

Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation

The client

Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation (TTGDC) was created at the end of 2003 as one of the bodies responsible for delivering the government's Sustainable Communities programme. It began employing staff in 2005 and since then has been driving regeneration to bring new jobs and an improved environment to Thurrock, the South Essex borough with a population of 143,000. A number of infrastructure projects are already under way, from creating cycle ways to the building of colleges, community centres and youth facilities.

Sector

Community regeneration.

Challenge

To fill the need for comprehensive HR management in an organisation with a relatively small full-time staff.

Solution

Outsourcing to Northgate HR brought TTGDC considerable policy-making advice during the creation of the corporation itself. It now provides ongoing HR advice and service delivery.

Benefits

- HR resources and expertise without the need to employ an in-house HR team.
- The creation of policies and processes by experienced HR professionals.
- Hands-on support during an intensive recruitment period.
- Access to updates on relevant HR issues, such as changes in legislation.

Background

Since it began employing staff in 2005, TTGDC has been run with fewer than 30 employees. The focus is very much on managing the redevelopment projects that are delivered by various contractors. So it was felt that a permanent in-house HR service wasn't appropriate: instead, most of the required HR activity has been outsourced to Northgate HR.

Solution

The first phase of Northgate HR's involvement with TTGDC was to assess its HR needs. This included a look at which HR policies would be necessary and appropriate, and the development of an employee handbook and contracts that were integrated with these policies.

A performance appraisal system has also been implemented, including a competency rating method and performance-linked bonuses. The design of the system, and its accompanying documentation, was followed-up with training for appraisees and appraisers on their roles and responsibilities.

"Staff retention is very important to us," explains TTGDC's Director of Resources, Sean O'Donnell. "That's especially true because we have a lean operation. A good performance appraisal system is therefore vital and I believe that Northgate HR have delivered one for us."

Another aspect of the initial support from Northgate HR was the creation of a recruitment process and then its implementation, in partnership with TTGDC's management. This has extended into hands on support during recruitment, including help to shortlist candidates and attendance at interviews.

Northgate HR's involvement in the development of HR policies continues with ongoing monitoring of legislative issues and the provision of subsequent advice. TTGDC has therefore been able to respond correctly to issues like the introduction of age discrimination legislation.

Daily support

For TTGDC's employees, HR support is available at the end of the phone every day. The Northgate HR team's contact details are included in the employee handbook. In addition, once a month Northgate HR are on site to run a 'drop-in' style session where employees can ask for advice on any general HR-related issues, or to raise specific issues about their employment.



"What our customer said"

"Northgate HR have been flexible, respond quickly when we ask something of them and are good at meeting deadlines. We're glad that we made the decision to work with them."

Director of Resources
Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation

Sean O'Donnell says: "The employees don't seem to have a problem with bringing their issues to these sessions. As long as they receive a good service they don't mind whether the HR function is in-house or outsourced. And as well as being available to employees, the Northgate HR team also spends time with me at these visits. This gives us a chance to catch up on any management issues."

Conclusion

One of the features of the relationship between Northgate HR and TTGDC is flexibility, as Sean O'Donnell explains: "In many other outsourcing arrangements with which Northgate HR is involved, they do more of the administration than is the case here. But we wanted to carry out some of these tasks, such as payroll and raising employment contracts.

Northgate HR were flexible enough to accept that and tailor the arrangement accordingly."

"Northgate HR have been flexible in other ways too. They respond quickly when we ask something of them and are good at meeting deadlines. We're glad that we made the decision to work with them."

For more information

With the skills, experience and market knowledge of Northgate HR behind you, you too can be well placed to translate the HR challenges your organisation is facing into powerful opportunities.

For an initial discussion about your requirements, call us on 0800 035 0545. Email: hrosolutions@northgate-is.com or visit www.northgate-is.com/hrs



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