

PAST REVIEW UPDATE: RECRUITMENT IN HILLINGDON

Committee name	Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities
Officer reporting	Mike Talbot, Interim Director, Corporate Resources & Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Summary Report of Exit Interviews

HEADLINES

This report updates the Committee on the actions taken by officers following the Committee's review, "Recruitment in Hillingdon", which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee note the update on the actions taken with regards to the previous review regarding "Recruitment in Hillingdon".

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. In April 2017, the Cabinet approved a Policy Overview Committee review into "Recruitment in Hillingdon", which included ten recommendations. The full report can be found [here](#).
2. Given the scale of the programme of change, especially the implementation of new technology solutions, a three-year plan was established and Cabinet agreed that these recommendations were to be delivered within existing operational budgets.
3. This report highlights the ongoing progress against each of the following recommendations, and includes further information regarding developments in recruitment within the Council.

Recommendation 1

The Council develops an employment brand, agreed by the Leader of the Council as lead member for Communications, to ensure the organisation has a unique and attractive message that differentiates from other employers in the public, private and third sector.

4. On 2 July 2018, the Council awarded a contract for the provision of recruitment marketing services to TMP Worldwide. This contract provides a range of strategic recruitment services, as well as support in securing best value media placement for recruitment advertising.
5. TMP Worldwide were subsequently commissioned to support the development of the Council's employment brand and work started on this project in 2019, with researchers interviewing senior managers from across each directorate. A number of focus groups were arranged with current employees at all levels, to identify what differentiates Hillingdon from other employers, and the key reasons that employees find the Council an attractive place to work.

6. The key message that came through from employees, especially those in professional roles who are often our target audience in 'hard-to-fill' campaigns, was that Hillingdon Council allows you the ability to really make a difference to residents' lives and there can be a tremendous sense of achievement when this is possible.
7. Following this, TMP developed a series of 'prototype' creative themes to use across all recruitment advertising. These themes were presented to the Leader of the Council, as the Communications lead, who decided that branding based upon the theme of 'the Hillingdon Feeling' would be progressed. This creative theme juxtaposed 'giant' employees with iconic Hillingdon locations and emphasised how employees of the Council can make a significant difference to our residents' lives and the positive sense of achievement and meaningfulness that can be realised (see Appendix A for example images).
8. The new branding was planned to be launched in April 2020 utilising the new imagery as part of a large scale recruitment campaign, however, this was delayed due to the pandemic lockdown. A meeting is scheduled for 6 November 2020 to reschedule the launch of the new branding.

Recommendation 2

The Council develops and implements a social media recruitment strategy, not only focused on advertising vacancies, but also promoting and managing the Council's online reputation and employer brand.

7. During December 2018, TMP also conducted an 'online audit' to gather information on how the Council represents itself online, in relation to the workforce recruitment market. TMP presented a report detailing the Council's online presence, together with key recommendations in January 2019.
8. The recommendations from TMP's report informed the Council's social media recruitment strategy, which was developed for the 2019/20 financial year. The Council now has a number of annual social media contracts and heavily utilises LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter as part of the recruitment approach.
9. The Council also replaced its recruitment platform and this has allowed direct applications to be made in LinkedIn and submitted for consideration without having to use the normal online application process.
10. Further development has ensured that the recruitment platform works across all types of mobile devices without any detriment to functionality.

Recommendation 3

The Council develops a culture of internal advocacy for the organisation among its staff, and reinforces this support through introducing a recruitment referral scheme.

11. A recruitment referral scheme was developed as part of the Children's Services Workforce Plan, and was approved by the Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive. This scheme promotes advocacy and candidate referral in our most 'hard-to-fill' areas.
12. The scheme will be relaunched as part of our next recruitment campaign.

Recommendation 4

The Council develops a 'Total Reward' approach to recruitment marketing, which involves not only advertising remuneration, but also the total worth of the recruitment package.

10. The Council completed local negotiations with the trade unions on a number of terms and conditions which impacted the 'Total Reward' approach (e.g. leave entitlement, flexible working) in 2019/20. Subsequently, our benefits page was updated to include the full range of benefits.
11. It was also agreed that the Council would begin the process of becoming *Timewise* accredited, to reflect our commitment to flexible working practices. The Council is now a *Timewise* Partner and the *Timewise* logo can be used in our own branding.
12. A full review of our benefits package has also been completed, together with a tender process for a new online employee benefits portal offering access to a comprehensive range of wellbeing, financial and retail incentives. This platform will be launched in Q4 of the current financial year.
13. The new benefits platform allows each employee to have an individual account which provides a total reward value for all benefits used.

Recommendation 5

The Council introduces and develops a workforce succession plan for all key roles within the organisation.

14. A new performance management system has been procured and was due to be launched in April 2020, however, this has been delayed to November due to the impact of the pandemic and subsequent focus on restoring services. This system will provide the platform for developing a succession plan for key roles in 2021/22.

Recommendation 6

The Council creates talent pools on existing employees, an alumni network enabled by social media and an "Apprenticeship Talent Pool" to ensure talented apprentices have opportunities to maintain employment within the Council.

15. The Learning and Development now co-ordinate career discussions with all apprentices and their line managers when they enter their last six months of the apprenticeship. The purpose of this discussion is to ensure that the Council explore the options to provide apprentices with an ongoing, permanent role. Our recruitment policy has been changed to allow apprentices to be considered for permanent roles when they are within this last six-month period of their apprenticeship.
16. The new recruitment platform TalentLink allows for the creation of 'talent pools' and has recently been used to ensure a pool of casual workers is in place to support the Covid-19 Community Hub resourcing. A requirement to develop talent pools is also included in the tendering information for establishing our future agency contracts.
17. All voluntary leavers receive an email inviting them to complete an exit interview, and also join our alumni network via the Council's Facebook account. This social media channel is used to update users on relevant Council news, and is also used to post job vacancies to the site.

Recommendation 7

A centralised Job Description Library is implemented, and all managers involved in recruitment are retrained on the new e-recruitment system, together with refresher training on selection methods and equalities.

15. This functionality is part of the recently procured performance management system and this module will be implemented for January 2021.

Recommendation 8

A review of the current competency framework is conducted by the Council.

16. The Council's Officer Competency Framework has been reviewed and was launched in October 2018.
17. The new competency framework categorises the desired employee behaviours into four 'clusters', which reflect our organisational environment: Residents and Community; Leadership and Collaboration; Accountability and Responsibility; and Change and Improvement.
18. These new competencies will be embedded into each job description as part of the development of the new Job Description Library (see Recommendation 7).

Recommendation 9

The Council introduces consistent interview questions associated with each job description, suitable selection techniques, and values-based interview techniques, to ensure employees are a culture-fit, and occupational testing for recruitment to key and

relevant roles. Appropriate IT assessment techniques are considered as part of the selection process to ensure the office-based workforce retains a high level of ICT competency.

19. This recommendation will be delivered as part of the implementation of the online Job Library (see recommendation 7).

Recommendation 10

The Council introduces an evaluation of recruitment and selection processes and performance indicators, as part of the probationary period sign-off process, reporting on a quarterly basis.

20. The Council's 'exit' interview process is now established, and individual and summary reports are generated on a regular basis; the summary report is included as Appendix A to this report.
21. The Council has now introduced a similar product aimed at surveying staff at the end of their induction / probation period. This provides the necessary evaluation process to ensure that the 'on-boarding' of staff is effective and provides the necessary training and management support required to motivate new starters.

Other Developments

22. As part of a recent Human Resources service restructure, the dedicated recruitment team has been replaced with directorate-aligned generalist teams. This has reduced the need for 'hand-offs' between HR functions for line managers, who will now have specified HR contacts responsible for both employee relations (ER) and recruitment support.
23. The e-recruitment system has been upgraded and reconfigured to improve both the line manager and candidate experience.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.