Top Leaders Development Programme

"Succession Planning for the Future"

Contents

Overview

The Council is operating in changing and challenging times and with an aging long standing senior workforce, the Council has, over the years, lost key skills and experience through retirement of key officers. In a climate of enduring skills shortages and research suggesting a lack of confidence in the leadership potential within the existing workforce, succession planning is key to the continuing success of an organisation.

The skills and behaviours we need going forward are changing and now is the right time to commence with a programme to ensure we have talented individuals, both in the present and future, who will continue the success of the Council and manage our risk of not having the right skills in the right areas, particularly in key roles at the top of our organisation.

This programme supports our 2020-2024 Corporate Plan, in particular, *"having a skilled, trained, flexible and proactive workforce"*

What is Succession Planning

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) describes the process as:

"Succession planning is the process of identifying and developing potential future leaders and senior managers, as well as individuals, to fill business-critical roles. The aim is to be able to fill key roles effectively if a current post holder leaves the organisation. Succession planning programmes typically include practical, tailored work experience relevant for future roles."

In essence, succession planning is about addressing and minimising risk through identifying critical roles within the Council and developing potential successors. The aim is to develop a pool of talented people, each one of whom is adaptable and capable of filling a variety of roles. Because succession planning is concerned with developing longer-term successors, as well as short-term replacements, each pool will be larger than the range of posts it covers.

Succession planning is not about a "guarantee" of promotion or alternative role, it is about enhancing individuals' skill sets in their current roles and equipping them with the tools and skills to prepare them for forthcoming opportunities.

Equal Opportunities

This process supports our equal opportunities ethos through equipping employees with the skills and behaviours for future roles. Future posts would continue to be advertised in line with the Councils policies and procedures and by completing this programme it does not guarantee an individual would secure an advertised role with the Council in the future.

Approach

We have identified that an ideal place to start, given the skills shortages for the recently advertised post of Strategic Director (Place and Renewal), that our initial succession plan programme(s) will be aimed at Heads of Service, to equip them with the skills and behaviours needed to operate at a director level and beyond. In order that training is delivered by a nationally recognised provider, the proposal is to enrol with Solace, Total Leadership Programme which is delivered in conjunction with INLOGOV and sponsored by the LGA. This training is delivered by Local Government practitioners alongside academics from a Russell Group University to provide 'kite-marked' bespoke leadership development opportunities and has successfully been used by other local Government organisations.

After discussions with Solace, this training is only open to one person from each organisation, per year. This is so they have a good mix of skills and backgrounds on the training course. The course is primarily aimed at Directors aspiring to be a Chief Executive, however, following discussions with the course lead they would be willing, subject to application, to accept a Head of Service whose role cuts across and influences decision making of the Council and who can demonstrate an understanding of the Council as a whole. The application would need to be sponsored by the CEX.

In summary, the course will deliver a tailored learning approach with modules, covering:

- Module 1: Understanding the Context of your Leadership
- Module 2: Place & Systems Leadership
- Module 3: Innovation, Adaptive & Agile Leadership
- Module 4: Inclusivity & Complexity
- Module 5: Authentic Personal Leadership & Resilience

The course aims to equip students with:

1. Mediating contested leadership spaces and the political and managerial interface
2. Demonstrating strategic leadership, from vision to delivery
3. Leading collaboratively across partnerships and alliances powerfully and effectively
4. Understanding the type of leadership skills and behaviours required for the future through exposure to real life experiences from the perspective of cutting-edge speakers

Full details of the 2021/22 course can be found at Total Leadership Programme

We propose that to build resilience, this course, or a suitable alternative, is available to HoS over a 3–5-year period, subject to funding.

Financials

Based on 2021/22 Programme

Programme fees for Solace members are £4995 + VAT, inclusive of accommodation and all course materials.

Programme fees for non-members are £5250 + VAT inclusive of accommodation and all course materials.

Resource strain

The training is primarily residential in Warwick. Across the 5 modules the time away from the business would roughly be:

1. Induction – delivered remotely around May 2022 – one day
2. Module 1 – Residential 3 days (2 nights) starting July 22
3. Module 2 – Residential 2 days (1 night) starting 8 weeks from Module 1
4. Module 3 – Residential 2 days (1 night) starting 8 weeks from Module 2
5. Module 4 – Residential 2 days (1 night) starting 8 weeks from Module 3
6. Module 5 – Residential 3 days (2 nights) starting 8 weeks from Module 4

In addition, there will be a small amount of reading between Modules and developing a plan of how the student is implementing learnings.

Time Frame

Based on 2021/22 Programme

The course runs over twelve months, with five residentials, plus online learning and action learning on real-time, work-based problems. Expected start time would be July 2022, with a one-day induction around May 2022.

Application Process

We propose to invite applications from Head of Service level. Only those who have been in their HoS post for more than two years and can demonstrate how their role influences the Councils wider decision making, will be eligible to apply.

To apply HoS will need to submit an expression of interest to the CEX by [TBC] detailing why they think they have the right skills and behaviours necessary to operate at Director level, taking account of the competencies we have identified in Appendix 1 as being necessary for this type of role. Once all applications are submitted, there will be:

1. competency-based interview, in line with the competencies at Appendix 1 with the CEX, the Leader of the Council and the Opposition Leader. The final decision will be that of the CEX as Head of Paid Service.
2. potentially Psychometric testing to evaluate a candidate's performance, skills, knowledge, abilities, personality traits, attitudes, and job/academic potential.

The successful HoS will then need to complete the Solace formal application process.

Additional Training Option

Due to the restriction in candidates allowed on the "Total Leadership" training each year, Solace have advised an appropriate alternative route for HoS, who have not been successful in the Total Leadership programme and who wish to work towards a director position in the future, would be a bespoke in house / remote learning programme "Aspiring Public Sector Leaders". This is a modular based workshop of 5 modules spanning over 5-6 months, with the course being tailored to suit the Councils and the HoS aspirations. Each HoS would need a mentor (Directors and CEX), which if we run this over a two-year period would see the

initial HoS becoming mentors for the other HoS in year 2. This training does not result in any formal certification etc.

There is a requirement that 10 people are on the course. We would have the option to sell places to neighbouring councils, if needed.

Draft scope of course is available in Appendix 2

Financials

The total cost for 10 delegates is £15000

Appendix 1

Competency Framework

BUILDING AND MANAGING REL ATIONSHIPS

Can demonstrate the importance of developing and maintaining relationships both inside and outside of the Council. Working effectively with a diverse range of people sharing knowledge and skills, to deliver the Councils goals.
Having good working relationships with colleagues and effective alliances with external partners will help create a Council people want to work for and with, enabling a more effective delivery of the Council's strategic priorities.

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Identifies and engages a diverse range of influential contacts within stakeholder and community groups, and partner organisations	Builds relationships with limited contacts.
Builds alliances to establish mutually beneficial working arrangements, openly sharing knowledge and insights	Forms one sided partnership arrangements that only benefit the Council
Actively challenges and addresses 'silo attitudes' to encourage effective relationship building.	
Understands the complexities of political dynamics and uses to manage relationships and resolve conflict effectively	

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS

Effectively builds and manages relationships with the Councils stakeholders, thinking through how our work relates to our different stakeholders engaging with them in a planned and meaningful way, to mitigate risk and maximise opportunity. Communicates intelligence back across the Council to deliver maximum benefit.
Stakeholders are anyone (internal or external) on whom our work impacts. We need to manage their expectations, respond to their aspirations, and use diverse views to shape our Council.

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Builds the Councils reputation as an organisation committed to meeting the needs of its community	Does little to encourage the Council to think about the needs of the residents and partner organisations
Manages partner organisations and residents' expectations of the Council by anticipating and influencing changing priorities	Accepts outcomes that do not meet the diverse needs of the residents
Instils a culture that encourages staff to think about meeting residents needs first	
Builds the confidence of staff, partner organisations and the community by ensuring the Council delivers quality work	

COMMUNICATING AND INFLUENCING

Ability to present information and arguments clearly and convincingly so that others see us as credible and articulate and engage with us.
Effectively engage our diverse audience - colleagues, Councillors, external partners, and the community - and ensure they understand, respond to what we do and help us to deliver

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Articulates self with credibility and conviction, encouraging buy-in to corporate position	Allows own views to be distorted or influenced inappropriately by others
Influences the thinking of other organisations, encouraging them to deliver in line with the Council	Pushes through own agenda, rather than acting in line with the Council
Acts as a credible and convincing spokesperson and negotiator for the Council	
Instils a corporate commitment to accessible communication	

STRATEGIC THINKING

Can demonstrate and understanding of the bigger picture to uncover potential challenges and opportunities for the long term and turning these into a compelling vision for action.
Constantly scanning the horizon to identify current and future challenges and opportunities, helping us to promote and deliver Council priorities more effectively.

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Translates an understanding of the complex and diverse threats and issues facing the Council into positive actions	Sets strategies for the Council that do not tie in with its overall vision or strategies
Proactively involves partners in strategic thinking, incorporating their views into plans and working with them to align strategic priorities	Generates uninspiring strategic initiatives, failing to realise the potential of the Council
Sets organisational priorities by identifying where time and investment is needed most	
Generates and leads strategic initiatives that reflects the Councils position as a District Council	

MANAGING AND DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE

Sets high standards for oneself and others, guiding, motivating, and developing them, to achieve high performance and meet the Council's objectives and statutory obligations.
Drive to perform at the highest standard to deliver the Councils objectives. This means encouraging everyone to use their skills and knowledge in the most effective way and develop to their full potential

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Creates a culture that learns from experience	Avoids providing staff with opportunities to learn and develop
Set clear organisational objectives, cascading challenging yet achievable deliverables to directorates	Sets standards that are unclear, unrealistic, or too challenging, jeopardising the delivery of good work
Identifies strategic level performance indicators and communicates these clearly	
Leads and sets an example for desired behaviour and performance for the Councils staff	

Instils a culture of high performance and outstanding results where staff are encouraged to perform to their best	

DECISION MAKING

Forms sound, evidence-based judgements, making choices, assessing risks to delivery, and taking accountability for results.
The decisions we take have wide- and far-reaching implications and we need to be sure they are well founded, fair and will stand up to scrutiny

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Makes difficult decisions for the long-term benefit of the Council	Puts off making important Council decisions
Presents and instils confidence in strategic decision making	Avoids responsibility for Council decisions that results in a negative impact
Consults stakeholders early in critical Council-wide decisions	Fails to consider the wider Council in decision making
Stands by decisions and actions of the Council	
Balances effective risk management with the need for timely actions	

PLANNING AND ORGANISING

Thinking ahead, managing time, priorities, and risk, and developing structured and efficient approaches to deliver work on time and to a high standard.
Success is measured by results. We will be judged by our ability to turn ideas and opportunities into concrete actions, working in partnership with others to deliver clear outcomes.

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Takes accountability for monitoring delivery of the Councils objectives	Fails to take responsibility for the delivery of work against the Councils commitments
Uses quality assurance processes across the Council as a feedback mechanism to improve performance	Delivers projects with no quality assurance or performance evaluation measures in place
Realigns objectives to respond to changing external and internal agendas	
Uses feedback from all channels as a performance measure for Council work	

PROBLEM SOLVING

Analysing and interpreting situations from a variety of viewpoints and finding creative, workable, and timely solutions.
We need to understand the challenges the Council and other partners face and respond innovatively with new ideas and ways of working together

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Seeks multiple perspectives to understand the breadth and depth of complex issues	Stifles creativity and fails to engage others in resolving Council issues
Produces strategies to solve Council wide problems, considering the practical and political concerns associated with the implementation of solutions	Fails to anticipate future Council problems
Enables to Council to continuously improve and innovate in the long term	
Problem solves jointly with others to stimulate innovation	
Turns ambiguous or difficult situations into opportunities	

RESEARCH AND ANAYLSIS

Gathering intelligence (information, opinion, and data) from varied sources, making sense of it, testing its validity, and drawing conclusions that can lead to practical benefits.
Quality information and insight will help us develop and substantiate robust policy and decisions which will lead to tangible benefits for our community.

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Exchanges ideas and knowledge with stakeholders to foster new research agendas and derive insights for the Council	Duplicates research effort, fails to find out about similar national or other research
Takes accountability for the quality of intelligence that research and new policy are based on	Fails to understand, or use, research in the delivery of Council wide projects
Encourages new and innovative insights from analysis	
Evaluates the feasibility of cost effectiveness of research proposals, stringently assessing where the research will add real value	

RESPONSIBLE USE OF RESOURCES

Taking personal responsibility for using and managing resources effectively, efficiently, and sustainably.
We want to provide maximum value for Dover residents now and in the future. That means acting with integrity, looking for new ways to drive efficiencies and maintaining our reputation for costing no more than we should – either to the taxpayer or to the environment

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Explores different options for funding and income generation	Does not achieve efficiency savings
Sets budgets, understanding current costs and challenging teams to deliver greater efficiency	Fails to maximise opportunities to generate income for the Council
Monitors resource allocation, ensuring the Council works within budget and resources	
Ensures the Council procures and uses resources fairly and responsibly and with regards to environmental efficiencies	
Leads initiatives to identify and deliver efficiencies across the Council	

ORGANISATION AWARENESS

Understanding and being sensitive to organisational dynamics, culture, and politics across and beyond the Council and shaping our approach accordingly. Balancing statutory responsibilities with different demands and agendas. Our decisions can have wide repercussions on our community and beyond, so we need to be able to navigate carefully and sensitively.

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Focusses on the needs of the community, promoting organisational awareness of how they impact Council priorities	Allows competing views to interfere with driving the Councils objectives forward
Anticipates and responds appropriately and professionally to political pressure, inspiring confidence, and trust for Councillors	Behaves in a way which calls into question the reputation of the Council
Leads by setting the highest standard in upholding integrity and ethical behaviour	
Shapes senior stakeholder perceptions of the Council, using their influence to support the Councils agenda	

RESPONDING TO PRESSURE AND CHANGE

Flexibility and adapting positively, to sustain performance when the situation changes, workload increases, tensions rise or priorities shift.
We operate in a challenging social, economic, and political context that is constantly changing. We need to respond to this positively and resiliently to ensure we continue to meet the needs and expectations of our community.

Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Demonstrates resilience in the face of challenge from staff, media, Councillors, or other partner organisations	Fails to seek stakeholders' views and priorities when initiating change
Promotes the Council as a flexible organisation, responding to the challenging needs of its community	Fails to take responsibility for leading organisational change
Shows positivity in the face of pressure, minimising negative impact	
Drives a culture of continuous improvement	

Appendix 2

Example Programme Dover

Launch Event Programme overview and network building (10.30 – 4)
• Development programme overview • Programme context and delivery approach • Learning Diaries • The Modules in more detail • Launch diagnostic process • Plenary about programme: additional topics, emphases and Guest Speakers • Introduction to Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Module 1: Leadership and Change Exploring the role of leadership in delivering change
• Leadership – what do we mean? • Contrasting leadership and management • The context for local government – understanding the VUCA environment • Change principles • Adaptive change • Leading self: resilience • Guest Speaker.

Version 3 8 November 2021

Module 2: Strategic Thinking
Thinking about the future and generating unique insights and opportunities

- Understanding the strategic context for public services
- Creating a strategic overview
- Commercial awareness
- Political astuteness – building your political awareness
- Guest Speaker.

Module 3: Working Collaboratively across organisations
How to establish a common purpose, a strong insistence on a whole systems approach and shared power to stimulate change

- The Dover context: partner and stakeholder mapping: working more closely with internal and external stakeholders
- Working collaboratively – effective partnership working across organisations: theory to practice
- Systems thinking
- Influencing skills
- Guest Speaker.

Version 3 8 November 2021

Module 4 Coaching for High Performance A coaching style of managing
•   High performing organisations •   Innovation in the public sector •   Innovation techniques •   Your role in developing others – ensuring a pipeline of talent •   Manager as coach •   Solution Focused approaches •   Skills Practice •   Scaling to establish reality.