

HTA Board meeting, 6 March 2024

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| Agenda item | 4.1 People strategy |
| For information or decision? | Information |
| Decision making to date? | Informal collaboration with Board / Senior Management Team / Business Delivery Team and colleagues across the organisation |
| Recommendation | The HTA Board is asked to note the People strategy for 2025/26 – 2027/28 |
| Which strategic risks are relevant? | Risk 3: Staff |
| Strategic objective | Efficient and Effective |
| Core operations / Change activity | Change activity |
| Business Plan item | Develop a People strategy that sets the direction for our organisational development and builds on the values and behaviours work from 23/24 |
| Committee oversight? | Board and RemCo |
| Finance and resource implications | Various due to the range of items covered |
| Timescales | 2025/26 – 2027/28 |
| Communication(s) (internal/external stakeholders) | TBC |
| Identified legislative implications | N/A |

People Strategy

Purpose of paper

1. Annexed to this paper is the final version of the HTA's 3-year People Strategy (April 2025-March 2028). The strategy confirms HTA's vision for its staff and the changes that will be made to improve their experience. It contains a set of commitments by senior leaders and staff to be met over the period of the Strategy, with a list of deliverable actions. It also outlines planned reviews of progress (including Pulse and Staff Surveys) across the life of the Strategy to ensure commitments are being met.

Recommendation

2. The Board is asked
 - a) to note the strategy's objectives and its five delivery strands
 - b) to note the process for developing the strategy
 - c) to comment on recent developments, 'next steps' and onward strategy implementation.

Objectives and delivery strands

3. Our People Strategy for 2025-2028 seeks to improve and enhance staff experience at the HTA, supporting our people to be and to feel their best. At its heart, lie the HTA's CORE values of collaboration, openness, respect and excellence.



3. The Strategy's objectives are to:

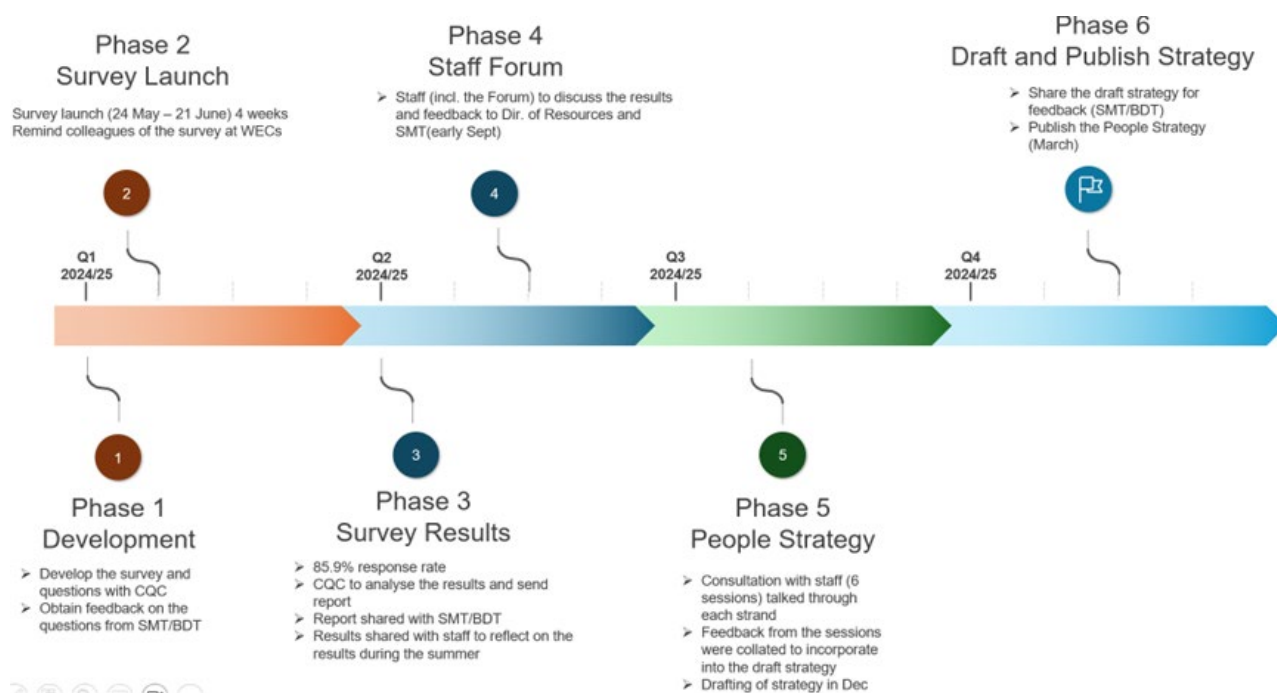
- a) **Attract and Retain Top Talent:** Establish the HTA as an employer of choice by implementing innovative recruitment and retention strategies to secure and nurture the best talent, ensuring our organisational goals are met with excellence.
- b) **Align People with Business Goals:** Strengthen workforce alignment with strategic priorities through proactive planning, clear role definitions, and continuous collaboration to meet current and future organisational needs.
- c) **Champion Diversity and Inclusion:** Foster a truly diverse and inclusive workforce where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and talent.
- d) **Elevate the Employee Experience:** Enhance every stage of the employee lifecycle by creating a culture of empowerment, recognition, and meaningful engagement, enabling individuals to thrive in their roles.
- e) **Build Strong Leadership:** Develop leadership that inspires, guides, and motivates teams, emphasising accountability, vision, and empowerment at all levels.
- f) **Invest in Learning and Development:** Prioritise continuous learning and professional growth by offering robust development opportunities, ensuring our people have the skills and knowledge to excel and adapt to future challenges.
- g) **Promote Health and Wellbeing:** Embed a culture of care by prioritising the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of all employees, creating a supportive environment where everyone can thrive.

4. The strategy is organised under five mutually supportive strands:

- **Strand 1: Total reward package** covering core pay and banding; overtime, TOIL and expenses; non-pay benefits; health and well-being service provision.
- **Strand 2: Learning and development** covering staff probation and induction; competency and skills development; supporting individual development; supporting and promoting professionalism.
- **Strand 3: Leadership and management** covering an effective approach to leadership; effective task allocation and delegation; building supportive and empowering teams; senior leaders' visibility and approachability; fostering an equitable and inclusive environment.
- **Strand 4: Performance and recognition:** covering monitoring and managing performance; management of poor performance and support for improvement; recognising and rewarding success.
- **Strand 5: Culture communication and environment:** covering how we address culture and communication; working conditions.

Strategy development

- The May/June 2024 Staff Survey was identified as a key method for gathering staff opinions to support a full People Strategy.



- A total of 49 survey responses were received, representing a participation rate of 85.9%. This encouraging response level indicated that that staff saw value in feeding back about they felt was working well and what could be improved. However, the results were a mixed picture with some “hard truths” coming through for senior staff.
- We followed up the survey by engaging with staff through a consultation period in October and November, supported by specialists from our HR service provider, to develop realistic and attainable actions. Dedicated consultation sessions (run by various leaders from HTA and the HR service provider) were progressed throughout November, where staff were asked to review feedback already received through the staff survey and other engagement. The consultation sessions were tailored so that colleagues could have safe spaces to talk openly to ensure we were capturing the changes that staff wanted to see. We have had positive feedback from staff on these engagements. Feedback from these consultations have been augmented and consolidated through discussion at BDT and SMT levels.
- A full working draft strategy was reviewed at the RemCo meeting of 24 January. RemCo welcomed progress to date. It felt that the methodology for

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developing the strategy had been sound and reflected discussion at the December Board meeting on the need for pace; visible short-term action as well as slower-burn strategic activity; deliverability; measurability; and investigating and addressing the root causes of issues. RemCo was comfortable with the thematic coverage and structure of the strategy as it stood, and provided feedback – which we have taken on board – relating to:

- a) reducing the number of actions under the five strands; with clearer prioritisation (impact, timing, and achievability)
- b) giving more clarity on how 'people' functions meshed with other core functions, whilst avoiding overlap with other discrete areas, such as business planning.
- c) maintaining momentum and building on engagement from staff so far with early and visible change; clear "you said – we did" connections; and articulation of links between actions and HTA's strategic objectives.
- d) the need for qualitative and behavioural change indicators of success
- e) the need for a fully worked through implementation action plan to support the strategy (recognising that some elements will need to be shaped by further engagement with staff) and that this was unlikely to be finalised by the Board meeting.

Recent developments and next steps.

9. In the **final quarter of 2024-25** we have:

- a) Appointed an experienced and HR-qualified Head of People Strategy Delivery as a fixed term appointment to oversee and facilitate initial strategy roll-out.
- b) Held the inaugural (and well-attended) meeting of the newly constituted Staff Forum which has provided valuable feedback and insight to SMT and BDT.
- c) Launched a business travel overtime pilot (February to April) responding to a staff ask for clearer, more flexible arrangements.
- d) Surveyed all staff to collect data on the value of current and potential new benefits, and followed this up with an all-staff day discussion.
- e) Ensured regular communication with staff on the ongoing development of the people strategy through SMT, Business Delivery team and Weekly Exchange Calls.

10. Our **next steps** are:

- a) Present the final strategy to the Board.

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- b) Develop a detailed Implementation Plan ahead of the RemCo meeting in May.
- c) Proceed with Year 1 implementation activity.
- d) Continue with staff engagement on the issues being progressed.

Recommendation

11. The Board is asked

- a) to note the strategy's objectives and its five delivery strands.
- b) to note the process for developing the strategy.
- c) to comment on recent developments, 'next steps' and onward strategy implementation.