices through the levy transfer scheme currently and the priority groups for our next levy transfer offer is under consideration.

Health and Wellbeing

Support for employee mental health remains a priority. We are monitoring the use of the new mental health first aider provision which launched in October 2021. There have been 21 contacts to the service with 86% of cases due to personal and 14% due to work issues. We are continuing to run resilience workshops which have been attended by 800 employees and managers so far.

In addition to their usual service, the Employee Support and Counselling Team are providing 'wellbeing check-ins' for staff and are developing peer support groups to help colleagues experiencing grief and loss which will go live once specialist training is completed. There is a new offer of assessment, priority referral to mainstream services and trauma support from specialist mental health practitioners as part of their offer to the Lincolnshire Health and Social Care system.

Following the One You Lincolnshire fitness challenge, employees have had the opportunity to sign up for a Health MOT trial to access advice and support to help them develop healthy habits and make positive lifestyle changes. 21 employees took part in the six-week trial. We are reviewing the feedback as the low take up suggests it may not be something there is a need for. Greater numbers have attended the One You Lincolnshire webinars that we have promoted, which cover health improvement and the free range of services available to support people to keep fit and active. e.g. assistance with smoking cessation and weight management support.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

A new annual report is being developed covering the Council's statutory public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

This will include:

- The diversity characteristics of the Council's workforce.
- The diversity of applicants applying for and being successful in securing roles through recruitment.
- The impact of key policies including, disciplinary, capability and grievance.
- The profile of employees leaving the organisation.
- Activities which take place to support the engagement and inclusion of our employees.
- Responses to our employee survey and exit surveys.
- How the council engages with the communities of Lincolnshire.
- How council services and information is made accessible.

The report will identify actions to:

- Improve our understanding of the experiences of future and current employees.
- Improve the experience and inclusivity for all employees.
- Contribute to our aim to be an employer of choice.
- Contribute to our recruitment and retention strategy.

Culture and Leadership

The Council's programme of a culture and leadership diagnostic is now underway to assess the views of leaders and the workforce on the 'how we do things around here' test.

As part of the diagnostic of what the Council's culture is, over 70 employees have volunteered to form part of the Culture Change Team and are assisting with four workstreams:

- Interviews with senior leaders (including the Corporate Leadership Team).
- Focus groups with members of the workforce.
- A Leadership survey which is open to the whole workforce.
- An information dashboard.

The leadership survey is complete and the senior leader interviews and focus groups are currently taking place. The work will continue until the end of September 2022 with a report published by November 2022. The report will be shared with the Corporate Leadership Team and then the whole workforce.

This overall work will enable us to understand, for example, whether we are a learning organisation, how empowering are our leaders and how well they demonstrate distributed leadership to improve our agility and performance. This will inform what action we need to take as an organisation.

LEGAL

Recruitment

We have recently made two appointments to Lawyer posts in Child Care. Both successful candidates were existing trainee solicitors who had spent two years training with LSL. This is an excellent return on the time and effort invested in their training and the first step towards growing our own Child Care lawyers in the face of a national shortage and extreme competition for qualified candidates.

LEXCEL

On 11 and 12 August 2022 we underwent our annual two-day inspection of our compliance with the LEXCEL practice management standard. The inspection involved consideration of our processes and procedures, investigation of a number of our case files and interviews with a number of our lawyers and support staff. The result was outstanding with the inspector finding no areas where we did not comply with the practice standards. This is an unprecedented outcome for LSL and provides strong assurance that the processes and procedures underpinning our work are robust and embedded in our practice.

CORPORATE PROPERTY

Assistant Director of Corporate Property

A recruitment exercise is underway to find a permanent replacement for the current interim Assistant Director, with interviews taking place on 28 September 2022.

Land and Property Asset Management Plan

A draft was presented to the Corporate Leadership Team and Assistant Directors and further in-depth discussions are currently underway with directorates and members. The latest draft was presented to the Property Board in July and, following further internal consultation, will be progressed to the Executive.

Early Years Estate

This initiative was set up to support the suitability and sufficiency of the Early Years estate. There has been a successful bid for Greater Lincolnshire One Public Estate Opportunity Development Funding (GL OPE SDIP) for a feasibility study to inform the process. Consultants have now been appointed to carry out the works in the forthcoming months.

Central Lincoln Campus

Following a period of bedding in Smarter Working, a review of future working practices and any resultant specialist service or property needs is underway. In parallel to this, a property review will cover current and future operating costs; short, medium and long term condition issues. The requirement to decarbonise the estate by 2050, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)/accessibility, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and green travel plan will provide an options appraisal for the future of the Councils Lincoln based estate. Works commenced in July on essential repairs to the rear wall, with restriction on car park access to West Parade.

Avenue buildings – Newland campus

The buildings are ready to be being cleared and IT decommissioned. Marketing for disposal is imminent.

Registrars

Site visits have been carried out. New proposals have been worked up and are being considered as part of the Newlands Campus overview.

Fire & Rescue training Centre Waddington

We have agreed to acquire the site for the continued use by Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. Terms have been agreed and the key decision for purchase of the site was approved and is currently with legal colleagues for exchange and completion. As a result, an Options Appraisal with GL OPE SDIP funding for a Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) training facility on-site in the future has been approved by the Blue Light Steering Group. A briefing and site visit took place in August.

IVO Spalding

Notice has been served on the community group, to enable the property to be used as a Young People's Learning Provision (YPLP) base. Discussions with group and Adult Services have identified alternative bases for the multiple community group activities.

The Collection

Works are now complete on the roof and chiller replacement. Further improvements are being discussed with Culture.

The Archives

Roof replacement works have been completed, with only minor snags outstanding.

Property Services Contract

The existing Vinci contract is due to end in 2025. A report to the Commissioning Board has provided an update on the work being undertaken to review options. A final report on proposed procurement options is to be developed.

Horncastle Youth Centre

The Horncastle Youth Centre sale completed on 18th August. (£300k)