

NON EXEMPT

EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

Joint Human Resources Committee

13/09/18

Wellbeing Strategy

FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Portfolio: **Portfolio Holder for Organisational Development:**

Cllr Nick Drew

Cabinet Lead for Organisational Development:

Cllr Lulu Bowerman

Executive Director: Gill Kneller (Business and Commercial)

Key Decision: No

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Joint Human Resources Committee for approval and recommendation to Full Council at Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Joint Human Resources Committee is asked to recommend the Wellbeing Strategy for approval at Full Council at Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 One of the factors contributing to the delivery of high quality services to customers is a workforce which is capable of sustaining high performance. Employees work in challenging conditions on behalf of the Councils. An operating environment which is genuinely supportive of safety and wellbeing will enable employees to work at their best and remain productive. The Wellbeing Strategy aims to support in the provision of a workplace which balances the challenges staff encounter, with support from the Councils as the employers.

4.0 Additional Budgetary Implications

- 4.1 Costs arising from the implementation of the Wellbeing Strategy have been factored into the Organisational Development budget for 18/19 and will be reviewed further for future budget setting processes

5.0 Background and relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Directorate Business Plan/s

- 5.1 This Strategy has been developed in response to a number of sources of information/data which has been gathered in respect of wellbeing in the workplace. These sources of information include the following:
- a) Responses to a survey undertaken in January 2018 by a former employee for academic research purposes. This research indicated a fairly low level of engagement with the Councils as an employer, with workload and job insecurity being cited as reasons for seeking employment elsewhere. On the flip side, supportive working relationships, variety of work undertaken, and employee benefits were cited as reasons for wanting to remain with the Councils. Whilst the research was based on a sample size of 100, and there were some positives to highlight, it does still indicate that there may be engagement issues which need to be addressed.
 - b) Responses to a specific 'Stress Survey' based on the HSE stress management tool during 2017 indicated workload and demands as an issue for employees. Supportive working relationships were again identified as a strong positive theme from the survey results.
 - c) Health and Safety colleagues have noted an increase in requests for stress risk assessments by employees to be carried out. Whilst this indicates potentially a rise in stress amongst employees, it also indicates an increased willingness by staff to use in-house sources of support to manage their health.
- 5.2 Research undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development found that 37% of respondents (out of 1,021 organisations covering 4.6m employees) have experienced an increase in work related stress absences, with workload being the most common cause of stress. The research also found an increase in employers adopting formal wellbeing strategies, and specific mental health strategies (source: Health and Wellbeing at Work annual report 2 May 2018).
- 5.3 The Stevenson/Farmer research and report concluded that the UK faces a significant mental health challenge in the workplace, whilst also identifying 'green shoots of good practice' (source: The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers October 2017).

5.4 The Strategic HR and OD Business Plan for 2018-19 contains a measure which includes; increased productivity, retention of high performing staff, high levels of job satisfaction, reduced sickness rates and reduced turnover in key areas. The Wellbeing Strategy aims to support this outcome. The aim is to create a working environment which provides assistance for staff members who may need a higher level of support to perform at their best, as well as creating the right conditions to ensure staff who consistently work at their best can continue to do so.

6.0 Options considered and reasons for the recommendation

6.1 The development of an overarching Wellbeing Strategy (Appendix 1) was identified as a corporate requirement for reasons cited in 3.1 and section 5 above. In addition, the employee experience during recent months of large scale organisational change has highlighted the need for the Councils to have a cohesive approach to employee wellbeing. Prior to the development of the Strategy, the Councils' approach has separated Health and Safety actions from employee wellbeing interventions. Officers from Health and Safety and Strategic HR and OD disciplines have collaborated to develop a combined approach.

6.2 Examples of the benefits expected of this approach include;

- a) Stress risk assessments being undertaken with Capita HR Advisory support as an early intervention, to minimise or prevent stress related sickness absence;
- b) Improved data on mental health issues within the workforce through Mental Health First Aiders (anonymous reporting of approaches by staff to MHFA's)
- c) A wide range of external resources and support available to staff on the employee intranet
- d) Improved employee experience and employer branding

7.0 Resource Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

None to report

7.2 Human Resources Implications

The implementation of the Wellbeing Strategy aims to increase the health and wellbeing of the workforce, resulting in higher performance and reduced costs of absence/unproductive working time.

7.3 Other Resource Implication

Dedicated Officer resource is provided from within the Organisational Development function. Other Officers provide their time voluntarily, in agreement with their line manager.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1** The Councils have a legal duty to protect the health and safety of all employees. The Strategy aims to raise awareness that health and safety obligations and responsibilities are broader than just physical injury through 'slips, trips and falls' and workplace accidents.

9.0 Risks

- 9.1** Without a cohesive approach to employee wellbeing, there is a risk to Council performance through short and long term absences, costs of employee claims against the Council, and poor employer reputation.

10 Consultation

- 10.1** Consultation has taken place with the following stakeholder groups; Executive Board, UNISON, Joint Health and Safety Committee and Culture Change Champions.

11 Communication

- 11.1** A communications plan is in development to promote this Strategy. The plan covers existing members of staff and potential employees. In addition, as summary document of the Wellbeing Strategy has been created for staff members (Appendix 2).

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Draft Wellbeing Strategy
Appendix 2 – Draft Wellbeing Strategy Summary

Background Papers: please see references under 5.5 and 5.6

Agreed and signed off by:

Monitoring Officer: (date) 4 September 2018

S151 Officer: 20 August 2018

Portfolio Holder(s): (date)

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Appendix 1 – Wellbeing Strategy

EHDC and HBC Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2022

Statement

The Councils' employees deliver services to customers in a challenging operating environment whilst remaining highly professional and committed to meeting customer expectations. In recognition, the Council's aim at all times is to provide a workplace which supports the overall wellbeing of employees.

Introduction

The Councils recognise that a safe and healthy workforce is generated through a range of ongoing and related activities which attend to both the physical and emotional wellbeing of employees. For the purposes of this strategy, these are documented between two key activities;

- Work Environment
In-house actions which create and sustain a working culture where employee wellbeing is an organisational priority
- Wellbeing Support
Enabling actions which encourage employees to focus on their general health and wellbeing

Responsibility

The Head of Organisational Development is responsible for this strategy.

Monitoring and Review

The Joint Health & Safety Committee, in conjunction with Strategic HR and Organisational Development, is responsible for monitoring the wellbeing of employees. This document contains detailed action plans which will be reviewed by the Committee.

Reporting

The Joint Health & Safety Committee will appoint representatives to report on progress and outcomes of this strategy on a quarterly basis (or as required) to other stakeholders;

- Executive Board
- UNISON Branch Secretaries
- Joint Human Resources Committee
- Corporate Governance Board

Work Environment

The Councils currently undertake the actions below to support employee wellbeing;

- Trained in house coaches who are available to support all members of staff confidentially. Staff may seek coaching for work or non-work related matters;
- Training and development opportunities across a range of subjects. Professional and personal development in the workplace is important to ensure staff members feel confident in carrying out their job roles;
- Recognition of the Disability Confident Scheme, creating an accessible and inclusive recruitment process and work environment;
- An employee intranet which holds information dedicated to the welfare of members of staff;
- In house support for mediation which can be used confidentially to resolve difficulties in working relationships;
- Expert in-house Health and Safety Officers who are available for information and advice on a range of issues including workstation assessments and stress;
- Peer groups dedicated to supporting high levels of employee engagement and robust internal communications for the benefit of all members of staff;
- Dedicated Safety Champions in place with a clear remit which includes raising safety and wellbeing matters to senior leaders on behalf of members of staff as well as providing a confidential 'listening ear' for colleagues;
- Mental Health First Aiders across the Councils who have undertaken specific training in order to understand, recognise and provide support to colleagues experiencing or demonstrating emotional distress;
- Recognition of UNISON as the workplace union, which can provide specific welfare services to members;
- A formal structured appraisal process which includes monthly 1:1 discussions between employees and their line managers, during which members of staff can raise concerns about matters impacting upon their wellbeing;
- A corporate Grievance Procedure which enables employees to raise workplace related complaints;
- A flexi time scheme, and flexible working patterns, which enable the majority of staff members to work flexibly to accommodate personal commitments and work pattern preferences;
- A Staff Award scheme, which provides an opportunity for colleagues and managers to praise a member of staff for their efforts, and for the employee to receive an additional financial reward.

Wellbeing Support

The Councils provide the following support to enable and encourage members of staff to focus on their health and wellbeing;

- Employee Assistance Programme which is confidential and free for staff to access and use the services on offer, including information about health and wellbeing on the company's website;
- Discounts for leisure centres local to the Councils' offices;
- Free on site health checks with qualified experts, such as blood pressure and cholesterol;
- Free annual flu jabs;
- Vouchers for eye sight tests for users of display screen equipment;
- Self-assessment checklist for stress, to help staff identify any potential areas of work-related stress and seek support as a result;
- Social and sports events, which encourages building of relationships with colleagues away from the workplace;
- Volunteer leave scheme, providing staff with paid time off to support local causes;
- A range of discounts available for sports and leisure activities.

Commitment – the Councils

The Councils commit to providing a workplace which respects the wellbeing of all employees. In demonstrating this commitment, the Councils will;

1. Provide appropriate resources to deliver this strategy
2. Provide appropriate facilities and support to employees
3. Approach physical and mental health equally
4. Gather and act upon feedback from employees
5. Recognise workplace and personal influences on wellbeing
6. Engage with a range of internal stakeholders
7. Include wellbeing within organisational performance metrics
8. Incorporate HSE Indicators into service delivery processes
9. Utilise external sources of information and support
10. Review emerging trends and research into employee wellbeing

Further details of each area of commitment can be found in Appendix 1.

Commitment – employees

The Councils need the support of all employees to create a healthy and safe working environment. The Councils therefore ask the following commitment from employees;

1. Follow statutory and corporate health and safety procedures
2. Raise concerns about potential or actual physical or mental health issues
3. Provide feedback on wellbeing matters regularly
4. Make use of facilities and support offered by the Councils
5. Recognise the importance of personal wellbeing

Further information on how employees can support the Councils can be found in Appendix 2.

Measuring Success

The overall aim of this strategy is to create a working environment where a respect for wellbeing is the norm. The Councils' primary measure of success will be the perception by staff that a respect for wellbeing in the workplace exists and is taken seriously.

The Council will regularly undertake staff surveys on a range of wellbeing matters, to identify where changes and improvements can be made. This will be an ongoing arrangement to ensure the Councils can provide a positive, engaging and supportive workplace for each individual. Exit interviews will also be used to measure the impact of the Strategy.

In addition to seeking opinions of the wider workforce, the Councils will review all appropriate statistics. For example, sickness absence rates and reasons, absence related to mental health (work related and non-work related), reported accidents and near misses, and anonymised information from Safety Champions and Mental Health First Aiders in respect of approaches for support.

Appendix 1

Commitment: The Councils

Action	Detail	Timescale
Commitment 1 Provide appropriate resources to deliver this strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Dedicated Officer resource is made available to support the aims of the Strategy2) Financial resources are provided, where appropriate and necessary, to enable actions within this Strategy3) Volunteers from the Councils' workforce are able to work with dedicated Officers within their normal working time	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Ongoing2) Ongoing3) Ongoing
Commitment 2 Provide appropriate facilities and support to employees	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Rest areas are available within normal working hours for staff to use during breaks2) Employee surveys are conducted to assess usage of rest areas/canteen areas and source suggestions of additional workplace facilities3) Quiet working areas are provided and promoted4) Peer groups are available to staff to discuss wellbeing issues in confidence;5) Information on external organisations is available through the employee intranet6) Senior leaders role model a respect for their own health and wellbeing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Ongoing2) Annually3) Ongoing4) Ongoing5) Ongoing6) Ongoing

<p>Commitment 3</p> <p>Approach physical and mental health equally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Relevant policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure equal practice towards physical and mental health 2) Communications are planned to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the workplace 3) Return to Work interviews include mental wellbeing as standard 4) Formal and informal training is provided on overall wellbeing 5) Appraisal and regular one to one discussions include wellbeing as standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ongoing 2) Ongoing 3) Ongoing 4) Ongoing 5) Ongoing
<p>Commitment 4</p> <p>Gather and act upon feedback from employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Employee surveys are conducted on a regular basis to assess employee wellbeing 2) Wellbeing volunteers are able to informally gather feedback during their normal working duties 3) Feedback is reviewed against planned actions to establish appropriate areas of focus or changes of plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Quarterly 2) Ongoing 3) Quarterly
<p>Commitment 5</p> <p>Recognise workplace and personal influences on wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Line managers are aware of factors influencing wellbeing to manage workplace performance/issues accordingly 2) All employees are made aware of the range of influences which contribute to each person's sense of wellbeing through communications and training 3) Unfair treatment in the workplace is raised through communications specifically bullying and harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ongoing 2) Ongoing 3) Ongoing

<p>Commitment 6</p> <p>Engage with a range of internal stakeholders</p>	<p>Open discussions take place with internal stakeholders and dedicated Officers in order to review the success and impact of actions taken by the Councils, and to gather suggestions for future actions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Joint H&S Committee 2) UNISON 3) Executive Board and Heads of Service 4) Wellbeing volunteers 5) Safety Champions 6) Mental Health First Aiders 7) Corporate Governance Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Quarterly 2) Monthly 3) Quarterly 4) Monthly 5) Monthly 6) Quarterly 7) Quarterly
<p>Commitment 7</p> <p>Include wellbeing within organisational performance metrics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Metrics on wellbeing are reported and included within overall Council performance measures, in order to raise the profile of wellbeing as a factor influencing each Council's performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Quarterly
<p>Commitment 8</p> <p>Incorporate HSE Indicators into service delivery processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) HSE Management Standards are utilised by Heads of Service and Team Leaders to assess potential impact of service delivery methods on employees undertaking the work 2) Internal Health and Safety expertise is available to Heads of Service and Team Leaders 3) Senior Leaders and Heads of Service incorporate HSE Management Standards into planned organisational change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 2019/2020 2) Ongoing 3) Ongoing

<p>Commitment 9</p> <p>Utilise external sources of information and support</p>	<p>1) Dedicated Officers explore external sources of information and practical support to enhance the Councils' wellbeing offering to employees</p>	<p>1) Ongoing</p>
<p>Commitment 10</p> <p>Review emerging trends and research into employee wellbeing</p>	<p>1) Dedicated Officers regularly research employee wellbeing matters through professional publications and external peer networks</p>	<p>2) Ongoing</p>

Appendix 2

Commitment: Employees

Action	Detail	Timescale
Commitment 1 Follow statutory and corporate health and safety procedures	Employees make themselves familiar with their statutory and corporate health and safety obligations and undertake mandatory training in these areas	Ongoing
Commitment 2 Raise concerns about potential or actual physical or mental health issues	Employees make themselves aware of which Officers and colleagues can be approached to raise concerns and are conscious of the impact of not raising concerns	Ongoing
Commitment 3 Provide feedback on wellbeing matters regularly	Employees engage with the Councils in providing their honest views and experiences of wellbeing in the workplace to help inform future actions and areas of focus	Ongoing
Commitment 4 Make use of facilities and support offered by the Councils	Employees make use of physical facilities and utilise internal and external sources of other support, such as the Employee Assistance Programme, and encourage colleagues to do so	Ongoing

<p>Commitment 5</p> <p>Recognise the importance of personal wellbeing</p>	<p>Employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) incorporate wellbeing practices into the day to support physical and mental health; 2) plan breaks within normal working hours; 3) forecast annual leave usage at the beginning of each leave year to ensure regular and adequate breaks from work 4) engage with wellbeing services offered by the Councils such as health checks 5) promote the benefits of personal wellbeing to colleagues 6) utilise flexible working and flexi time as needed to support wellbeing 7) work with colleagues to create a fair and supportive workplace 	<p>Ongoing</p>
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