

## GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY

14 February 2019

### STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER – RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Oliver Hemsley, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Rutland One Public Estate and Growth, Tourism and Economic Development, Resources (other than Finance and Communications)	
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Ward Councillors	N/A	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee note the controls and actions in place to enable the Council to recruit and retain skilled staff and therefore maintain effective service delivery.

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

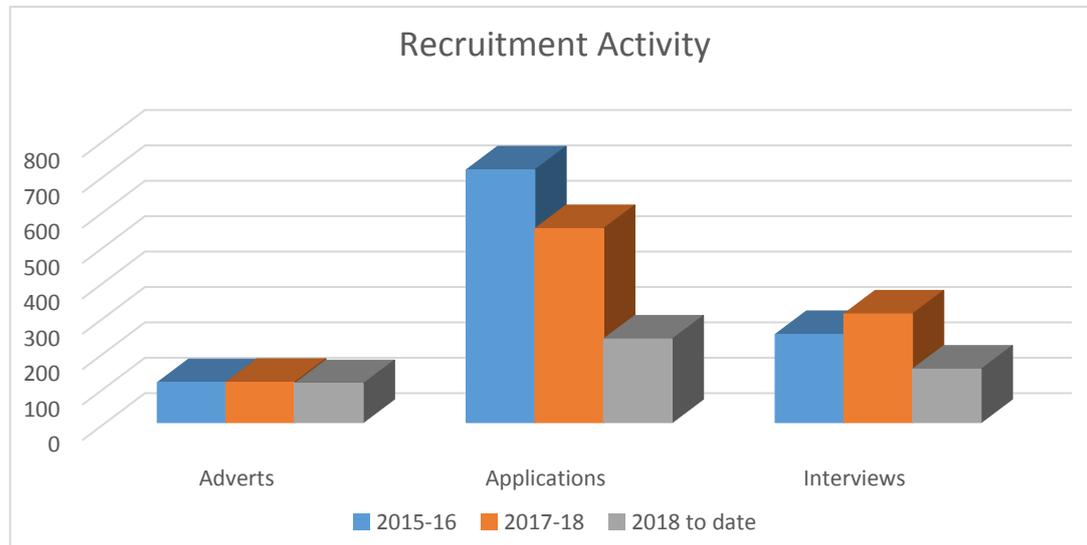
- 1.1 The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the Strategic Risk Register which includes the following risk: 'Failure to recruit and retain sufficient skilled staff to ensure safe and effective service delivery'. The Committee suggested that this area may be of interest to Scrutiny and it was subsequently included on the Forward Plan.
- 1.2 The paper advises the Committee of the Council's approach to recruitment and retention to ensure we effectively manage any risks in vacancy management.

## 2 OVERALL POSITION

- 2.1 As noted above, the Council's Strategic Risk Register outlines a risk of 'Failure to recruit and retain sufficient skilled staff to ensure safe and effective service

delivery'. This is supported by a range of controls and actions which are reflected in a Recruitment Strategy and supported by a temporary resource within HR.

- 2.2 Our level of recruitment activity is fairly static in terms of numbers of posts, but the level of response through application forms and interview stage is variable – certainly the volume of applications has reduced. The graph below shows that recruitment is in the range of 110 to 130 adverts per year; we receive between 550 and 750 applications and arrange 250-350 interviews per year.



- 2.3 Over time, our success rate in recruiting first time out to advert is in the region of 80%. Further advertising has therefore been necessary and this has primarily been in roles such as Senior Management roles and Social Care (2016-17) and more recently Community Support and technical/specialist roles where the candidate supply is low.
- 2.4 Our cost of advertising in 2017-18 was £53,100 – representing c. £425 per hire. By way of comparison, the CIPD Recruitment and Talent Planning Survey gives an average cost per hire of £1,000 in the public sector. For Rutland, this is therefore a relatively low cost and in part represents our success in achieving bulk purchasing of media through job boards and job sites. Most posts were filled following digital and on-line campaigns.
- 2.5 We have further work to do in improving our time to recruit, current performance being:
- 2017-18 - 11.3 weeks
  - 2018 Q1 - 9.3 weeks
  - 2018 Q2 - 11.5 weeks
  - 2018 Q3 - 10.4 weeks
- 2.6 The Council is not unusual to other authorities in that we experience recruitment difficulties in some roles/professions. Nearly 74% of respondents to the Local Government Workforce Survey reported recruitment and retention difficulties. Similarly, a CIPD survey reported 56% of respondents as experiencing an increase in hard to fill roles, and the public sector reported difficulties in recruiting to 62% of all vacancies. Our response and approach is to research successful approaches elsewhere but then to apply our local perspective.

2.7 Our turnover over the past 3 years has been

2015-16	15.9%
2016-17	18.2%
2017-18	14%
2018-19 (predicted)	13.4%

*NB 2016-17 figures include a number of casual contracts that were completed in this period (particularly tutors) – the adjusted figure for turnover would therefore be 14.3%*

2.8 In general our turnover figures have been higher than average but are moving towards the average position. Comparator data from the Local Government Workforce Survey is not yet available for 2017-18 but for 2016-17, the median average turnover reported by Councils was 13.4%.

2.9 Our turnover levels has meant that in the past we have had heavy reliance on agency and interims to cover posts we could not recruit to – in 2015-16 this was £2.3m – in 2017-18 this reduced to £995,700 – in 2018-19 this is predicted to be £1.2m. These figures do not show the savings made from vacancies but do include costs associated with supporting the MICare Project in Community Support, Winter Pressures in Adult Social Care and a Surveyor resource for OEP. As Members will be aware the Council has a record of delivering within budget so whilst the level of interim spend may look high, it has been largely contained within budgets as a result of vacancy management and alternative ways of working.

### **3 RECRUITMENT STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Actions taken to address challenges**

##### *Specific campaigns - Social workers*

3.1.1 From 2015 we were certainly experiencing difficulties in recruiting to Social Workers – this has been part of a national picture for some time. Our turnover was high as the pull from other regional authorities was increasing – demand was high, supply was low; staff were attracted to larger social worker teams with more middle and senior management roles therefore offering greater career potential. Consequently our usage of agency workers increased in terms of numbers and cost.

3.1.2 Our response was to develop a specific programme and campaign, this comprised:

- A review of the Social Worker Career Grade and creation of a Senior Social Worker designation at Level 3
- Creation of lead roles - Service Manager and Practice Development Lead
- Introduction of Market Supplements to enable our pay offer to be more comparable in the region

- Design and delivery of a creative and innovative marketing and attraction campaign comprising a bespoke brand of 'Get Closer'. This includes a microsite (video content by Dr Tim O'Neill) and was led by a social media/digital search campaign. The dedicated 'site' tells the compelling story of Rutland and enables us to set our-self aside from the next. We were making job offers within 2 weeks of going live. We also received a nomination for a national award for this campaign.

To illustrate the success, we moved from 12 unfilled social worker vacancies in June 2016 to 4 in January 2017. We are currently recruiting to 1 Social Worker/Care Manager role in Adult Social Care and have one vacancy in Children's Social Care for an Independent Reviewing Officer. The reliance on Agency workers has also substantially reduced with currently some additional roles in Adult Social care to enable our management of winter pressures.

#### *Senior Officer pay and grading structure*

- 3.1.3 Pre 2016 we were struggling to attract posts to leadership roles and our salaries for Directors, Service Managers and Heads of Service were not comparable. Attempts to recruit to key Heads of Service roles in the People Directorate were not successful first time of going to market.
- 3.1.4 We therefore reviewed our Senior officer pay and grading structure in 2016 and implemented a new pay model for Heads of Service, Directors and the Chief Executive post. Since 2016, we have successfully recruited to the following roles
- Head of Legal and Corporate Governance
  - Deputy Director Resources (Monitoring officer)
  - Strategic Director Resources (internal)
  - Strategic Director People (internal)
  - Deputy Director Places
  - Head of Childrens Social Care (internal).

#### *Alternative ways of working*

- 3.1.5 There have been a number of areas where recruitment difficulties for specialist posts have contributed to consideration of alternative approaches to service delivery. One example of this is the delegation of the provision of the Council's IT financial system and support to Herefordshire Council. The Council realised quickly that trying to recruit its own IT specialist would not only prove costly but not provide any resilience. Delegating the service to a bigger Council with a team of IT and payroll specialists has solved the issue.
- 3.1.6 There are numerous other examples – including Internal Audit, Health and Safety, Emergency Planning – where the same principle applies.

#### *Attraction and marketing - ongoing interventions*

- 3.1.7 Our approach to attraction and marketing is certainly changing, moving from

reliance on free advertising options to identification of more 'interest generating' media. We know from research, that reaching out to passive job seekers is the challenge – job seekers are no longer reliant on seeing jobs advertised, particularly in hard copy media eg. trade press, professional publications.

### 3.1.8 Further current interventions include:

- Planning Policy – we will be targeting a digital and social media campaign, including professional networks, as well as defining the key Rutland attraction so this message can be filtered through the job postings
- Community Support – design of a promotion campaign to attract individuals into this front line service. This will include materials and posters, images and messages from the current workforce, website, social media and local media including a radio advert.

#### *Other actions*

### 3.1.9 Alongside the above examples, we have implemented various other measures as part of our ongoing recruitment strategy:

- Implemented a Market Supplement Protocol, particularly in Social Care but also applied in other areas, to ensure our salaries are comparable in the market.
- Partnered with leading search consultants to attract high calibre candidates to senior roles. This has been helpful in respect of senior management recruitment.
- Built a portfolio of digital marketing and search approaches, recruitment sites and job boards - easy and quick access. Eg. Linked In, Twitter, Facebook.
- Negotiated discounts for bulk purchase for job board advertising – such as JobsGoPublic, Total Jobs.
- Very recently, we have implemented an Applicant Tracking System to replace our previous manual, lengthy, recruitment processes (see Appendix B).

## **3.2 Future Plans**

3.2.1 Section 3.1 reflects specific actions taken to date and how our approach has evolved. We have also taken a broader look at our overall approach to recruitment and have further plans to develop a Recruitment Strategy that places Rutland in a stronger position in the recruitment market to ensure we can attract the talent we need in a timely and cost effective way.

3.2.2 The key objectives are to:

- i) Develop a recruitment culture that places the highest priority on drawing talent into the organisation. This requires acknowledgement, acceptance and investment in getting the right person.

- ii) Define and develop an employer brand as a key part of our attraction strategy.

3.3 Key components of our strategy are outlined in Appendix A and as presented. Further work streams to be developed over the next six months include:

- Assessment tools and techniques – to ensure we are actively assessing against needs of the role in terms of knowledge, skills and ability as well as values and culture. Also a process that enables us to spot talent and potential that will add value to the organisation.
- Onboarding – how we fully support a new employee to become integrated into the organisation. The process of engagement with Rutland starts pre-first day and should build on the good experience at the selection stage, through their initial induction and their ongoing employment with Rutland.
- Talent Pools – our new Applicant Tracking System will enable us to maintain an ongoing relationship with potential candidates for subsequent vacancies with the Council. In addition, we are exploring relationships with colleges, schools, Job Centres and the Armed Forces to create a pipeline and source of candidates that we can access at the earliest stage of a recruitment assignment. Our Apprenticeship programme is also a key component and we are progressing relationships with Universities, Schools and Colleges to explore intern programmes and entry level opportunities.
- Recruitment brand - Our website does not reflect the culture and values of our organisation in a welcoming and enticing way. We do not depict an employer brand for recruitment purposes. Research tells us that 'values' is top of the list that organisations believe are important to attracting candidates. Individuals have told us they want to be able to find out more about Rutland, the role and what we have to offer. We have partnered with an organisation to work with us to develop our recruitment employer branding and creation of a bespoke recruitment microsite.

## **4 EMPLOYEE RETENTION**

4.1 The Council's headcount has stabilised over the past 3 years at an average of 465 staff. Paragraph 2.7 highlights our turnover since 2015.

4.2 More specific analysis of our turnover is showing that in 2017-18 there was a relatively high proportion of leavers within the first year. Our analysis of exit interviews (all) in 2017-18 told us:

- 42% of leavers moved to the private sector – this is an increase from 24% in 2016-17.
- 88% felt they had received a good induction; 94% felt they had sufficient training.
- Level of satisfaction in communication across the Council had increased although had dropped in communication within the team.

- The majority feel their workload is manageable and have a good worklife balance.
- Similarly, the majority of feedback responses felt RCC has a good reputation as an employer, would recommend Rutland to others, and would return to us.

4.3 The HR team are currently reviewing and developing a rebranded Onboarding model with a focus on – pre-employment, initial induction and ongoing development and learning of the role, team and organisation. An improvement in the on-boarding experience should have a positive impact – both on turnover and employees’ experience of working with Rutland. Further actions we will be taking include:

- HR to maintain ongoing engagement with new joiners to assess progress and respond to any emerging concerns.
- Target exit interviews for employees leaving within the first year to drill down into reasons and issues.
- Research the value of employee benefits ie. what do staff value? How does Rutland compare to other employers? How can we improve our employer offering?
- Explore where we can enhance career grades and career pathways including Apprenticeships, Secondments.
- Redesign our leadership and management development programmes to ensure they are accessible and enable us to develop our leaders of the future.
- Enhance the use of our e-learning platform to provide more readily available access to enhancing skills and knowledge.
- Build an employee values and engagement programme that promotes Rutland as a great place to work.

4.4 We are currently investing in some further HR expertise and resource in these areas to help us develop and drive forward these improvements by the end of this financial year.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

5.1 Recruiting Managers and new recruits have been consulted and engaged with to develop strategy and actions.

5.2 Items in this paper do not require any formal consultation with Trade Unions.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

6.1 The Council could take no action to enhance its strategy and approach to recruitment and retention. However, there would be risks associated with this including – increasing hard to recruit to posts, posts covered by agency staff (additional cost and lack of continuity), increased turnover through loss of

motivation and interest in the Council – consequently this would have a detrimental effect on our ability to deliver services to the Community and meet our strategic aims and objectives.

## **7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 All actions and objectives are fully assessed for financial implications and against the return on investment e.g. Improving speed of recruitment, productive employees, and employee morale. Therefore whilst some items may require some initial investment, the benefits achieved are aligned to continuity of high quality services.

## **8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no further legal nor governance considerations in this paper. All actions and decisions will be taken with full regard to all Procedure rules.

## **9 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant risks/issues were found. A copy of the DPIA can be obtained from the Report Author.

## **10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant risks/issues were found. A copy of the EIA can be obtained from the Report Author.

## **11 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no Community Safety implications arising from this paper.

## **12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no Health and Wellbeing implications arising from this paper. However, effective onboarding and retention initiatives should have a beneficial impact on employee wellbeing.

## **13 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 13.1 The Council is taking appropriate steps and actions to enable and enhance our ability to attract and recruit good calibre candidates in a speedy and efficient way.
- 13.2 Retention of staff not only provides continuity of service but enable us to continue to develop and grow our own talent, promote from within, and recognise employee success.

## **14 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 14.1 No additional background papers.

## **15 APPENDICES**

15.1 Appendix A – Recruitment Strategy Actions (presentation)

15.2 Appendix B – Applicant Tracking System

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**