

## **The Role of the Somerset Manager – Update on Audit Report**

Lead Officer: Chris Squire – Director of HR & Organisational Development

Authors: Melissa Fairhurst (Strategic Manager, HR) & Andrew Fisk (Senior Learning & Development Officer)

Contact Details: csquire@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Mandy Chilcott

Division and Local Member: n/a

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the Audit Committee on the recommendations that came out of the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) Report into the Role of the Somerset Manager, which was issued on 1 October 2018.
- 1.2. There has been good progress made on these recommendations. The work has been identified as a key part of the Council's People Strategy (published July 2018) and the Transforming Somerset County Council to Improve Lives programme.

### **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

- 2.1. Members are asked to consider and comment on the areas of work that are described.
- 2.2. It is recommended that this work continues, with an update to the Audit Committee in November 2019.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The report by SWAP into the Role of the Somerset Manager was commissioned by the Director of HR & Organisational Development and provided a 'Partial' audit opinion. It identified several areas of good practice including:
  - Good quality information available on the Intranet, including specific managers' guides;
  - A long-standing corporate appraisal system;
  - Regular good quality staff surveys;
  - A wide range of training courses, including a comprehensive management course;
  - The Council's Learning Centre is described as useful.
- 3.2. The report also identified one significant weakness, with a finding that significant numbers of managers have not completed important training:
  - Systems to identify and address non-completion of training are not effective;
  - A lack of a corporate training policy (for managers);

- Mandatory training (for managers) not clearly identified.

**3.3.** One high-priority recommendation was made, that a Management & Leadership Training Framework is written and implemented to address the weaknesses described.

**4. Work to date**

Our response to the audit has led to a number of programmes of work as outlined here.

**4.1.** The Corporate Training Policy has been reviewed, revised, consulted upon and is now published on the HR intranet site.

**4.2.** An e- learning module has been created on decision-making (as requested) and is now available on the Learning Centre

**4.3.** Significant work has been undertaken in developing a Management and Leadership framework. This initial work has been taken further in terms of also linking the framework to other programmes of a similar nature thus bringing everything together. The following programmes have either been implemented or are close to completion:

- Within the Learning Centre a dashboard has been created called “Learning and Development for Managers.” This dashboard contains a section on “Core Learning and Development” which includes all the sections that a manager in SCC needs to complete in their first year with SCC. This covers technical and some behavioural areas. The advantage being that reports can be created and followed up on with teams/service areas (it is proposed that this is quarterly). The Learning Centre would also highlight to a manager which sections have already been completed. There is also a link to the Somerset’s People Attributes and qualification opportunities;
- Somerset People Attributes (‘leadership’ competencies at all levels, linked to the County Plan and supported by work on appraisals, performance management, recruitment)
- SLT Development Programme (currently being procured);
- An apprenticeship in Leadership & Management, providing a Level 3 qualification with the Institute of Leadership & Management, and delivered by the Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning;
- Team development linked to the Somerset People Attributes;
- Service specific management & leadership development.

**4.4.** The Learning Centre is used to identify and report on mandatory training for managers. This includes, for example, a recent programme on Financial Management Training, as well as courses such as Health & Safety. These reports will be included as part of quarterly HR reporting to the Senior Leadership Team.

## **5. Consultations undertaken**

- 5.1.** Work undertaken has been done in consultation with managers and trade union representatives.

## **6. Implications,**

- 6.1.** The implementation of a framework and supporting programmes of work will provide consistent and high-quality management practices across the authority. There are some excellent managers and leaders across all service areas and the issue is one of ensuring consistency.

These programmes will also help to define management & leadership as a definable career within the authority and across partner organisations. We are sharing our work with others and taking part in joint development programmes (for example, with the NHS in the region). This work also supports other initiatives such as Innovation Champions that are working across the organisation.

- 6.2.** If this work is not completed, the Council faces risks in several areas:
- Staff morale – poor or outdated management practice is a consistent complaint in our staff surveys;
  - Legislative – Health & Safety, employment;
  - Provision and commissioning of services;
  - Increased turnover due to lack of transparency for career progression and opportunities.

## **7. Background papers**

- 7.1.** The following papers are available on request:
- Corporate Training Policy
  - Somerset's People Attributes
  - Learning & Development for Managers
  - Children & Families Leadership Development Framework

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report authors