

JSCC Discussion Paper - Succession Planning and Future Proofing

‘Succession planning focuses on identifying and growing talent to fill leadership and business-critical positions in the future.’ (CIPD). It’s closely linked to talent management.

North Herts Council is committed to the development of our staff through various initiatives aimed at creating a skilled and adaptive workforce. This has always been important but especially so, in light of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which highlights the importance of teams that are prepared for evolving demands.

We encourage staff to develop in a number of ways, through both formal and informal training and development; we support staff to complete formal qualifications wherever possible, there are opportunities for secondments and ‘acting up’. Discussions with line managers at Regular Performance Reviews and 1-1s is vital to this process, along with HR advice and support.

Succession planning and nurturing talent can support retention, but we recognise that with the Councils flatter structure, there may not always be a role to progress into, which may result to individuals seeing opportunities elsewhere. Where there has been turnover, several senior roles at the Council have been filled by internal candidates in recent years and there are many examples of employees at all levels of the organisation achieving promotions within the Council.

In addition to developing staff for their next role, we are looking to the future and preparing them to adapt to changes in the world of work. We have incorporated the apprenticeship levy as one of the tools to facilitate staff development and we have several staff developing their digital skills and knowledge to support the workforce of the future. New roles and opportunities may also arise from LGR and we should ensure they are well placed to continue their development.

Utilising the apprenticeship levy, or any other form of learning and development undertaken by staff, does come with challenges. The primary issue is the constraint of time and workload on our staff. Many employees are already managing substantial responsibilities, and taking on additional learning can be impractical, so we support employees as much as we can to facilitate this.

The future will bring new structures, roles, processes, and technologies. It is vital that our staff are not only prepared for these changes but can also use them as an opportunity.