

## PPMA Awards Submission for Public Sector HRD of the year: Elaine Chandler, Head of HR & Organisational Development at Worcestershire County Council

### Introduction to Elaine



Elaine Chandler became Head of HR & OD at Worcestershire County Council (WCC) in January 2014. Elaine joined WCC in December 2005 as HR Manager of Adult and Community Services and prior to this she worked in Leadership Development within the Banking sector.

Elaine's drive to move to Local Government stems from her experience at her interview which is when she first realised that working in the public sector puts us in the privileged position where we can make a real difference to people's lives. Elaine is always clear that we all have a responsibility to make sure that everything that we do in HR & OD on a daily basis enables colleagues on the front line to be the best they can be every single day. Elaine's passion and her values inspire others to want to make a difference and to realise that achieving the impossible is possible!

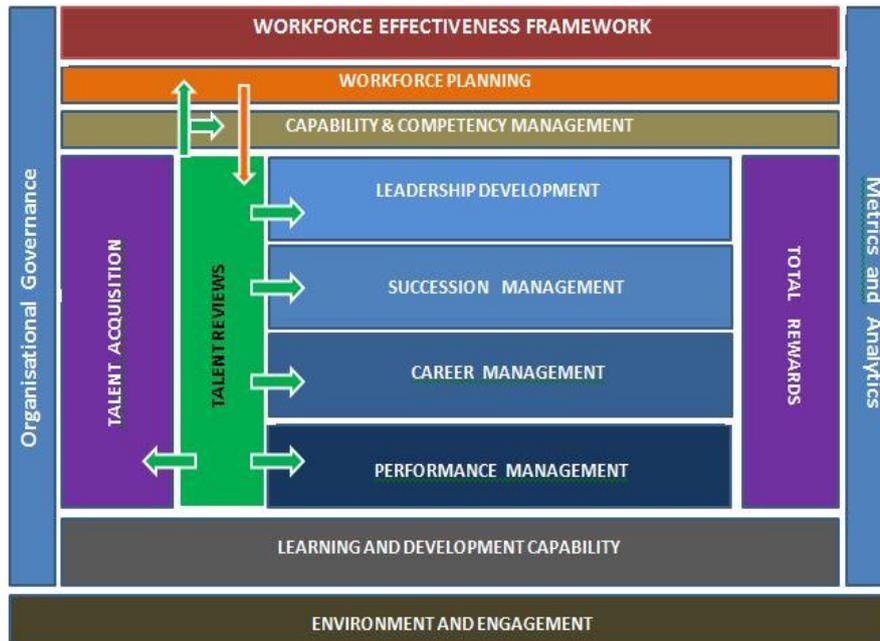
Since Elaine arrived at Worcestershire County Council, her infectious enthusiasm for leadership and the importance of delivering through our people has never faltered and since becoming Head of HR & OD, has elevated the importance of workforce to be one of the Chief Executive's key priorities.

Elaine has done this through implementing the Workforce Effectiveness Framework and its key components:

### Workforce Effectiveness Framework

Elaine devised and introduced the Workforce Effectiveness Framework in 2015 following agreement from Cabinet and our Strategic Leadership Team to our Workforce 2020 principles.

In order to implement these principles and deliver the associated outcomes we now focus on **Capacity**; (e.g. size and shape of the authority, critical role identification, succession management), its **Capability** (e.g. leadership development and performance management) alongside our organisational **Environmental Factors** (e.g. innovative spaces; staff engagement; total reward) to build our **Workforce Effectiveness Framework (WEF)**. This is shaping how we acquire, develop and retain a world-class workforce fit for 2020 Worcestershire.



Elaine created the **Workforce Effectiveness Board** (Chief Executive and Directors) which provides overall direction and monitoring of delivery against the Workforce Effectiveness Framework (**Capacity, Capability and Environment**). The Board meets every 6 weeks and is solely focussed on our workforce and the organisation's culture and its behaviours. Elaine leads this Board and holds the Strategic Leadership Team to account to support the delivery of outcomes in this framework and also their role as senior leaders in leading the workforce in the right way. Elaine reminds SLT about the shadow they cast as leaders and how their behaviour impacts upon the performance of the people within that shadow. Through this framework there is now a robust attention to workforce issues which is owned by both the Officer Leadership Team and equally by the Politicians.

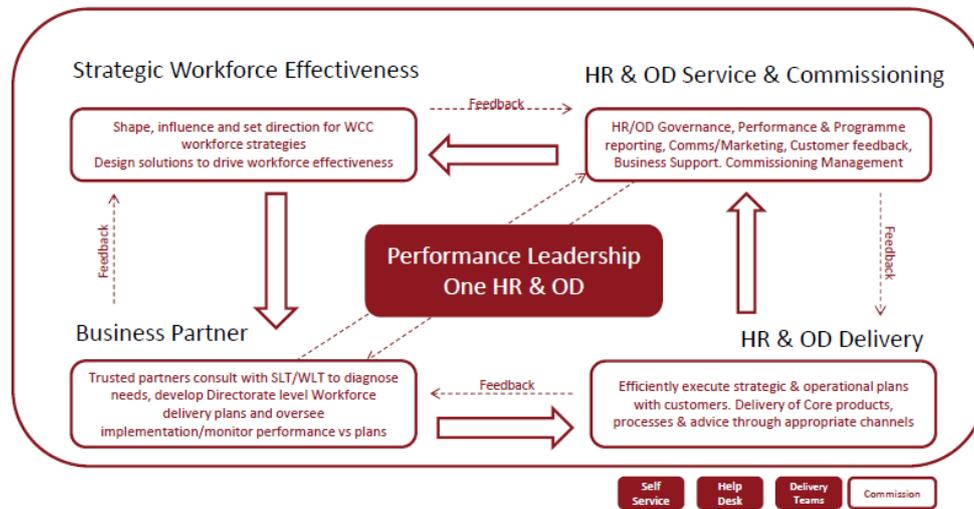
### Our HR Operating Model

In order to ensure that HR & OD were set up in the best way to deliver these changes in Worcestershire's workforce, Elaine introduced our new HR & OD Operating Model in 2016. We have moved from a traditional devolved HR function to a modern and innovative HR & OD service focussed on value added demand rather than avoidable or failure demand.

We are focussed on the art of the possible, ensuring that HR & OD "**enables people to be the best they can be**" and we do this through our principles which are:

1. We build confidence in our people – we encourage independence
2. We act with integrity and create an environment of trust
3. We focus on outcomes not the process
4. We promote a shared learning experience
5. We believe in our purpose and we work together to achieve it

## HR & OD Operating Model



### ***You might ask: why is this transformation and not just a restructure?***

Through Elaine's leadership, she has not only transformed the HR & OD function to become more focussed on delivering outcomes, she has achieved this whilst making savings of over £1 million since 2014. As Elaine has gained the trust and respect of her colleagues, this difficult process has not diminished staff morale and commitment to supporting her on this journey.

### **Relationship Management**

Elaine has a credible reputation and profile with her peers and she is recognised and respected as an innovative and passionate HR Leader. She works tirelessly on our stakeholder relationship management and has built excellent relationships with the Chief Executive, the Senior Leadership Team and Elected Members. Elaine is not afraid to challenge senior leaders on their behaviours, especially when it has the potential to have a negative effect on people. Elaine consistently ensures that workforce effectiveness sits firmly at the top table and Directors welcome her feedback. At a recent Leadership Exchange, Catherine Driscoll, Director of Children's, Families and Communities commented that as a result of Elaine's influence she is now aware of how she casts a shadow every second, every minute of every day and how this can enable people to follow you on even the toughest of journeys.

Elaine's creation of the Workforce Effectiveness Framework and the introduction of her Talent Programme has been shared regionally and with the Peer Into The Future HR Talent Programme. From these events, Elaine has been to many Councils to share these models and help others to understand how they can input this into their own organisations.

Elaine has been at the forefront of huge and sometimes contentious transformational change but she always manages to take people with her. Elaine has an open and transparent approach and her reputation as a 'straight shooter' means that she has excellent relationships with our recognised trade unions.

Elaine is engendering greater departmental engagement through initiating our 'One HR & OD Connect' sessions. These began as staff consultation sessions and have now evolved into engagement sessions held bi-monthly and building on our 'One HR & OD' philosophy, our brand, encouraging genuine employee voice.

### **Our Vision**

Elaine demonstrates inspirational leadership and staff buy in to her passion and enthusiasm for what she does.

Elaine would say that we are on our journey and we still have a long way to go. Whilst this is true, the profile of HR & OD is now undoubtedly higher than it's ever been before and we are closer to the heart of the business than we have ever been previously.

Although Elaine is in a position of seniority, hierarchy is not a word in Elaine's vocabulary. She treats everyone with respect and values every single person's contribution and is genuinely interested in them. A quote from one of our Admin Supervisors perfectly sums up:

*"On meeting Elaine for the first time there was an excitement and passion as she talked about her role and the work she was doing. She was so compelling that you wanted to go on the journey with her. She treats you as an individual and quickly realises your strengths so utilises you to be the best that you can be. She has a natural skill for making you feel included and has such a positive energy that it is infectious."*