

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 6 SEPTEMBER 2017

### Staff Awards

1. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate two very worthy winners in this year's staff awards in their respective categories, both of whom fall within my portfolio.
2. ICT winners of the Adapting to Change Category:  
This was awarded for the Customer First Programme, which involved a redesign of the service running over a period of 6 months leading up to the re-launch of the ICT service in November last year-well done.
3. The Programme Management Office (PMO), winners of the Business Improvement Category:  
This was for addressing in an innovative way the development and implementation of a bespoke Programme and Project Management framework based on best practice, allowing collaboration from Project Managers from all Directorates-well done.
4. I would also like to thank all the teams who submitted entries to the Staff Awards. Once again the standard was very high. Well done to all concerned.

### Peer Review

5. The Council first invited the Local Government Association (LGA) peer review team to visit in January 2016. Following the peer review, the team produced a report that identified a number of strengths of the organisation which I have referred to in earlier reports, but also went on to make some recommendations to strengthen corporate governance in a number of areas.
6. These improvement actions identified by the team were incorporated into the Council Improvement Plan, which has been delivered over the last 12 months to provide assurance that the Council's corporate governance arrangements are fit for purpose and on which I have provided regular updates on real progress made in my reports to Council.
7. In July 2017 the same team were invited back to undertake a two day critical friend review of the progress the Council has made since January 2016. I am pleased to report that the team found that the Council has made significant progress in the last 17 months and included the following areas for praise:

- Strong, capable and streamlined senior management team in place with respected political leadership
- Improved internal communications
- Improved governance frameworks around Project and programmes, performance and risk
- Additional external training for members
- Development of an impressive investment prospectus

The key messages for the future for the Council from this more recent visit were:

- Agree the Middlesbrough brand – stick with it and drive it;
- Debate, understand and align Middlesbrough's leading role in the Tees Valley Combined Authority;
- Drive the People Strategy, values and Organisational Development;
- Make the move from leading in an organisation to leading in a place;
- Truly reform integrated public services with partners based on customer insight and intelligence.'

## **ICT**

### **Agile Working**

8. The Agile Working solution is entirely voluntary and is designed to enhance service provision and staff productivity by adopting the most appropriate and effective way of 'getting the job done'. Middlesbrough's agile solution continues to provide staff with one of three options:

Agile Worker - working between home and office

Mobile worker - working between home, office and other locations

Office Based - permanently office based

9. Agile 'Phase 1' focused on volunteers from the MBC Central Campus and 'Phase 2' of the rollout targets volunteers in the MBC Satellite Offices. Approximately 1200 users have successfully had their laptops 'Agiled'. The Project is expected to close at the end of September when ICT Services will have updated *all* laptops in MBC with the new improved Agile software suite. This has been a significant Project and the cornerstone for enabling the Accommodation strategy and ultimately delivering key savings.

### **Disaster Avoidance and Resilience**

10. In July Fibre connectivity was established between Melrose House and Resolution House Data Centres. Having data centres in two distinct locations is part of providing network resilience to the Council and was successfully undertaken with minimal network disruption to users. ICT Services are now busy planning next phase of the Project which will begin in early September and will further add to the Disaster Avoidance solution.

### **Secure Mail**

11. Earlier this year Vodafone announced it was closing its GO Mail secure email system that the Council uses, with short notice of termination. This left the Council with 3 quickly developed options:
  - Purchase Vodafone's alternative offering at a higher price
  - Migrate to a Microsoft online system
  - Migrate to an in-house system

12. It was decided to develop an in-house system using our own expertise and the migration to the new system, following communications to staff, was successfully completed by 23rd July 2017. Some 500 staff are now using the new system, with very little in the way of disruption or downtime.
13. This change was forced upon the Council at short notice, but through the efforts of ICT technical staff and the co-operation of end users the result has been a major operational success with the added value that we have avoided costly alternatives and actually reduced annual costs for secure mail provision.

### **Mobile Phones – Transition from Vodafone to EE**

14. The Mobile Phone Transition Project has been progressing successfully since February 2017, starting with the procurement process, selecting a provider, exiting from the Vodafone contract and implementing a new contract with EE as the provider. The Project included streamlining the makes, models and appropriateness of phones for use, including implementing the most secure and manageable devices for apps/email. The EE contract will over its lifetime reduce the overall spend by the Council on mobile phones with the most economic tariffs available.

## **HR**

### **People Strategy**

15. Following agreement of a report that I took to the Executive on this important topic, the HR Service is now working up project plans and identifying task and finish groups to support implementation and embedding of the strategy to ensure that there is delivery of commitments feedback has been extremely positive to date from directorates. HR plan to launch the strategy to our workforce in September, after the holiday season, which will be followed soon after by the launch of new core values.
16. A key component within the People Strategy is Workforce Planning which is the identification and analysis of our workforce against now and future needs. The process identifies the strength of our succession and talent pipeline, which allows us to make strategic and informed decisions when developing, progressing and recruiting people to ensure we have the right experience, knowledge and skills to deliver the Mayor's vision. HR have successfully piloted the workforce planning methodology within Adult Social Care and are now in the process of delivering a programme of work across all directorates with a target of having a top level assessment completed by March 2018. An output of this work will include identification of development needs and plans which will include coaching and mentoring programmes.

### **Induction**

17. HR are launching our Welcome to Middlesbrough Council Induction event on 20<sup>th</sup> September. These induction events will take place monthly and will be hosted by the Chief Executive and another LMT member along with other presenters covering topics such as the People Strategy, Health and Safety, Customer Excellence etc. There will also be a 'market place' to promote areas including employee benefits, employee support available, health and wellbeing initiatives, Trade Union membership. The Welcome to Middlesbrough Council Induction is a key initiative bringing together the wider Induction Programme which includes the

on-line induction portal and local inductions which were launched in June this year.

### **Recruitment**

18. There are a number of initiatives in place looking at improving our approach to recruitment in terms of looking at how we can better attract talent into Middlesbrough Council. HR are reviewing how we create and market our brand as a “good employer” and ensure we are utilising social media positively to attract a wider audience and skills to our workforce. They are refreshing our Council Facebook page, LinkedIn Profile and Twitter accounts to advertise jobs, create and enhance “brand” awareness and also looking at how the Council could use job search sites to attract a wider pool of talent.

### **Appraisal Update**

19. Appraisal meetings have taken place during March and April. Employees will then have a minimum of 3 further feedback meetings with their manager during the course of the year. Access to the learning system during the appraisal period increased by 42%, which is the highest level of access since it was introduced.

20. The completion rate was 99% for those appraisals that were due to be carried out in March/April. Spot checks will be carried out by internal Audit to ensure that frequent feedback meetings are taking place and HR will follow up with service managers who have a more fluid appraisal cycle to ensure that they are scheduling in appraisals and frequent feedback with their staff.

21. Qualitative data will be sought from staff on the new appraisal system well in advance of the next round of appraisals so that any identified issues can be addressed.

### **HR Pay System - Phase 2**

22. Work is progressing on the system build for the People Manager and Employee Self-Serve platform. In addition to existing IT users, this will also enable an additional 40% of employees who were previously excluded from Council IT to have their own personalised profile page, this will act as a portal to enable them to receive corporate communications direct, to access to the Intranet, Middlesbrough Learns and HR Pay Employee Self-Serve.

23. A significant amount of engagement with Managers and Employees has been carried out and will continue throughout Phase 2 to ensure that business change is managed appropriately.

### **Staff Handbook:**

24. The Staff Handbook is now live on the intranet and has been circulated to all managers, there will be a formal launch in September. The Staff Handbook will form part of the induction process and will be built into the IT welcome process.

As an interim measure, managers with staff who do not currently have access to the intranet have been asked to make available printed copies. The work related to the HR Pay System – Phase 2, providing IT access to all staff should resolve this access issue.

**NICKY WALKER**  
**EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE**