

Date of Meeting: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Portfolio Holder: Cllr P Wharf, Deputy Leader/Corporate Development and Change

Director: Aidan Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

### **Executive Summary:**

In our first year as Dorset Council, we have brought together six councils, with separate workforces, together into one safe and legal organisation.

It is important that we now set out our strategic approach to how we will become an employer of choice, both for our current employees and for our employees of the future.

The People Strategy attached to the report at Appendix 1 is presented to Cabinet for adoption. The Strategy has been and has also been created alongside our draft Corporate Plan and draft Values.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment:**

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed, and is attached as appendix 3.

**Budget:** Many of the actions need no further investment to bring them to realisation. Projects which require additional investment will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **Risk Assessment:**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the risk ratings are as follows

Current risk: MEDIUM

Residual risk: LOW

The detail of the risks that have been identified are contained within this report within Figure 1.

### **Climate implications:**

No negative impacts have been identified by delivering a People Strategy for Dorset Council. There are a number of areas where the outputs of the People Strategy could help to support our climate emergency commitments:

- Following Dorset Council's declaration of a climate emergency, this can be incorporated into our induction and on boarding processes, so that all new employees are aware of our commitment to this important issue
- Awareness of Dorset Council's climate emergency, and awareness of progress, can be measured through the proposed employee engagement platform
- In collaboration with the Climate Change Executive Advisory Panel, work can be undertaken to engage employees through Dorset Council's employee forum

**Other Implications:**

No other negative implications have been identified, however, it's important to note that through the transformation programme, and the 'Employer of Choice' theme, there are a number of dependencies which will have been identified and will be developed further. Examples of dependencies include:

- Property and assets – close link to the People Strategy, developing a positive workplace culture and how we will work in the future to increase collaboration and productivity
- Established transformation programmes within People: Children's and Adults Services
- Employees at all levels, will contribute to our culture shaping programme and how we live and demonstrate our values and behaviours

Both of these dependencies will be managed through the corporate transformation programme to align approaches and outputs.

**Recommendation:**

1. That Cabinet reviews the People Strategy and accompanying documentation as set out in Appendix 1 and agrees its adoption
2. That the equality impact assessment set out in Appendix 3 be noted and Cabinet members suggest any additional activity required to ensure that our approach is as inclusive as possible
3. That in consultation with the Executive Director, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development is delegated authority to make changes to the strategy which might occur as a result of the scrutiny process.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To consider Dorset Council's People Strategy, which sets out the strategic approach to becoming an employer of choice, developing the skills and approaches and organisational culture needed to be a successful organisation.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – People Strategy  
Appendix 2 – Action Plan  
Appendix 3 – Equalities Impact Assessment

**Background Papers:****Officer Contact:**

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**1. Background**

1.1 Dorset Council came into being on 1 April 2019 to:

- Protect frontline services by reducing costs
- Give Dorset a stronger voice nationally, helping to attract business investment, government funding and support local economic growth; and
- Better meet the needs of the communities by bringing all services together

1.2 Dorset Council brought together six predecessor organisations into one, safe and legal organisation on 1 April 2019. Work now needs to take place to define what our strategic ambition is as an employer, becoming an employer of choice.

**2. Developing our Strategy**

2.1 Developing a healthy organisational culture will be critical to our success. The culture of Dorset Council will have a direct impact on our reputation and the achievability of improved outcomes for residents, businesses and visitors to Dorset.

2.2 In preparation for the organisation being formed on 1 April 2019, work began with employees to understand what they would like to bring with them into Dorset Council, and importantly, what they would like to leave behind. This early work helped to formulate a series of core behaviours, a behavioural framework and latterly our draft values.

2.3 In addition to a behavioural framework, work has taken place to define a series of organisational values and a transformation programme, with one of the key themes being 'Employer of Choice'.

2.4 Building on this work, a People Strategy is now ready to be presented to Cabinet for decision. The process for developing this strategy has been to:

- Work with employees to define what an employer of choice means to them

- Meet with managers across the organisation to understand their ambitions and potential challenges to becoming an employer of choice
- Engage with recognised trade unions
- Engage with partners
- Undertake national research
- Seek feedback through the recent peer review

2.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been developed. The EqIA process has brought forward mainly areas where the impact of the People Strategy has been assessed as positive. There are three areas where the impact is unclear and the approach to developing further understanding of these are detailed in the assessment's assessment (appendix 3)

2.5 Through the conversations that have taken place with managers, a workforce profile has been developed, to pull together, at an organisational level, upcoming activity that will impact on the workforce.

### **3 Dorset Council's People Strategy**

3.3 Based on the insight we have gathered from engaging with a variety of stakeholders (as detailed in 2.3) the People Strategy is structured under six themes:

- Becoming an employer of choice
- Developing our people
- Engaging our people
- Supporting our people
- Rewarding and recognising performance
- Creating a positive workplace culture

3.4 The strategy also references our draft values, these draft values alongside our core behaviours should underpin everything we do, and are integral to the culture we aspire to achieve.

3.5 Under each theme is a series of commitments. The strategy has been developed with a clear action plan, with milestones, accountabilities and measures of success to make sure that we act on our commitments.

### **4 How will we deliver the strategy**

4.3 It is recognised that the nature of this work is significant, challenging and transformational. It has been recognised that for much of this work to be successfully achieved, dedicated resource needs to be in place to help deliver on our strategic ambitions, over a sustained period of time.

4.4 The recent peer review has highlighted that this strategy is ambitious and will need to be resourced effectively. As part of the transitional structures for Dorset Council, a strategic Organisational Development function has been introduced,

and will be in place from January 2020. This function will help to deliver the actions of the strategy, alongside key stakeholders.

4.5 Resource is being put into place to help to deliver this work, but this strategy must be owned and led by the organisation. To help support this, the strategy action plan will inform the organisational transformation programme, specifically the employer of choice theme, and will be reported on and measured regularly.

4.6 Risks to delivery have been identified as detailed below. These will be developed and regularly reviewed alongside the transformation programme.

Figure 1.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Employee engagement	We are a changing organisation, and change has happened and is happening at pace. There is a risk to employees experiencing 'change fatigue', resulting in reduced employee engagement.	The action plan sets out how we will work towards becoming an employer of choice, and deliverables to help us engage employees in our journey.  The action plan has been prioritised taking into account this risk.
Delivery	As a large organisation, it's understandable that some areas need to prioritise workforce development. There is a risk to delivery of the People Strategy if this work is not joined up.	All workforce related change activity will be managed through Dorset Council's proposed transformation programme, under the 'Employer of Choice' theme. This will help to identify dependencies and manage these effectively.  There will also need to be a focus on building strong, collaborative, relationships across the organisation to make sure our People Strategy is embedded and owned across the organisation.
Delivery	As reflected in the recent Peer Review feedback, this strategy is ambitious and covers a five year period. It's important that this is resourced effectively.	Resourcing will be managed through the newly formed Organisational Development service, with risks and issues being reported regularly through the corporate transformation programme.  Should gaps in resourcing be identified, this will be escalated through to SLT as early as possible.

## 5. Next steps

5.1 The People Strategy was scheduled to be discussed at the Audit and Governance Committee, with an extended invite to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee Chair and Executive Chair. This item had to be rescheduled, and will now take place on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

5.2 The final version of the strategy and detailed action plan will be made available on our website.

5.3 A communications plan is being developed and will inform further engagement work with employees, partners and key stakeholders.