

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Staff Governance Committee
<b>DATE</b>	12 April 2021
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Recruitment Update
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	RES/21/076
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steve Whyte, Director of Resources
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Lesley Strachan, Talent Manager
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.2

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide an update to Committee on workforce capacity developments across the organisation over the last twelve months. These are set out within the report covering three specific areas.

- Firstly, an update on the temporary movement of staff scheme developed during the Covid-19 pandemic (as requested at the Staff Governance Committee of 1 February 2021);
- Secondly, an update on recruitment undertaken across the Council between May 2020 and December 2020 (in response to the instruction from the Urgent Business Committee of 6 May 2020 as set out in section 3.3.3 of the report, and
- Finally, an update on the development and implementation of the new re.cr.uit scheme (in advance of a fuller report at June Committee).

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Committee notes the progress made on each of the three areas covered within the report.

### 3. BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Context

3.1.1 In August 2017, Council approved the 'Building a Council of the Future' report which set out our Target Operating Model (TOM) and the flexible and adaptable workforce we require to deliver the TOM.

3.1.2 Part of the focus of the Council's Workforce Plan approved by Staff Governance in June 2019 (RES/12/296) relates to building our workforce capacity to deliver as an organisation. The key challenges (and opportunities) within our workforce at that time identified three main areas of focus. Responding to our multi-

generational workforce, developing our young workforce and reshaping our current workforce to support our areas of sustained and increasing demand.

- 3.1.3 In response to these challenges (and opportunities) a range of work has been undertaken. In terms of our commitment to developing a multi-generational workforce, this requires an understanding of the needs and expectations of different generations in terms of ways of working and the working environment, as well as the various challenges and barriers to employment faced by different age groups.
- 3.1.4 In terms of developing our young workforce, a report was presented to Staff Governance Committee in September 2020 (RES/20/103) setting out the progress made with developing our young workforce and specifically around initiatives in place to support care experienced young people in the city. These include the apprenticeship programme and the guaranteed interview commitment.
- 3.1.5 In terms of reshaping our workforce, Committee instructed the Chief Officer - People & Organisational Development to develop a new approach to the internal recruitment and movement of staff across the Council. This approach (now known as the re.cr.uit scheme) was subsequently approved by Staff Governance Committee in October 2019 [RES/20/103].
- 3.1.6 From approval of the re.cr.uit scheme in October 2019, the principles of the way we recruit as an organisation began to change. Recruiting managers responded positively to the new approach to consider internal employees in a more flexible way, with an understanding that an employee may not have all the necessary qualifications, skills or experience required for the role from day one, but with development and experience will develop into the role.
- 3.1.7 The Covid-19 pandemic rapidly accelerated the need for this intended workforce flexibility, with a requirement to create the facility to move staff (on a voluntary basis) to areas of need across the organisation at short notice. Following an overwhelming response to an organisation wide ask for volunteers willing to support the pandemic response in undertaking temporary alternative duties, the temporary movement of staff scheme was developed and implemented. Further detail of this is outlined in section 3.2 of this report.
- 3.1.8 The Temporary Movement of Staff scheme has had a significant impact on our ability as an organisation to meet the workforce demands of the pandemic, and it is important to capture and build on this flexible approach for the future.
- 3.1.9 This report provides an update of the workforce capacity activity undertaken over the last 12 months over three specific areas as requested by Committee:
- Temporary Movement of Staff Scheme
  - Internal and External Recruitment following the Urgent Business Committee on 6 May 2020
  - Progress Update on the new approach to internal recruitment / internal movement of staff 're.cr.uit'.

## 3.2 Temporary Movement of Staff Scheme

- 3.2.1 At the Staff Governance Committee of 1 February 2021, an update on the work undertaken related to the temporary movement of staff to support the Covid-19 pandemic was requested.
- 3.2.2 Following the UK wide lockdown announcement on 23 March 2020, a number of services required urgent temporary resourcing support due to increased demand or resource shortage (as a result of some members of staff having to shield, self-isolate, or with caring responsibilities). Further, the implications of the pandemic meant that a number of services had to be reduced or stood down completely, resulting in employees working from home or with the ability to work from home but whose current role and duties did not allow for this.
- 3.2.3 As a result, there was a need to quickly move employees where they were either unable to work or were not doing 'critical' work, i.e. supporting the pandemic response, on a temporary basis, to areas of the organisation facing increased demand due to the need to respond to the pandemic, or resource shortage (as a result of a need to shield, self-isolate, or caring responsibilities).
- 3.2.4 The **Temporary Movement of Staff Protocol** was therefore developed to provide a framework for our approach to temporary movement which covers how employees would volunteer for the scheme and the basis for how they would be aligned to areas of demand based on factors including qualifications, skills and experience. Communications were issued to managers setting out how to request support with resourcing gaps on 25 March 2020 along with a communication to all staff inviting them to volunteer for the temporary movement scheme. The protocol also sets out pay arrangements, recording of temporary duties, risks and safeguards, and management and employee responsibilities during a temporary move. Trade Union colleagues were actively engaged and consulted during the development of the protocol and were supportive of the approach. Since its creation, other Local Authorities have requested access to our protocol as an example of good practice.
- 3.2.5 Temporary movement was and continues to be a voluntary process, and employees need to volunteer for and agree to any temporary moves. In order to best align employees to areas of demand, a Microsoft Form was issued to employees who expressed interest in the scheme to capture key information such as qualifications, skills, experience as well as availability and any restrictions (such as location or childcare or health), and the type of alternative work they would be willing to undertake.
- 3.2.6 The Temporary Movement of Staff scheme was promoted to managers and employees across the organisation using a variety of communications and hosted on the on the intranet, alongside the wider coronavirus pages on People Anytime.
- 3.2.7 Communications about the scheme received a huge response with over 1600 employees actively volunteering to support the pandemic response.

- 3.2.8 Requests from managers seeking temporary resource support were considered and approved by the Covid-19 Incident Management Team, based on reports provided by the Talent Team. As well as supporting internal services, partners including NHS Grampian, Bon Accord Care, the Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership and the Grampian Humanitarian Assistance Hub were also included.
- 3.2.9 Throughout the pandemic, there have been waves of demand in temporary movement. After an initially high volume of requests, as services were gradually reinstated, this decreased. December 2020 and January 2021 saw a significant increase in demand again for support with the Covid-19 vaccination programme and in processing business grants for example. To supplement our pool of volunteers, we have utilised our supply and relief workers and worked closely with partners including Sport Aberdeen to support services. Appendix 1 provides detail of the specific settings that these employees supported.
- 3.2.10 To date, 241 employees have undertaken alternative temporary duties as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, 424 employees from the Education service volunteered to support the Education and Childcare Hubs at the point that schools closed in March 2020. The total number of employees undertaking temporary alternative duties to date is 665.
- 3.2.11 The new re.cr.uit (Retaining Employees. Changing roles. Using Internal Talent) scheme (see section 3.4) is our new approach to internal recruitment. To support the scheme, a digital tool has been procured and developed. Whilst planned for use for internal recruitment and internal movement of staff on a fixed term / permanent basis, the system has now been developed further to accommodate both temporary movement and emergency response resourcing needs.

### **3.3 Update on Internal and External Recruitment (May - December 2020)**

- 3.3.1 The new approach to focus on the development and upskilling of our internal workforce, using the new re.cr.uit scheme for internal movement of staff and internal recruitment, was approved at Staff Governance Committee in October 2019.
- 3.3.2 Although the digital tool was still to be developed to support the re.cr.uit scheme, the fundamental principles of the scheme were in place from that point, with communications to managers about approval of the approach, the requirement to provide a clear justification for external recruitment at approval stage and on a case by case basis, Talent Team Advisers supporting managers to focus on internal recruitment and only where all internal options were exhausted, to seek approval for external recruitment.
- 3.3.3 The Urgent Business Committee of 6 May 2020 agreed: 'to limit external recruitment of employees only to critical posts where there was a clear and pressing need for resources relating to the COVID-19 response or public health and protection and the resources cannot be found either from temporary or permanent internal movement. Any permanent internal or external recruitment should only be undertaken in consultation with the Convener of the City Growth

and Resources Committee and should only be undertaken where the post would not be impacted by ongoing future redesign, and that the relevant Committee be a provided with service updates regarding any permanent recruitment that had been undertaken’.

- 3.3.4 Following this decision, the existing vacancy approval process was adapted to take account of the additional level of scrutiny instructed by the Urgent Business Committee. When completing the online ‘request to recruit’ form, managers are required to provide justification for filling the role and identifying how it relates to the Urgent Business Committee decision. Requests are considered by a panel comprising the Talent Manager, the Chief Officer – People & Organisational Development and the Chief Officer – Finance, in consultation with the Convenor of the City Growth and Resources Committee.
- 3.3.5 The principle of the approval process is that vacancies will be approved internal only in the first instance and only where all internal options have been exhausted will approval to advertise externally be considered.
- 3.3.6 Exceptions to the internal only approval are for particular critical roles such as teachers and social workers, where there are registration requirements, they are hard to fill roles, there is a statutory need to deliver the service and it is known that there is not a ready pool of available internal employees who could move to the role(s). These roles will be advertised internally and externally simultaneously, with agreement that recruiting managers prioritise any internal employees ahead of external candidates.
- 3.3.7 To provide an indication of the volume of recruitment undertaken across the organisation during the period May to December 2020, 431 vacancies were advertised. This compares with 954 for the same period in 2019, representing a 55% decrease).
- 3.3.8 Focusing on the 2020 data, 26% of vacancies were advertised internally only and 74% externally (and internally at the same time). [This compares with 20% of vacancies advertised internally only in the same period in 2019].
- 3.3.9 Of the externally advertised vacancies in 2020, 51% were teaching or school support vacancies (40% in 2019). Other areas where there has been a need to advertise externally are Social Work / Social Care roles across Adult Health & Social Care and Integrated Children & Family Services and an ongoing need to recruit Cleaners, particularly given the additional pressures placed on facilities teams during the pandemic. This is because we do not have a ready pool of internal employees with the necessary qualifications, in some cases, or in some cases they are part-time, term time roles for example, which are not always attractive to candidates seeking full time employment.
- 3.3.10 A number of these roles, such as Teachers and Social Workers, are recognised locally and nationally as ‘hard to fill’. In recognition of this, as part of our approach to succession planning, work is ongoing between the Talent Team and Service Managers to develop talent pipelines to enable us to secure our

future workforce in these areas. Initiatives include traineeships, apprenticeships, mentoring / shadowing and other development initiatives.

3.3.11 Appendix 2 shows a detailed breakdown of all vacancies which were advertised during the period May to December 2020.

### **3.4. Launch of re.cr.uit scheme**

3.4.1 The new approach to internal recruitment and internal movement of staff was approved at Staff Governance Committee in October 2019. The principles of the new re.cr.uit (retaining employees. changing roles. using internal talent) scheme have been adopted since that point for recruitment to all our vacancies.

3.4.2 Development of the digital tool to support the scheme commenced in early 2020, in terms of the necessary governance steps, including development of a data protection impact assessment and system customisation, including branding.

3.4.3 The Covid-19 pandemic caused a significant delay in progress with system development and implementation as the team were diverted to develop the temporary movement of staff scheme as set out above.

3.4.4 Once the temporary movement of staff scheme was operational, the team were able to focus once again on progressing the development and implementation of the scheme with system training and then testing phase with recruiting managers and employees.

3.4.5 A significant amount of guidance has had to be developed to accompany the scheme including guidance notes for employees and managers and these are available to all on the intranet on the People Anytime pages.

3.4.6 The new approach also required a review and update of the overall recruitment and selection guidance to take account of the re.cr.uit scheme.

3.4.7 The final stage was development of communications to managers and staff across the organisation to announce the launch of the full digital system from January 2021.

3.4.8 Trade Union colleagues have been kept informed and engaged at key stages throughout the development and implementation stages of the system including all guidance documents.

3.4.9 The re.cr.uit scheme represents a new and different way of recruiting for the organisation. Employees no longer 'apply' for internal roles they wish to be considered for, instead they join the scheme and are automatically considered for roles that they have a potential alignment to on the basis of a combination of their qualifications, skills, experience and potential 'fit' to roles. ('Fit' is determined using the working preferences questionnaire (OPQ32 - occupational personality questionnaire). [Staff Governance Committee, October 2019 - New Approach to Internal Recruitment and Internal Movement of Staff RES/19/371].

3.4.10 The period January to March 2021 will be used as a learning cycle and review period for the team as feedback is provided from managers and employees on their experience of the system. The team is continuously reviewing the feedback and improving the system on the basis of that feedback. Trade Union colleagues continue to be engaged during this period providing any feedback from their Members and on any developments / improvements in the system and scheme.

3.4.11 At the time of writing this report, the digital tool has been launched and is in use. 99 internal vacancies have been added to the system to determine whether these can be filled using our internal workforce and are at various stages in the process.

3.4.12 A further report will be provided to a future Staff Governance Committee to provide more detail on how the new approach is working in practice and any changes and improvements being made as a result of this initial learning cycle.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Processes are in place to track the movement of Council staff between services, making use of timesheet recording for hours worked.

4.2 Costs of hours worked are re-aligned between Council services by the Finance team on a monthly basis as required. The scheme is sufficiently developed to be able to handle charges to any partner organisations when required.

4.3 As identified above, the pandemic increased resource demand within some services at very short notice, and it is important that the costs of the response are correctly aligned so that they can be matched against any funding made available by Government. The latest list of Coronavirus Related Funding was included as part of the Council Financial Performance report to the City Growth and Resources Committee in February 2021.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	None	L	None
<b>Compliance</b>	None	L	None
<b>Operational</b>	None	L	None
<b>Financial</b>	None	L	None
<b>Reputational</b>	None	L	None
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	None	L	None

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Economy Stretch Outcome 1 and 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026. This includes social care. Key driver 1.2 is 'developing the talent and future workforce necessary to support diversification of business &amp; economy'. This includes employability activity and progressing the Council's Investors in Young People Programme.</li> <li>• 90% of working people in living wage employment by 2026. Key driver 2.1 is 'promoting inclusive economic growth for our most disadvantaged communities'. This includes support for young people as well as people progressing positively through the employability pipeline.</li> </ul>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of People Stretch Outcome 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</li> </ul> <p>The key drivers for this outcome are:</p> <p>6.1 Improving pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including Care Experienced Young People and those with Additional Support Needs)</p> <p>6.2 Supporting young people, families, carers and communities to better understand the opportunities available to their children upon leaving school</p> <p>6.3 Ensuring children, young people and families understand the pathways available to them and skills required for future</p>



## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Reports to Staff Governance Committee and Urgent Business Committee as referenced above.

## 10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Temporary Movement - Summary of Requests to Date  
Appendix 2 – Vacancies Advertised

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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## Temporary Movement - Summary of Requests to Date

Date Started	Request	Number of Employees providing support
March 2020	Education and Childcare Hubs	424
March 2020	Crematorium Team	1
March 2020	Crisis Helplines	52
March 2020	NHS Bed Provision Support	24 (but not required)
March 2020	Scottish Welfare Fund Support	4
March 2020	Refuse Drivers	1
April 2020	Prescription Collection and Delivery	5
April 2020	Bon Accord Care front line support	20
Jan 2021	(lunch support, general duties etc.)	6
April 2020	Refuse Loaders	16
Jan 2021		2 Sport Aberdeen
May 2020	Care Home Support (ACHSCP & External Care Homes)	27 2 relief via national SSSC portal
July 2020	Driving support for the Social Work Transport Team	1
July 2020	Waste and Recycling customer services	2
August 2020	Additional admin school support, Harlaw Academy	1
September 2020	Admin support in Housing for backlog of lease signings	1
September 2020	Flu immunisation programme support	3 employees 3 casual/relief workers 4 Sport Aberdeen
September 2020	Revenues and Benefits team support	2
March 2021	Ongoing search for 2FTE	
October 2020	Test and Protect calls	9
April 2020	Business Grants (processing applications and Helplines)	19
November 2020		15 1 casual worker 3 Sport Aberdeen
January 2021	COVID vaccination calls and helplines	29
March 2021	Education hardship grants support	2