



CORPORATE AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20TH FEBRUARY 2024

SUBJECT: RECRUITMENT UPDATE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES



1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Corporate & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in relation to the work undertaken to address the recruitment and retention challenges the Council is experiencing.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Scrutiny Members will be aware from the report to Council on 24th November 2022 entitled 'Workforce Capacity & Associated Challenges' that the Council was facing recruitment and retention challenges across the whole organisation in many service areas and the services affected seem to be under increasing demand in accordance with the national picture.
- 2.2 Members will also be aware that this was not just a specific challenge to Caerphilly.
- 2.3 Cabinet, at a meeting held on 19th October 2022 agreed funding for the appointment of a specialist internal Recruitment Team.
- 2.4 This report provides information of the work to date of this team and the wider People Services teams and their planned work for the future.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Corporate & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendation is made to provide Scrutiny Members with an update in relation to recruitment and retention activity across the Council.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 As stated, Members will be aware from reports towards the end of 2022 the Council was facing recruitment and retention challenges across the whole organisation. The national and organisational position with regard to recruitment challenges has not changed.
- 5.2 In 2022, People Services commenced work to reposition the Council in the competitive job market to become an employer of choice. This was particularly important being one of the largest employers in the region.
- 5.3 Work began to s to attract a broad range of candidates.
- 5.4 Members will recall from the Workforce Capacity & Associated Challenges report considered at Council in November 2022, that People Services had also stated to review many aspects of recruitment including modernising the process; revamping the web pages and testing alternative methods of advertising on social platforms and popular job boards; working with the Employment team to increase the use of placements to hopefully lead to employment; the use of a recruitment consultant; growing the number of Apprentices; review HR policies and procedures and a revised exit survey process.
- 5.5 Funding was agreed by Cabinet in October 2022 to appoint a specialist internal Recruitment team that would focus on:
 - 5.5.1 Marketing and promoting the organisation to prospective candidates; make use of commercial recruitment tools to identify individuals that meet the Council's needs and engage potential candidates in relation to the benefits of working for Caerphilly CBC.
 - 5.5.2 Promoting more widely the opportunities that exist within the Council across social media and other professional channels, as well as hosting local recruitment events across the Borough on an ongoing basis.
 - 5.5.3 Further the relationships with key partners such as Careers Wales, our schools, local colleges and Universities to engage and encourage prospective applicants as well as developing tailored opportunities to join the Council.
 - 5.5.4 Operate a dedicated 'recruitment hotline' where prospective applicants could discuss possible employment options in the Council rather than just ring about a job that is already advertised.
 - 5.5.5 Continue to develop and modernise the Council's Recruitment web pages, streamline the application process, be proactive and outward facing in its approach to recruitment as well as mirroring the skills and disciplines typically employed by sector leading recruitment consultants.
 - 5.5.6 These requirements were examples or their function of the team and were not exhaustive.
- 5.6 Appointments were made to the team and they have been at capacity for almost 5 months. They have been actively working on all the duties stated within paragraphs 5.5.1 – 5.5.5.

- 5.7 The initial staff appointed to the team developed an advertising framework that is adapted to each role and weekly digital bulletins and social posts are released to raise the profile of all vacancies.
- 5.8 They strengthened our partnerships with organisations such as the Job Centre and Careers Wales.
- 5.9 Whilst an increased online presence is important the team recognised that it was equally as important to attend community recruitment events, especially to target front line posts and those who may find the digital application process challenging. The team attended a number of employment events in 2023 Community presence to reach the digitally excluded and in 2023 and piloted a career quiz to help applicants identify areas of work that may interest them or they may be suited to.
- 5.10 For Members information, the headcount and full time equivalent (FTE) as at the close of each of the last three financial years is detailed below. The information for 2023 is at 31st December 2023 is also included:

Date	Headcount	FTE Headcount
31.03.21	8,296	6,124.17
31.03.22	8,348	6,245.04
31.03.23	8,535	6,409.36
31.12.23	8,635	6,513.47

- 5.11 Detailed below for Members information are the numbers of new starters to the Local Authority and internal transfers for the last three financial years. The information for 2023 up to 31st December 2023 is also included:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
New Starters	500	864	1091	829
Internal transfers	1,040	1,487	1031	919

Recruitment Campaigns

- 5.12 The team have worked with managers to deliver bespoke frontline recruitment campaigns for Catering, Care and Housing.
- 5.12.1 Care – This was the first large scale pilot campaign where the team explored doing things differently and raised the profile of careers in Care. As a result, over 20 offers of appointment were made and the team made long-term adjustments to how they tackle recruitment and interviews to modernise the approach.
- 5.12.2 Catering – This was the most successful campaign, where there was a requirement to recruit staff to be in a position to deliver the Welsh Government’s Universal Free School Meals programme. Having previously received 0 applications from many adverts, the team sought expressions of interest as part of a comprehensive advertising strategy and a simplified application and interview process were all

delivered in line with the Safer Recruitment policy. The campaign resulted in 112 offers of appointment being made.

- 5.12.3 Housing – as a result of a targeted campaign and refined job descriptions, the campaign led to over 30 offers of appointment for Operative posts being made. This was a marked change to previous adverts where recruitment had been unsuccessful. The feedback from the team was overwhelmingly positive and they noted that the new fresh approach will see some lasting changes in the way that they recruit and interview candidates.
- 5.13 The team have also supported an advertising campaign for a Head of Service, which amongst other approaches included targeted professional networking via social channels. 17 applications were received for the post.
- 5.14 The team have been involved in the recruitment of many other posts and are in discussions with Managers about further specific campaigns.

People Life Cycle

- 5.15 Employees are our most valuable resource and this is reiterated in all our HR strategies, policies and procedures. Talent acquisition is a small part of the people lifecycle.
- 5.16 Consequently, the team are working with the wider People Services team to support managers to consider a more wholistic approach, rather than looking at recruitment in isolation. Workforce development, workforce planning, retention and succession are all key components to the life cycle that are being reviewed with a view to bringing more synergy.
- 5.17 There is an understanding that this may not look the same for each service, as priorities will be focussed on different parts of the life cycle and will be subject to change.

Looking ahead

- 5.18 The team will be developing:
 - 5.18.1 A Recruitment Strategy that will include support for managers to ensure that there is a holistic approach to recruitment and workforce planning within service areas.
 - 5.18.2 A framework for largescale recruitment pilots to respond to the changing needs of the organisation will be developed, which will take account of the Mobilising Team Caerphilly.
 - 5.18.3 An advertising framework that can respond to the changing landscape of the market.
- 5.19 Further work will be undertaken on our branding to promote the Council as an employer of choice given the competitive recruitment landscape organisations are operating within.
- 5.20 The team will also be strengthening partnerships with key partners to showcase the Council as an employer of choice.

- 5.21 Teams within People Services will work together to further digitise the processes to make the customer journey easier and ensure the service is operating efficiently and effectively. Onboarding and Induction will be key factors in this process.
- 5.22 More importantly, the team, along with the wider People Services' teams will continue to support Managers to review their recruitment and retention to ensure Council Services are delivered.
- 5.23 Members were informed in the Workforce Capacity & Associated Challenges' that it is unlikely that the Council will be able to successfully recruit to all vacant posts and retain all staff due to the national crisis. This position has not changed. However, as an employer we must continue to do all we can to differentiate the Council and position it at the leading edge.

Conclusion

- 5.24 There are still many factors affecting the workforce which may impact on the Council's ability to deliver services. Whilst the Council will do what it can to respond to some of these local challenges, it will clearly be unable to influence many of the national and global factors which have increased the complexity and scale of the challenges being faced by local government and the public sector as a whole.
- 5.25 The support of the dedicated Recruitment Team will hopefully enable the Council to remain resilient and responsive to these challenges and help to address some of the workforce challenges being faced.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions made within this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has not been completed as this report provides Members with an update on the work of the newly appointed Recruitment Team and the wider People Services teams in relation to recruitment.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications to this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultation responses have been incorporated in the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972

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Background Papers:

Report to **Policy & Resources Scrutiny 27th September 2022**, Cabinet 19TH October 2022 and Council 24th November 2022 'WORKFRCE CAPACITY & ASSOCIATED CHALLENGES'