

Recruitment and Retention Strategy

28 November 2024

Report of Organisational Development Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consult with members of the People and Organisational Development Committee on the Council's Recruitment and Retention Strategy, and agree implementation.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the new Recruitment and Retention Strategy as detailed in this report is considered and approved by the People and Organisational Development Committee.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed strategy and action plan relating to recruitment and retention, which is essential so that the council has the right people in the right place at the right time with the right skills in order to deliver the Council Plan.
- 1.2 This new strategy is presented to the Committee for their consideration.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The new Recruitment and Retention Strategy has been developed as part of the People Plan 2023-2026. It follows the Outcomes Based Resourcing principles by aiming to match our human resources to our priorities.
- 2.2 National issues with recruitment and retention have been widely reported and Lancaster City Council is no exception to the difficulties. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has found through their research report Resourcing and Talent Planning 2024 that:
 - Competition for talent is high – employers are finding it difficult to fill vacancies and retain existing employees. Many new recruits leave within the first 12 weeks.
 - Focus on developing skills in house – organisations are increasingly using internal training and development to meet their talent needs.
 - Improving pay and benefits – organisations are increasingly offering better pay and benefits to address recruitment difficulties, as well as raising pay to retain existing talent.

- Benefits of flexible working offerings are increasingly recognised – the demand for flexible and hybrid working arrangements has grown, so is a key tool to attract and retain talent.
- Small improvement in recruiting diverse candidates – organisations are trying to attract and recruit diverse candidates.
- Technology is speeding up recruitment and improving experience – the majority of organisations are increasing their use of technology in recruitment and onboarding.
- Rise in data management as a priority – increased use of collection of data to inform workforce planning and resourcing.

3.0 The picture at Lancaster City Council

- 3.1 Our annual turnover rate for 23/24 was 18.69%, compared to 16% nationally (UK Labour Force Survey Jan 24), and 14% in Lancashire authorities (LG Inform). It is important to note that these figures include leavers arising from the OBR work.
- 3.2 Our job vacancies that have a developmental aspect built in results in higher numbers of views and applications, while our skilled trades and leisure vacancies have low numbers of views. Our refuse vacancies result in the highest conversion rate to applications following views.
- 3.3 Most people find our vacancies by directly visiting our website pages.
- 3.4 Work to date has included refreshing our recruitment webpages and job adverts, streamlining and digitising our recruitment processes, introducing more functionality to our Applicant Tracking System to allow for online job applications for applicants and online shortlisting for managers.
- 3.5 Managers have attended recruitment workshops as part of our Lancaster People Manager Essentials Programme to ensure they have the skills to manage their recruitment needs.
- 3.6 The Exit Interview scheme has been refreshed so that we can understand why our employees decide to leave our employment, and what they valued about working here. We are also planning the launch of an annual staff survey to gain insight from existing colleagues.
- 3.7 Our induction and onboarding processes have been completely reviewed, including the reintroduction of the corporate in person induction event, in order to address the so called 'induction crisis' where new recruits leave within the first 12 weeks.

4.0 Strategy development

- 4.1 In order to develop a strategy and action plan that is tailored to our unique circumstances, work has been undertaken to find out from a variety of different groups of employees what our strengths and weaknesses are, and what opportunities and threats we are facing. From this, the strategy and action plan have been developed. Groups consulted with have included the Manager Network, Staff Ambassadors, the HR Team (recruitment and operational), Staff Networks, JCC and Trade Unions.
- 4.2 The Local Government Association guide to recruitment and retention was also used to theme the resulting actions, using their Six Ps framework: Plan, Promote, Process,

Partnerships, People, Pledge.

- 4.3 The result is a highly practical strategy to be delivered over the next two years, complemented by the existing People Plan.
- 4.4 Example actions include understanding workforce needs, ensuring that our role descriptions are clear, developing recruitment analytics, showcasing local government using the LGA national recruitment campaign, and many more. Full details are included in Appendix 1.

5.0 Implementation

- 5.1 The Recruitment and Retention Strategy will be introduced with immediate effect once approved by the People and Organisational Development Committee.
- 5.2 We are leading, along with Chorley Council and South Ribble Council, an action group to encourage collaborative working to address recruitment and retention issues at district council level across Lancashire. This may result in the strategy being reviewed and updated in light of the action plan being developed.

6.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, make any relevant comments and suggestions on the content, and agree implementation.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

Inclusive recruitment and selection methods will be promoted as part of this strategy and in line with existing policies.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this update, however the strategy overall will improve our commitment to abiding by the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

none

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