

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
Executive Board 13th June, 2005
Council 20th June, 2005

Report of: Anne-Marie Scott
Business Manager, Human Resources

Title: Human Resources Strategy 2005-8

Ward: all

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Key Decision: No

Lead Member: Cllr Bill Baker

Scrutiny responsibility: Finance

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Consider the Strategy and, subject to any comments made at the meeting, recommend approval to Council.

1. Summary

A Human Resources Strategy, developed in line with the Council's corporate aims, identifies key people issues to be addressed in the medium term to ensure the organisation secures and retains a workforce which is appropriate in terms of skills, capacity and capability. Oxford City Council has never before taken this longer term, strategic view on people issues and this strategy therefore provides a set of strategic aims which will be developed further and implemented through the current review of human resources procedures and guidelines. In order to achieve success, Members are asked to note:

- The strategy will be underpinned by a series of operational plans with milestones, deadlines and review processes.
- Delivery is dependent on completion of the HR procedure review and all managers taking forward the strategic aims in planning and managing their people issues.
- The strategy should facilitate better planning of workforce needs in the future.
- The strategy is designed to underpin performance improvement and cultural change, highlighting in particular the need for effective management, increased capacity and flexibility.

2. Council Vision and Strategic Aims

The development of a Human Resources Strategy is a key example of how the Council is improving future planning, developing a flexible workforce and creating organisational capacity. It also has the potential to contribute to our strategic objectives of improving all our services year on year and investing in staff.

3. Background and context

The strategy aims to provide a framework within which the organisation can achieve appropriate staffing resource, skills and capacity to ensure achievement against the corporate plan. An agreed and effective HR strategy is a key indicator in corporate governance and CPA. In their last review of HR policies the District Auditors identified the development of an HR Strategy a key recommendation.

4. Consultation

The strategy has been developed through a process of consultation which began in the summer of 2004 with the Operational Managers Group. It has subsequently evolved through a series of staff workshops and reviews at SMB and CMG. Both Finance Scrutiny and the Joint Consultative Committee have considered the strategy during the last 6 months and it has been endorsed by the Strategic Management Board and the Portfolio Holder.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications, delivery of the strategy will be within existing budgets.

5.2 Legal and Constitutional Implications

At law, there is division of responsibilities for local government staffing matters between the authority's Executive and its full Council. Included among the Executive's functions are responsibilities for health and safety; training; overall staffing structures; performance appraisal and employment policies - but not where these affect individual terms and conditions. Council responsibilities include the power to appoint staff and to determine the terms and conditions under which they hold office, and duties to appoint staff to the statutory roles such as Head of Paid Service and Monitoring Officer. In practice, of course, Council has delegated much of its responsibility for matters concerning staff appointments and their terms and conditions to the Chief Executive. In regard to the HR Strategy, this report is asking both the Executive Board and Council to approve those parts of the strategy which fall within their respective areas of responsibility.

5.3 Staffing Implications

There will be significant staffing implications in terms of changes to procedures and practices which will be dealt with through the procedure review.

6. Recommendation

Executive Board is recommended to:

Consider the Strategy and, subject to any comments made at the meeting, recommend approval to Council.

7. Timetable and review

Work on the procedures and processes which underpin the Strategy is underway and significant progress has been made in key areas. The timetable for completion of the current review December 2005. Many of the changes outlined in the strategy are aimed at improving morale, increasing capacity and making Oxford City Council a better place to work. Consequently many of the improvements will be subjective and difficult to measure. There are numerous indicators which will be monitored to ensure progress in the right direction, these include a MORI survey (to be carried out in July 2005), recruitment and retention statistics (turnover), levels of staff complaints, exit interview feedback.

A full review of the strategy and progress towards strategic objectives will be carried out annually. It is proposed that the first review, carried out in the last quarter of this financial year, should include a progress report and SMART targets for building on improvements in years 2 and 3.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Bill Baker

Legal and Democratic Services: Lindsay Cane

Financial Management: n/a

Human Resources: Anne-Marie Scott

Background papers: None