

Report sponsor: Nicola Sykes, Service Director for HR and OD

Report author: Liz Moore, Head of HR

COVID-19 and workforce response

Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on how the Council's colleagues have responded and adapted to the challenges of COVID-19 in continuing to deliver great services to the citizens of Derby.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To note that the Council's colleagues have worked flexibly and adapted to new approaches to working during the pandemic.
- 2.2 To note that further work is underway as part of the Council's Recovery Plan on how to take forward the learning from the way the workforce has responded during the pandemic, and that this will also inform the future organisational design approach of the Council.
- 2.3 To note that a report will be brought in future to Personnel Committee about the updated organisational design approach of the Council.

Reasons

- 3.1 The Council's initial response to supporting the city's residents and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic was the subject of a report to Council Cabinet in June 2020, and a Recovery Plan has been developed by the Council in collaboration with key partners for the benefit of the city. The purpose of the report for Personnel Committee is to provide a snapshot of how the Council's workforce has so far responded flexibly to the impact of COVID-19, and to confirm that work is taking place to build on this response for the future.

Supporting information

- 4.1 **Background**
 - 4.1.2 The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, and the Council has had to respond at pace to the challenges of supporting our communities and businesses. This has required greater collaboration, across Council services and with partners and stakeholders both locally and nationally.
 - 4.1.3 The Council's workforce has played a major role in enabling the Council to continue to deliver key services, and many Council colleagues have had to adapt quickly to new

ways of working, and in some instances, work in new roles or services. Colleagues and partners have been aligned and delivered services around a common purpose during the pandemic, and this ability to coalesce around a clear mission and purpose is a strength to build on for our future service delivery.

4.2 Flexible and agile working across Council services

- 4.2.1 To temporarily reallocate colleagues at short notice to key services as quickly as possible to support service delivery, we set up a Hub to match skills and demand. Over 160 Council colleagues were temporarily reallocated into a variety of roles, including in the Community Hub; cemetery and crematorium; refuse collection; residential care homes; Carelink; Derby Direct; and pickers for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the centralised PPE hub/store which was set up at London Road to supply PPE to Council colleagues and providers across the City.
- 4.2.2 This approach was a great example of the Council's value of great people working as one team. Whilst not all of the Council's needs for additional support were able to be met by this approach, we have reviewed what worked well and what we could do differently in future. We are developing a revised approach should we need to deploy colleagues again in response to a potential further impact of the pandemic.
- 4.2.3 In addition, reviewing how we can best utilise the wealth of skills of our colleagues across our services longer term to support the Council's mission and purpose will feature within our organisational design approach.
- 4.2.4 A number of colleagues have also temporarily supported the NHS on a short-term basis, helping to set up GP mobile hubs and marshalling car parking at local temporary test and trace sites. Derby Homes also have enabled some of their team to temporarily support the delivery of Council services.

4.3 Working remotely

- 4.3.1 Whilst many frontline services and key workers have continued to provide excellent services in person throughout the pandemic, the government's initial advice to stay at home and save lives has meant that since 23 March 2020 many colleagues whose roles enable them to do so have been working from home for their full contracted hours. This has meant a significant change for most colleagues working remotely, on a full-time basis, rather than in their usual work location.
- 4.3.2 Managers have had to adjust to managing and enabling their teams remotely, as well as recruiting and inducting new starters during a pandemic. Authentic leadership is needed in these circumstances and managers and their teams have had to adapt how and when they work. A positive outcome of this is a focus on outcomes being delivered rather than the focus on work being delivered within the pre-COVID working hours pattern. This is an important feature to take forward in our focus on outcomes and outcome-based accountability, rather than an emphasis on carrying out tasks.
- 4.3.3 The ICT team have played a major role in responding at pace to deliver hardware and software upgrades, to enable a move to working remotely for many colleagues. Virtual meetings have become a regular feature of the working day, and the ability to connect and collaborate with colleagues and external partners has been enhanced, and provides a platform for continued flexible and sustainable working in future.

4.4 **Wellbeing and potential impact on morale**

- 4.4.1 We recognise the potential impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing and morale of our teams. During the pandemic the Council has continued to provide colleagues with information, advice and signposting to a range of internal and external wellbeing advice and support. The Council's intranet pages on coronavirus COVID-19 include specific pages on wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak and the pages are regularly updated.
- 4.4.2 A short on-line wellbeing survey was carried out in June 2020, primarily aimed at those colleagues who were working some, or all, of their contracted hours on a remote basis. There were approximately 900 responses, and the encouraging headline results from respondents are as follows:
- 91% of respondents knew how to access wellbeing support
 - 80% felt connected to their teams/service
 - 88% felt valued and supported by their manager
 - 83% felt well-informed about what was happening in the council
- 4.4.3 Wellbeing and developing a culture where colleagues take personal accountability for their health and wellbeing is a key area of focus for the Council, and further short pulse surveys will help us to regularly check the effectiveness of our revised wellbeing approach. A follow up on-line wellbeing survey will be issued shortly, to get updated feedback from colleagues.
- 4.4.4 In addition to the regular acknowledgement by senior managers and councillors of the outstanding work of teams and individuals during the pandemic, we continue to recognise and thank our colleagues for going over and above to help the most vulnerable in our city as well as those taking on new roles to keep essential services running through our #HereforDerby articles. Our Communications and Marketing Team run the articles about the great work our colleagues are doing, including our:
- refuse team
 - fostering service
 - public protection team
 - care homes service
 - volunteers in the crematorium
 - business support team.

4.5 Next steps

- 4.5.1 The response of the Council's workforce during the pandemic has been to adapt quickly to new ways of working, and to deliver reconfigured and existing services at pace. Colleagues and partners have been aligned around a common purpose during the pandemic, and have worked innovatively to achieve common goals for the benefit of the citizens of Derby.
- 4.5.2 Collaborative working and co-production of solutions, working at pace and being citizen- focussed to improve lives in the city also informs how we develop our colleagues with the skills and leadership capability to focus on the priority needs for our city. We will bring a report to a future Personnel Committee to set out the updated organisational design approach.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Council managers and colleagues.

Other options

- 6.1 Not applicable.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 None directly arising.

Legal implications

- 8.1 None directly arising.

Other significant implications

- 9.1 None identified.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Nicola Sykes, Director of HR and OD	26/10/2020
Report sponsor	Nicola Sykes, Director of HR and OD	26/10/2020
Other(s)	Liz Moore, Head of HR	26/10/2020

Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	None

