

# Appendix A

## HR Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023

### HR Work Plan

#### Introduction & Context

This is the first HR Work Plan created by the new Chief HR Officer, David Fairall. Based on meetings with each member of ELT, discussions with the existing HR team members, many conversations with colleagues and general initial observations, this plan is designed to essentially stabilise the HR service and focus on a few key areas to begin the process of improving the HR provision, including alignment with the Council's strategy, values and objectives.

As detailed within this document, a more comprehensive plan will follow, but the current priority areas are as follows:

#### 1. Review the HR Team

The team currently consists of 4 people: 3 permanent and 1 fixed-term. With 3 team-members joining in 2023 and the other late in 2022, the average length of service (as of July 2023) is 4.5 months, reflecting the extent to which the service has undergone upheaval and change in the past year:

**David Fairall, Chief HR Officer** (Permanent)

Joined 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**Teresa Crowther, HR Business Partner** (Fixed-Term until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023)

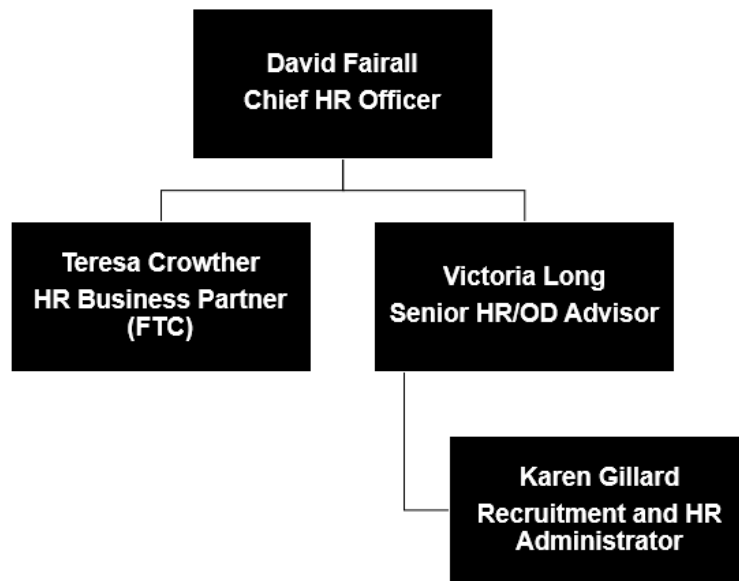
Joined 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022

**Victoria Long, Senior HR/OD Advisor** (Permanent)

Joined 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023

**Karen Gillard, Recruitment and HR Administrator** (Permanent)

Joined 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023



The HR administration and payroll function is processed by East Hants through a service agreement, consisting of fixed annual administrative fees and a proportion of the wages for the team who oversee the input and payroll processes.

Having experienced so much turnover and change, and with nobody in the team having been employed for more than year at Havant, a key objective is to stabilise the HR service. Therefore, an immediate priority is to review the volume of queries and casework, recruitment levels, organisational objectives and programmes requiring HR support, along with the areas requiring immediate review or updating, such as policies and performance (see below for further details) and determine the required resource and structure of the HR team.

## **2. Workstream Mapping – Create a Plan!**

With this being an initial plan to stabilise and address time-specific or key objectives, it is important the team also creates and communicates a longer-term and more detailed plan to share and communicate with colleagues. The team will, therefore, undertake 2-3 sessions in July to map out all current HR tasks / workstreams, then add what is perhaps missing (i.e. management training programme, apprenticeships, enhanced induction programme etc.) and what needs to be changed / improved, plus what we aspire to introducing or achieving once all the foundations are back in place and operating successfully. We will then prioritise these and bring a more comprehensive plan to ELT and the next HR committee.

## **3. East Hants Separation / Contracts**

Work continues to separate the last remaining shared platforms / contracts we previously shared with East Hants. These include:

Hireful (Recruitment): A new site has been created and adverts have been launched from this site since early June 2023, so this action is complete. Hireful will have also exported all Havant-related information from the previous domain by the end of July, thereby fully concluding the separation of the Havant and East Hants sites.

Virtual College (Online Training): A proposal has been received to move to a new subscription for 12 months on a new dedicated Havant Borough Council domain. Existing courses and relevant history can be transferred. Work will commence in July, prioritising the courses required for new starters and agreeing with colleagues from Health & Safety, Equalities and Safeguarding etc. which courses to retain, edit or remove. The HR team will use the 12-month period to review the general learning and development offering, including which e-learning platform to proceed with in future.

Gauge (Job Evaluations): We are working with East Hants to agree the best way forward. We will either retain the current site and arrange for East Hants information to be extracted or we will both move to new agreements. Having had initial conversations, we envisage an agreement to be signed with Gauge for one of the options at the end of June / early July, so separation should be complete by the end of August at the latest.

We will also review our contracts and services with First Advantage (DBS Checks) and Simply Health (Employee Assistance Programme) once the above have been completed.

#### **4. Policy Review**

In order to support the new high-performance and values-based culture, the approach to setting policies, procedures, rules etc. would benefit from an entire overhaul, which will be outlined in greater detail when the more comprehensive HR plan has been designed. However, there are a number of existing policies beyond their set review dates or that need a slight update to reflect recent changes in Employment Law, so it is proposed to address policies in two phases:

Phase 1: Create a policy working group consisting of a representative each from HR, Equalities, Health and Safety, Communications and IT (where required) to ensure all existing policies are up-to-date and legally compliant. Any significant updates will be agreed by ELT and then brought to future HR Committee meetings. This will commence in July 2023 and is anticipated to be completed by the end of August (presuming no disputes from stakeholders regarding the proposed minor amendments).

Phase 2: Review the whole look and feel of policies. Consider moving to a handbook and/or short guides complemented by brief policies and procedures, where required. Plus, consider adding policies or statements of intent for key themes i.e. regarding our approach to equalities, being family-friendly, flexibility, wellbeing etc. Then transfer the existing suite into this new approach. With this being a significant project, phase 2 will commence in 2023, but continue into 2024. A more accurate timeline will become clearer when the process mapping and priorities exercise has been completed.

## **5. Performance Management**

Another vital HR-related element in supporting the new culture will be to update how we manage performance.

In order to support the 'golden thread' of objectives being cascaded from the Chief Executive, to ELT and then through to each service, an interim process has been communicated to set individual goals and capture up-to-date feedback and any development needs. This will be followed up by further reviews later in 2023 and then in February/March 2024.

The aim will be to evolve into a model of continuous feedback with flexibility to incorporate the golden thread and links to specific council, service or team projects or strategies and statutory requirements, but focusing more on communication than the form themselves (although information will still need to be captured). This will be designed specifically for Havant Borough Council by the HR team and will need a thorough rollout plan i.e. manager training, employee communications / drop-ins, IT support to automate input etc. As it links to a key objective for the Chief Executive and Executive Head, Internal Services, work on designing this will commence in July 2023 and an update will be provided in the next HR Committee meeting.

## **6. Utilise the Apprenticeship Levy**

The HR team now has access to the government portal, providing the Council with confirmation on the 'pot' available to use and any people / courses assigned to it. An HR Apprentice has been advertised and, provided a successful candidate is appointed, is expected join the team in June or July. We have agreed to transfer an ongoing further education sponsorship for a recent recruit from their previous employer and have had exploratory conversations with some services on how to utilise the levy for their future recruitment needs.

Although it is now active and some good early progress has been made, the work plan will include rolling this out and engaging fully with colleagues on how to utilise the levy for both apprenticeships and training as one of the key priorities for 2023

## **7. Data Integrity and Management Information**

Following meetings with Will Jackson, Chief Policy Officer, and Georgie Thurlby, Project Officer (Governance), it will be imperative that the HR team provides accurate data for management information, as well as for general internal reporting and FOI / ONS returns etc.

Therefore, the team now has direct access to the HR system, ResourceLink, and has received training from the South Oxfordshire District Council team (for which we pay for a proportion of their time each month as part of the legacy Five Councils partnership) to update information and run reports. This reduces the dependency on East Hants for such information and will allow the team to focus on improving data integrity.

## **8. Training and Development Plan**

Linked via the 'golden thread' from the objectives for the Chief Executive and Executive Head, Internal Services, a training and development plan will be designed using information gathered from the interim performance management process, where any training needs will be captured, through the creation and development of the Operational Leadership Team and a general training needs analysis for the organisation.

This will also be included as a priority for 2023 in the more detailed work plan.

## **9. Review Payroll Provision**

The current payroll set-up involves a Software as a Service (Saas) contract and bureau service with Zellis in partnership with South Oxfordshire (lead council for contractual purposes), Vale of White Horse, Hart and East Hants (plus Mendip for the software), supplemented by an agreement with East Hants to process payroll on our behalf.

In other words, we pay South Oxfordshire for contract management and system administration and support and East Hants for input and checking.

The Saas contract (i.e. for the HR / Payroll system itself) expires in June 2025, meaning discussions with the other council partners will need to take place either later this year or early 2024 to establish if the partnership is likely to continue, as any process leading to procuring a potentially new system would ideally require at least a one-year lead time to secure a supplier, design a new system, export and test this system and conduct many months of parallel payrolls to minimise the risk of incorrect payments. This may not be required depending on partner preferences, but we will review the current payroll provision and internal knowledge to ensure we are in the strongest position possible should negotiations be required. This will form part of the above team structure review.

### **In Addition**

A new benefit, a Salary Sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) scheme, will be launched in July 2023. This has already been communicated to staff, with introductory letters sent and an announcement made during The Fountain Live in June 2023. This will be administered by a company called AVC Wise and enables people to save on tax deductions through salary sacrifice in order to invest in their future pension pot.

The team will also continue to manage day-to-day work in addition to the above improvement activities, including administering the advisory inbox and responding to all questions and requests, overseeing the recruitment process and supporting managers and colleagues with general HR-related matters.

This plan is reflected as a schedule in Appendix B.