

Somerset County Council

Human Resources Committee

– Date: 21st February 2023

Somerset Council Wellbeing Strategy for Approval

Executive Members: Cllr Liz Leyshon, Deputy Leader and Lead Member on Finance and Human Resources

Lead Officer: Chris Squire, HR&OD Director

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<i>Please complete sign off boxes below prior to submission to Community Governance</i>			
	Seen by:	Name	Date
Report Sign off	Legal	Tom Woodhams	10/02/2023
	Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	10/02/2023
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	10/02/2023
	Executive Member	Liz Leyshon	10/02/2023
	Monitoring Officer	Scott Wooldridge	10/02/2023
	Summary:	This report provides details of the new Wellbeing Strategy for Somerset Council, which is ready for consideration and if appropriate, approval, by the HR Committee.	
Recommendations:	The members of the HR Policy Committee are asked to: Formally approve the new Wellbeing Strategy, as detailed below, for use in the new Somerset Council with effect from 1st April 2023.		
Reasons for Recommendations:	To ensure that the Wellbeing offer at Somerset Council is supportive, effective, and accessible to all employees from 1 st April 2023.		
Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:	Part of the People Workstream for Local Government Reorganisation.		
Financial, Legal and HR Implications:	Financial – There are some financial implications, for example resource needed to provide a suitable and effective service. This may include buying in some services and sourcing external suppliers where necessary to ensure that our offer remains fit for purpose and continues to evolve. This will be budgeted for as appropriate.		

	<p>HR – Wellbeing at all five councils has been welcomed and it is important to continue to offer and improve the service, particularly at a time of change and transition, which can be challenging for people. The Wellbeing Strategy will support change resilience within the new organisation and give weight to the people focused culture we wish to create. It is imperative to have a good wellbeing offer to attract people into the organisation – since the Pandemic, research has shown that wellbeing is at the forefront of candidates’ minds when they are considering new opportunities.</p> <p>Legal – There are no known legal implications to the proposed strategy as it draws on the best practices from previous Somerset County and District Councils.</p>
Equalities Implications:	The Council’s duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have “due regard” to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions. A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the new Wellbeing Strategy and is attached as an appendix to the strategy document.
Risk Assessment:	N/A
Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):	N/A

1 Background

- 1.1 Under Local Government Reform the five Councils have come together to agree a new Wellbeing Strategy which builds on the excellent work already achieved within each separate council. It seeks to take the best practices from each council and develop a wellbeing offer which leads the way in its support for all employees.
- 1.2 The strategy follows trends, best practice, and recommendations from industry experts such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, MIND, and the NHS.
- 1.3 The Wellbeing Strategy sits alongside the Dynamic Working Strategy and recognises that, since remote working continues to be a popular choice for many employees and is now commonplace in many organisations, the wellbeing offer needs to reflect and support all ways of working.

- 1.4 Some of the broader organisational benefits include:
- Greater access to external talent due to the global trend in wellbeing sitting at the forefront of many candidates' priorities when searching for a new role
 - Greater retention of key talent who feel motivated, inspired, and valued
 - Improved internal employee engagement by demonstrating that employees' needs are put first
 - A reduction in sickness absence
 - Improved performance, productivity, and success
 - A healthier and more inclusive culture where differences matter and are celebrated

2 Options Considered

- 2.1 An alternative option was to continue with Somerset County Council's wellbeing offer. However, it was felt that, by taking the best practices and concepts from all predecessor councils, alongside local and national developments, this would provide a unified approach which will be a) market leading and b) recognised by most employees.

Initially the Wellbeing Workstream and the Ways of Working Workstream were operating separately but, by working jointly, all elements of the employee experience were considered together.

Feedback from predecessor councils' recent Wellbeing Survey results has been considered and contributed to our approach and design of Somerset Council's '4 Foundations of Wellbeing'. The strategy will continue to evolve and results of the recent Health & Wellbeing Survey (sent to all employees in November 2022) will inform future iterations.

3 Consultations Undertaken

- 3.1 The Wellbeing Strategy has been consulted on with key stakeholders: union representatives, HR colleagues, Property, FM, ICT, Customers & Partners, Employment Equalities Officers, People Workstream Leads, Peer Support Networks – Working Well Together, Culture Navigators. The strategy was taken to the LGR JNF (Joint Negotiating Forum) on Wednesday 8th February 2023 for formal approval.

4 Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations are made to ensure a supportive and positive approach to wellbeing in the new Council. If approval is not achieved for the new Wellbeing Strategy, there is a risk to employees' health, engagement, and performance and to the reputation of Somerset Council as an employer of choice.

5 Background Papers

5.1 Wellbeing Strategy

Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B - Working Well Together Draft Communications Activity Overview 2023