

Argyll and Bute Council HR and Organisational Development Strategy 2014 – 2018

Realising the Potential of Our Organisation

***Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on
a growing population***

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Argyll and Bute Council

Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR and OD) Strategy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council delivers a wide range of services to the public across a complex and remote geographical area. We are an organisation that delivers services to people of all ages across Argyll and Bute and to do this, we have a wide range of dedicated and skilled employees.
- 1.2 Our diverse workforce of over 4400 employees is based in over 150 different locations across Argyll and Bute in a diverse range of facilities, buildings, schools, yards and offices. We have developed robust and effective flexible and mobile working policies and procedures to enable our workforce to be as efficient as possible, given our diversity and the distances between our settlements. This enables us to tailor our workforce to our customer and service needs. From senior professionals to front line workers, our employees are supported to develop the skills, qualifications, behaviours and experience that enable us to deliver quality services to our customers.
- 1.3 The Council, along with the rest of the public service in Scotland, is currently facing a time of unprecedented change. In a financial climate that is seeing real reductions in finance available to local government, the Public Sector Reform agenda is a high priority for all Councils. Closer integration across organisations, shared services, resource alignment and shared outcomes are the drivers that are shaping the way that we manage our organisations to deliver quality services.
- 1.4 Argyll and Bute Council faces significant challenges in realising the potential of this reform agenda, particularly given the different boundaries that the majority of our partner organisations have, the highly complex geography that we experience and the second highest rate of population decline of any local authority in Scotland. Furthermore, the impact that population decline, if it continues, will have on the Council budget reduction is significant.
- 1.5 However, Argyll and Bute Council has a strong track record of partnership working and is well-placed to take advantage of these effective partner

relationships. The Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement 2013-23 sets out a very clear objective to stabilise and grow the population over a 10 year period and increase economic success. Partners are committed to putting actions in place that will achieve this and improve outcomes for the people of Argyll and Bute.

- 1.6 The Council is a significant employer in Argyll and Bute, an area which is particularly dependent on the public sector for employment. Any action that the Council takes, therefore, which impacts on the workforce will also have an impact on the communities that we serve and levels of income and employment. As a result of a reducing budget since 2010, we have reduced our workforce by 400FTEs and this has made a real impact on the organisation, our customers and communities. This HR and Organisational Development Strategy takes this into account, setting out the strategic direction that the Council will take over the next 4 years to manage our employees and our workforce for the future shape of the organisation. We must recognise that around 53% of the Council's annual revenue budget is spent on employee costs and that current forecasts predict an on-going revenue savings requirement. It is therefore certain that further budget reductions are likely to impact further on employees.
- 1.7 This document provides the strategic context for the Council to ensure that we have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time to deliver quality services to the people of Argyll and Bute, within this challenging financial context. It sets out the framework for the Council to meet the challenges and on-going change that faces the public sector in Scotland. It also seeks to put in place measures, in terms of people management, that will support the overall, agreed objective of the Single Outcome agreement 2013-23 to stabilise and grow the population and increase economic success.
- 1.8 The Strategy sets out clearly our approach to workforce development, recognising and articulating the essential requirements for ensuring that our workforce is appropriately trained and supported to deliver excellent services. Developing our workforce is essential to building our reputation as an employer and a service provider. Investing in our employees improves performance and secures a workforce for the future.
- 1.9 We must work to become an employer of choice, for example, by developing further flexible working opportunities for our workforce, and planning our workforce for the future through "Growing Our Own". Talent management and succession planning will be critical to our ongoing success and to ensuring that we meet the current and future demands of our service users. Modern Apprenticeships will assist in fulfilling future roles as well as delivering on the Council's corporate parenting obligations.

All of these opportunities will require a creative and innovative approach to ensure we deliver on future people management and workforce planning demands.

- 1.10 This Strategy sets out a framework to ensure that the people resource we have as a Council is aligned to the delivery of the outcomes as set out within our Corporate Plan and the Single Outcome Agreement and that we are prepared to meet the challenges of service delivery in the future.
- 1.11 It sets out an ambitious series of objectives which will achieve a comprehensive, corporate approach to managing and developing our employees across all Council services, tailored to service requirements, flexible to change and accessible to all.
- 1.12 This HR and Organisational Development Strategy has been developed to ensure the Council meets the challenges of a reducing employee resource by targeting key themes. It builds on the policies and procedures we have already developed to ensure that we achieve our vision that '*Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population*' by continuing to build and support workforce that is engaged, motivated, well managed and well led.
- 1.13 The HR and Organisational Development Strategy has been developed in consultation with services across the Council and with our Trades union colleagues and takes account of the feedback provided.
- 1.14 The Council has been and continues to implement significant organisational change. In addition, there are a number of external policy influences, such as Health and Social Care Integration, which have significant implications for the Council and its workforce. These lie specifically in relation to the risks and complexities associated with different terms and conditions enjoyed by the associated employee groups. The Council is committed to investing in and supporting staff through these changes with an integrated range of activities which consult, engage, inform and develop our staff to ensure that the benefits of the programmes are realised.
- 1.15 The people who deliver public services in Argyll and Bute are at the heart of what we aim to achieve in our Single Outcome Agreement. The expertise, energy and creativity of the workforce will be essential if we are to succeed in pursuing our ambitious and wide ranging agenda aimed at improving public services, tackling poverty and inequality and promoting jobs and economic development and ultimately turning around population decline. Public sector spending constraints have placed substantial

pressure on local public services, and it is important that all partner organisations work jointly to build multi-agency capacity, share ideas, promote learning and deliver results.

- 1.16 We have identified 6 key objectives that will enable us to deliver the overarching outcome that:

Argyll and Bute Council has right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time to deliver excellent services

These objectives are:

- 1. Supporting transformational change and innovation**
- 2. Sustaining and improving a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce**
- 3. Building strong leadership and management**
- 4. Planning for the future workforce and being an employer of choice**
- 5. Promoting positive performance**
- 6. Promoting equality and diversity**

These objectives will be delivered through a series of actions that are specified in the Strategy.

- 1.17 These objectives will be implemented in partnership with services and Trades Unions to ensure they support the delivery and achievement of key service priorities and outcomes. The objectives also recognise that we currently have an ageing workforce and that action needs to be taken through formalised policies and procedures to ensure that every opportunity for sharing knowledge and expertise is undertaken through flexible retirement, succession planning and flexible working opportunities so that knowledge and expertise continues in the organisation.

- 1.18 The Council is committed to a collective bargaining agreement and joint working with colleagues in the Trades Unions is a core part of our approach to managing and developing the Council's workforce. Argyll and Bute Council is committed to continuing to work in partnership with the Joint

Trades Unions to ensure positive outcomes.

1.19 **Implementing the Strategy – What will success look like?**

Implementation of this Strategy is key to the success of Argyll and Bute Council and quality service delivery. Improvement and HR, working in partnership with the Joint Trades Unions, will lead the Council through the implementation of this Strategy by ensuring that effective workforce planning, succession planning and recruitment planning are linked to inform the future direction of the Council. To ensure that we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time with the right skills to deliver services to the people of Argyll & Bute.

- 1.20 A clear action plan has been prepared following approval of the Strategy. Progress on actions will be reported through the HR Board to SMT and will be subject to scrutiny by the Council through the performance management system and the IHR scorecard.

2 Objective 1 - Supporting Transformational Change and Innovation

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve

We will manage the process of change efficiently and have service models and operational structures in place which have both addressed budget reductions and the needs of priority services.

Actions – The key areas we will focus on:-

- Developing a framework for change management incorporating employee and trade union engagement and communication
- Promoting a programme of learning to support transformational change and Innovation
- Developing talent for the future through “Growing Our Own”, Talent Management and Succession Planning

- 2.1 To ensure that the Council efficiently manages the process of change we will focus on key learning and development interventions such as a Change Management/Project Management Methodology and Toolkit. This will be reviewed and updated in line with the strategic developments across the Council and rolled out using a blended learning approach.

- 2.2 As the Council continues to address the public service reform agenda, a number of challenges will affect the workforce and will affect how services are delivered. These include the shift to prevention, health and social care integration, improving the effectiveness of community planning, and a fundamental review of UK welfare and social security policy. The Council is also committed to the roll out of a comprehensive digital, broadband and ICT Strategy which will substantially change the way we do business across our communities.
- 2.3 The Council will continue to investigate all creative, flexible and sustainable employment models through opportunities for both “Growing Our Own”, Succession Planning and the new teacher professional standards. It is expected that further restructuring of services will be necessary in the future as a result of the predicted reduction in public sector finance. In the same way the Council must continue to consider the implications of and opportunities presented by new ways of working to manage service provision with a reduced workforce.
2. Significant changes to service delivery, such as Health and Social Care Integration, need to be carefully planned for to ensure that managers have the skills to enable them to deal with the resultant potentially complex management situations. As public service reform becomes embedded, there are likely to be teams of employees from different organisations, e.g. NHS and the Council, working together on different terms and conditions, including different salary grades. It is essential that the Council works closely with partners both locally and nationally to ensure that all possible mitigation is put in place to avert the potential for challenge, for example through equal pay claims. It is also essential to manage the expectations and performance of team members who are aware of those differences and equip our managers to deal with this.

Supporting Documents

- Communications Strategy
- Argyll and Bute Manager Programme
- Service Prioritisation Process
- ICT Strategy
- Alternative Ways of Working

3 Objective 2 – Sustaining a Skilled, Flexible and Motivated Workforce

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve

Our workforce will be trained, qualified and experienced, to deliver quality

services which meet current and anticipated service needs.

Actions – The key areas we will focus on:

- Reviewing and strengthening our Performance Review and Development (PRD) process to ensure all employees have relevant performance development plans in place
- Reviewing and improving our employee engagement, communication and reward/recognition arrangements including celebrating success events
- Extending Performance Review and Development (PRD) to all employees and develop process as appropriate
- Implementing improvements identified through Business Process Redesign (BPR) to ensure that individual learning and development is clearly planned, prioritised and informed by Performance Reviews and Development plans (PRDs)
- Reviewing and improving our employee engagement, communication, recognition arrangements including celebrating success and healthy working lives
- Ensuring that corporate learning and development programmes are driven by the needs of the organisation informed by the Workforce Planning framework
- Ensuring that the learning and development resources that we use are consistent, high quality, transferable and meet the future needs of the organisation
- Ensuring that the delivery of our workforce development activity makes the best use of resources available corporately including specialist knowledge and technology
- Continuing to invest in and support the SVQ centre to deliver vocational qualifications across the workforce
- Communicating information about learning and development clearly and accessibly to all employees
- Working closely with our partners to maximise opportunities for shared learning and development
- Exploring further new ways of working, using technology to ensure flexible and effective working practices

- Reinvigorating Growing Our Own
 - Supporting and enabling secondment and job shadowing
- 3.1 Workforce Development is an essential component of our approach to managing our employees. Investment in learning and skills development is a critical element in ensuring that our workforce is equipped to deliver the services that we are responsible for. We have a duty as an employer to provide employees with training appropriate to their jobs and a responsibility as an organisation providing services to the public to ensure that those services are provided safely and effectively.
 - 3.2 Developing and investing in our workforce has a positive impact on our performance overall as, apart from improving skills and knowledge in a particular area, motivation is improved and this impacts on improved wellbeing, reduced absence and reduced staff turnover.
 - 3.3 Workforce development is delivered by a combination of corporate training programmes and service specific learning. All corporate learning is driven by the PRD process and improvements are ongoing to increase the efficiency of this. The Council operates a successful SVQ centre, which delivers vocational qualifications across the area in specific service areas. Recognising the vast geographical coverage of the Council area, e-learning is an essential tool in delivering training and is being extended. This enhances equality of access to training and supports flexible and self-directed learning amongst employees.
 - 3.4 Effective communication and engagement with employees improves motivation and impacts positively on performance. Communication is a core module of the Argyll and Bute Manager Programme and supports managers to communicate and engage more effectively with their teams. One of our key actions will be the review of the Council's internal communications approach
 - 3.5 Reward and Recognition has been refreshed and a new employee award scheme launched. This will continue to be reviewed and updated in response to feedback.
 - 3.6 Flexible working has been shown to be a key driver for the recruitment and retention of employees. Through a review of terms and conditions we will investigate opportunities to facilitate better usage of the working day/week by implementing more flexible packages to assist in the recruitment and retention of quality staff. Examples would include variable working day and 9 day fortnight.
 - 3.7 Linked into this the Council will develop Succession Planning and

“Growing Our Own” through formalised secondment opportunities, training and development. The use of existing policies such as Flexible Retirement will be used to enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise before it is lost from the organisation. This will ensure resilience and continuity. In addition, with fewer promotional opportunities available, managers will be encouraged to support secondments in different parts of the organisation.

- 3.8 In order to ensure our employees consistently perform to a high standard they need to have access to appropriate and affordable development opportunities. There are a range of in-house development opportunities which exist through learning and development courses, customised requests, subject specific training for areas such as customer service, finance and vocational qualifications. A number of accredited qualifications are also available for employees.

Working in partnership with the Joint trades Unions to deliver Life Long Learning opportunities.

Supporting Documents

- Employee Reward and Recognition
- Argyll and Bute Manager Programme
- ICT Strategy
- PRD/Core Competency Framework
- Corporate Training Courses Programme
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

4 Objective 3 - Building Leadership and Management Capacity

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve

All our managers will lead, motivate, energise, and encourage innovation and will be viewed as role models, be highly effective, supportive and approachable.

Actions – The key areas we will focus on:

- Rolling out the Argyll and Bute Manager programme to all employees with management responsibilities
- Developing Leadership and Management Strategy
- Promoting our Core Competency Framework and leadership behaviours for senior managers through a leadership programme;
- Developing our approach to coaching and mentoring

- Developing a secondment/job shadowing policy
- 4.1 This theme focuses on the development of improved leadership and management skills across the Council. The role of managers in delivering transformation and change is crucial and we must continue to develop our managers to be leaders who can motivate and empower staff to deliver what is required.
 - 4.2 Effective leadership and management is a priority for the Council. The Argyll and Bute Manager Programme has been designed to support and develop managers in both senior and operational management roles. The programme focuses on ensuring that everyone in a management and leadership role has access to support and feedback in enhancing skills, competencies and knowledge.
 - 4.3 There are current Performance Review and Development schemes in place across the Council which have been designed to support managers in effectively managing the performance and development of their teams. These schemes allow managers and their employees to discuss work goals, objectives, required performance levels, work targets, learning and development needs and offer employees development opportunities linked to job roles, competencies and our Corporate objectives.
 - 4.4 Managers are regularly required to undertake new and challenging activities, often with less time or resources than before. It is important that managers are committed to the learning and development opportunities that they need in order to be effective. Opportunities for coaching and mentoring to reinforce learning will be provided through our approach to coaching and mentoring which will be developed.

Supporting Documents

- PRD/ Core Competency Framework
- Argyll and Bute Manager Programme
- Corporate Training Courses Programme
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

5 Objective 4 – Planning for the Workforce of the Future and being the Employer of Choice

Outcome – What we plan to achieve

Our workforce will have the skills, abilities and confidence to meet the needs of services for the future and will embrace new ways of working.

Actions – The key areas we will focus on:-

- Promoting Argyll and Bute Council as an employer of choice
- Adopting innovative ways of recruiting new talent
- Developing our approach to talent management
- Creating employment and training opportunities for young people in the community by exploring training schemes and developing Modern Apprenticeships; with particular consideration to the Council's Corporate parenting role for Looked After and Accommodated Children
- Ensuring effective workforce and succession planning processes and policies are in place by continuing to provide frameworks for the up-skilling/re-skilling of employees
- Ensuring skills and abilities are identified to meet the needs of services for the future and that they are incorporated into learning and development plans

- 5.1 The key to our future success as a modern local authority will be heavily dependent on our capacity to match the skills and abilities of our workforce to the needs determined by our new and changing service demands. An effective workforce planning framework needs to be built into the future review and development of services of the Council. In addition, a review of working hours linked to flexible working opportunities should be carried out to ensure that all barriers to delivering the best services with the best staff are overcome.
- 5.2 As the Council goes through a further period of change, the importance of succession planning increases. We must ensure effective succession planning processes are in place by continuing to provide frameworks for the up skilling/re-skilling of employees through leadership, skills and organisational development priorities. Effective use of existing policies such as Flexible Retirement should be enhanced to allow the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise given the age profile of the organisation.
- 5.3 Managing talent inside the organisation, closely aligned to Growing Our Own, will support us to identify our leaders and managers of the future.
- 5.4 The Council will continue to look for opportunities to support Modern Apprenticeships in all occupational areas. The Council will deliver a modern apprenticeship programme with our local community planning partners which will provide increased apprenticeship opportunities for young people in Argyll and Bute.

- 5.5 The Council's 'Recruitment and Selection' policy underpins this strategic objective of ensuring that the Council can recruit the best talent to ensure future sustainability. It focuses on recruiting employees who can meet future needs, demonstrate commitment to its values, service improvement and to delivering a modern customer focussed service to the community of Argyll and Bute. This is a critical element of the Strategy's support for the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement's long term objective 'Argyll and Bute's Economic Success is built on a growing population'. Attracting the right people with the right skills is essential to our future success. Joint working with partners to promote the area, innovative ways to recruit using all available channels and developing a positive reputation are all components of this.
- 5.6 We will seek feedback from our employees to help the Council become the employer of choice for our workforce of the future. We will provide effective development programmes to ensure employability and appropriate rewards to existing and potential employees. We will increase the Council's profile to ensure that we attract and retain the best candidates.

Supporting Documents

- PRD/Core Competency Framework
- Argyll and Bute Manager Programme
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Workforce Planning Framework
- Employee Survey

6 Objective 5 – Promoting Positive Performance

Outcome – What we plan to achieve

Our managers will have the skills, abilities and confidence to manage and promote the expected standard of performance.

Actions – The key areas we will focus on:

- Implementing a programme of developments to improve our HR and payroll database, Resourcelink, to provide accurate, easily accessible management information and increase self service
- Developing and refining the current suite of management information measures
- Providing regular, accurate monthly management information on a service by service basis

- Providing an integrated and comprehensive programme of management training (Argyll and Bute Manager)
 - Delivering a coaching and mentoring approach
 - Assisting managers to identify, target and improve poor levels of performance
- 6.1 HR and Organisational Development Strategy performance indicators should be aligned to the business and the improvements it is striving to achieve. HR will work with the HR Board and SMT to develop a suite of measures which set the direction and standards expected. The effective management and development of the Council's HR and payroll database, Resourcelink will improve the data available.
- 6.2 HR will provide regular monthly management information to enable managers to make informed decisions in the operation of their service.. This will result in overall performance improvement related to all aspects of people management.
- 6.3 Sound leadership and management are essential to ensure that the correct behaviours and attitudes are evident at all levels.

Supporting Documents

- Argyll and Bute Leadership Programme
- Performance Management Policy
- PRD/Core Competency Framework
- Argyll and Bute Manager Programme

7 Objective 6 – Promoting Equality and Diversity

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve

We will enhance our work with community partners and the voluntary sector to promote equality and ensure our employees, customers and partners are treated fairly and with respect at all times.

Actions – The key areas we will focus on:

- Working with the Employee Equality Forum
- Delivering our Equality outcomes
- Gathering and using employee information to promote equality of opportunity.

- Carrying out regular equality monitoring to ensure services, policies and employment practices are fair and reasonable
- Ensuring systems are in place so that all employees are treated fairly and equally and are supported to access learning.
- Delivering targeted equality and diversity training to managers and employees, including e-learning where necessary
- Working in partnership with the relevant partners to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations

7.1 The Council is an equal opportunities employer and this is an important facet of our ability to attract and retain employees. We have developed a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures which support equality and diversity in our workforce. Equality and Diversity issues continue to be a high priority for the Council, so all employees, customers and partners are treated fairly and with respect at all times. It is essential, during any period of significant change, that we maintain a focus on our commitments and have processes in place to meet our responsibilities and to monitor the impact on our staff and our workforce profile through equality impact assessments, regular surveys and a quarterly Equality Forum. All new and reviewed policies and procedures will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

7.2 Equality and Diversity training is available to all employees of the Council in both a tutor-led environment and through e-learning. The Council has a duty to ensure that all managers are aware of their duties in relation to equality and will implement this through a programme of targeted training. Equality and Diversity is also mainstreamed throughout the Council's learning and development programmes and vocational qualifications.

7.3 Equality is embedded in all Council policies and procedures. Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, relevant policies, processes and training have been reviewed and amended to ensure compliance with the Act.

Supporting Documents

- Argyll and Bute Council Equality Outcomes
- Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit