



Human Resources Strategy

2014 – 2018

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Introduction

1.1. Orkney Islands Council's Human Resources Strategy 2014-2018 recognises that people are at the heart of everything we do. Through the hard work, dedication and commitment of our employees, we deliver essential services for the people of Orkney. We seek to make a positive difference in many people's lives through a diverse workforce who help our young people grow and learn, care for our older and vulnerable people, and protect and develop our infrastructure and communities.

1.2. The Council, like other public sector organisations, continues to face a period of sustained challenge with reductions in public services funding. As demand for particular services increases, we need to deliver improving services with significantly less money.

1.3. Within this context, we are confident that our commitment to improvement combined with prudent financial management has prepared us well to meet the challenges ahead. However, our ability to continue as a successful organisation will again rely on the commitment and talent of our employees working together with elected members, partners and communities.

1.4. We will need to continue to investigate better ways of delivering services at lower cost. For our workforce, this means we will need to develop new skills and create capacity to lead and manage change and service redesign. Hence we intend progressing with a Change Programme which will support the Corporate Management Team in leading change and developing more efficient ways of working.

1.5. We will require our staff to adapt as we will be doing new things and delivering services in new ways. We may have fewer staff, although we will continue to be the largest employer in the County with a diverse workforce. We will investigate ways in which we can work more flexibly, including home and remote working.

1.6. Throughout the changes we need to make, the Council will endeavour to protect services and jobs.

1.7. All the Council has achieved and all it can be is supported by our employees - our skills, knowledge, experience, our drive, enthusiasm and commitment, our creativity and innovation and our leadership and management.

Aims and Objectives

2.1. The overall aim of our new Human Resources Strategy is about having the right people in the right place with the right skills to deliver the Council's key priorities as set out in the Council Plan 2013-2018. In doing so we must look to continually improve services and customer focus. However, the current climate means that our strategy must also now focus on how our employees will help achieve the modernisation and efficiencies that are required to meet the financial challenges and future service demand by 2018.

2.2. Our Human Resources Strategy identifies three key areas from which a number of actions will be produced in order to enable us to meet our overall aim, and support the Council achieve its key priorities:

1. Reshaping the workforce.

2. Flexibility and exploring new ways of working.

3. Enhancing capacity and improving performance.

This document seeks to set out in broad terms what we intend to do to meet these objectives in challenging times and how we intend to monitor progress towards our objectives.

1. Reshaping the workforce

Our objective is:

“To reshape our workforce so that we retain, recruit and develop people with the right skills, abilities and potential to deliver the Council priorities.”

Demand for Council services and financial pressures will drive efficiencies and service redesign which in turn determine our workforce requirements. As the Council modernises and transforms its services and ways of working at a time of a reduction in funding, the composition and size of our workforce may change. We recognise the importance of supporting staff through the changes ahead. We also recognise and value the important contribution our trade unions and staff can make and will consult them on workforce changes.

We will do this by:

- Embedding workforce planning within our everyday management activities to ensure our workforce is equipped to meet the medium and longer term changes in service demand.
- Using workforce planning to develop entry level jobs, career paths and succession planning in order to ensure we have the right people with the right skills and abilities and at the right time.
- Ensuring managers have access to effective advice and support for workforce planning, development and service transformation.
- Ensuring significant issues which affect our workforce are considered and planned strategically through increased and earlier involvement of the HR and Performance Service with Service Management Teams.
- Providing practical support for employees affected by organisational change.
- Equipping managers to deal with change and support employees through it.
- Providing a range of choices for our employees who may wish to work more flexibly, take career breaks, retire early or apply for voluntary redundancy.
- Preparing employees to take on new roles when their jobs change or are no longer required.
- Promoting the Council as an employer of choice so when necessary we are able to attract, appoint and retain the right people.
- Work with schools and Orkney College to promote the benefits of careers in key priority areas, e.g. Social Care, where service demands are set to increase and/or there are recruitment shortages.
- How will we measure our progress?
- By monitoring the levels of staffing and seeking to avoid or minimise the need for compulsory redundancy.
- By monitoring the number of employees who are successfully redeployed into alternative work.
- By monitoring Employee Survey results on key areas such as the percentage of employees who feel that they are well communicated to and kept appropriately involved in changes which affect them.

- By monitoring recruitment statistics to identify hard to fill posts, trends and applicant interest.

2. Flexibility and exploring new ways of working

Our objective is:

“To explore greater flexibility and new ways of working, within the constraints of service delivery requirements.”

With a flexible workforce who are willing to embrace new ways of working and are committed to continuous improvement, we will ensure that the Council can deliver more effective and efficient services. We can achieve this through investigating the use of more flexible working practices; keeping HR policies and procedures under regular review; and ensuring our HR processes and systems are efficient and effective. We also need to encourage and develop greater flexibility in our employees to be adaptable and be open to taking on new roles and tasks. We will consult our trade unions and our staff on workforce changes.

We will do this by:

- Investigating more flexible ways of working, including home and remote working practices.
- Regularly reviewing our HR policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet the business needs of the organisation.
- Streamlining HR processes in order to deliver efficiencies and improvement for both managers and employees.
- Developing and further integrating existing electronic systems and exploring full use of the technology and IT resources available to us.
- Considering the need for flexibility and adaptability when reviewing job descriptions and person specifications for roles.
- Encouraging a flexible attitude to work and a positive commitment to continuous improvement amongst our employees.
- Encouraging a greater awareness of how employees' job roles fit into the overall Council and Service Plan objectives.

How will we measure our progress?

- By monitoring and evaluating the progress of delivering more flexible working practices and what does and does not work for this Council.
- By monitoring the number of staff who are facilitated to adapt their working hours, locations, or are able to work remotely when appropriate.
- By monitoring the number of reviewed job descriptions and person specifications across all services.
- By our ability to increase the number of HR processes delivered electronically.

3. Enhancing Capacity and Improving Performance

Our objective is:

The continued contribution of our employees through the challenging times ahead is even more critical to our ability to sustain organisational performance. Our leadership and management development will seek to foster a high performing culture. With a strong focus on people and performance, our approach intends to maximise the potential for being a successful organisation both now and into the future.

We will do this by:

- Being clear on the Council vision and how each of us contributes to it.
- Reviewing and updating the Council's Employee Charter.
- Developing leadership at all levels in the organisation by rolling out a Leadership and Management Development Framework to our managers and expect them to apply their learning in the workplace.
- Embedding effective communication and consultation with our employees and our trade unions.
- Providing opportunities to engage all employees in the process of change and service improvement.
- Developing further means to enhance managers' skills in a consistent, thought out manner so they are equipped to handle difficult and sensitive issues and processes.
- Building capacity through investigating ways of providing greater corporate support, learning, coaching and knowledge transfer.
- Promoting and valuing equality and diversity.
- Ensuring we continue to focus on maximising employee attendance and supporting employees with health or other personal issues.
- Supporting employees' health, safety and wellbeing by reviewing and modernising the support provided by our Occupational Health Service.
- Reviewing our approach and policies on managing stress in the workplace.
- Promoting a strong public sector ethos amongst our employees and upholding the standards set out in the Employee Code of Conduct.
- Embedding a high performance culture through the full use of the Performance, Review and Development (PRD) Scheme and using that to inform both Corporate and Service training priorities.

How will we measure our progress?

- By monitoring employee relation trends and being responsive.
- By monitoring the participation levels in the Leadership and Management Framework.
- By monitoring manager attendance at HR briefing and training sessions.
- By continuing to monitor sickness absence rates, in particular in any Service areas where rates are above performance targets, and striving to reduce the level of absence.
- By continuing to monitor performance targets in relation to completion of PRD.

- By monitoring our Employee Survey results especially in key areas associated with fairness, treatment at work, views of management, provision of learning and development opportunities, and clarity on job purpose and role.

Implementing the Strategy

4.1. The strategy will be implemented by the Council through the combined efforts of the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Corporate Management Team, Managers, Employees and Trade Unions.

4.2. Specific actions resulting from the overall policy objectives outlined in the Strategy will be added to the relevant Service Plans as and when appropriate, and monitored through the existing performance management framework.

Review of the Strategy

5.1. The Corporate Management Team will review the Strategy on an annual basis to ensure that it is aligned to organisational requirements and is achieving the desired outcomes.