



James Ellis  
Head of Legal and Democratic  
Services

**MEETING** : HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2022  
**TIME** : 7.00 PM

**PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE**

This meeting will be live streamed on the Council's Youtube page:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/EastHertsDistrict>

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

Councillor Rosemary Bolton (Chairman)  
Councillors A Alder, S Bull, J Dumont, M McMullen, S Newton and  
P Ruffles (Vice-Chairman)

**CONTACT OFFICER:**

**Michele Aves**  
**michele.aves@eastherts.gov.uk**

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A Member, present at a meeting of the Authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Authority, with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in any matter to be considered or being considered at a meeting:

- must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
- must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;
- must disclose the interest to the meeting, whether registered or not, subject to the provisions of section 32 of the Localism Act 2011;
- if the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
- must leave the room while any discussion or voting takes place.

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## **AGENDA**

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes - 25 May 2022 (Pages 6 - 22)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2022.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member's Declaration of Interest.

4. Chairman's Announcements

5. Health and Safety : Minutes 3 May 2022 and 30 August 2022 (Pages 23 - 36)

To receive the Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 3 May 2022 and 30 August 2022.

6. Health and Safety Quarterly Review - Quarter 1, April 2022 to June 2022 (Pages 37 - 52)

7. Annual Equalities Report 2021/2022 (Pages 53 - 90)

8. Human Resources Management Statistics Quarterly Report - Quarter 1, April - June 2022 (Pages 91 - 100)

9. Human Resources and Payroll Team Update Report (Pages 101 - 107)

10. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.



# Agenda Item 2

HR

HR

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN  
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,  
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2022,  
AT 7.00 PM

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PRESENT: Councillor Rosemary Bolton (Chairman)  
Councillors A Alder, S Bull, J Dumont,  
M McMullen, S Newton and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Democratic Services Officer
Peter Dickinson	- Health and Safety Officer
Jane Mackie	- Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

21 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2022/23

It was moved by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor McMullen that Councillor Ruffles be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources Committee for 2022/23. After being put to the meeting

and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor Ruffles be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources Committee for 2022/23.

22 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

23 MINUTES - 15 FEBRUARY 2022

It was moved by Councillor Bull and seconded by Councillor Ruffles that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 February 2022, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 15 February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members of the Committee to use their microphones when speaking, as the meeting was being webcast.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were declarations of interest from Councillors Alder, Bull, Newton and Ruffles who were all members

of Town or Parish Councils which had procured the services of East Herts District Council's Human Resources Department.

26 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES - 22 FEBRUARY 2022

Councillor Alder referred to paragraph 7.3 of the minutes and asked for clarification if the use of March 2021 was a typing error, and if March 2022 was the correct date for the next phase of the project at Hertford Theatre. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that this was a typing error, and that March 2022 was the correct date. He said that the minutes would be amended to reflect this.

Councillor Newton referred to paragraph 9.3 of the Minutes and asked for clarification of the acronym "APCOA". She also asked when the Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee which was held on 3 May 2022 would also be available to the Committee. The Health and Safety Officer said that APCOA was the organisational name of the Council's parking contractor. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that parking would be added when using APCOA in future to make this clearer to Members. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development confirmed that the Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 3 May 2022 would be made available to Members of the Committee at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** – that the Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 22 February 2022 be received.

27 HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY REVIEW - QUARTER 4, INCORPORATING THE ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chairman asked if Members had any questions regarding the report.

Councillor Dumont referred to paragraph 9.0 of the report and asked if Members were to be issued with the new lone worker devices. The Health and Safety Officer said that there had been no further discussions regarding this matter, but that there was provision for Members to be included within the current contract. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that a Members Group were looking at this matter, and that an app based system was thought to be more appropriate for Members and the way in which they worked.

Councillor Alder referred to paragraph 13.4 of the report and asked when it was expected that all staff would return to working at the Council offices. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that staff had returned to the offices in November 2021, under the new blended working offer. The offer consisted of the option for the majority of staff to work up to 50% of their hours at home, with the remainder of their hours worked at the offices. He said that the blended working offer was to be reviewed after 12 months, in November 2022.

Councillor Alder said that she had experienced delays when contacting the Council by telephone. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that extra resources were being given to these issues and that both the Executive Member for Corporate Services and the Head of Communications, Strategy and Policy would be the best placed to speak to regarding such issues.

Councillor Newton asked for the definition of a 'non-reportable accident', and if there was any explanation as to why Grange Paddocks appeared to have a higher number of these accidents compared to the Council's other leisure facilities. The Health and Safety Officer said that a non-reportable accident would be a minor accident, and gave the examples of a paper cut, or a trip. He said that the higher number of such accidents seen at Grange Paddocks was due to the increased size of, and therefore the higher footfall at this facility. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that comparable data for Grange Paddocks would be sourced, which would provide reassurance for Members. He added that the use of term IP in the report was an acronym for 'injured person'.

Councillor Bull asked if there were any plans to move the closed tip facility at Aspenden (which is not owned by the Council) to the recycling area at Buntingford. The Health and Safety Officer said that he was not aware of any such plans, but that he would make enquires regarding this matter with the Head of Operations. Councillor Bull said that recycling facilities

at Buntingford were needed as outlining villagers also used these alongside the residents of the town. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that although there were no known plans to re site the aforementioned closed tip, there were plans to maximise the existing recycling site at Buntingford in partnership with North Herts Council. The Health and Safety Officer said that the expansion of such services at Buntingford had already begun, but the site presented challenges due to its small size.

It was moved by Councillor Alder and seconded by Councillor Dumont that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - that the Health and Safety Quarterly Review (Quarter 4) – January 2022 to March 2022 and Annual Report be received.

28 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY STATISTICS REPORT - QUARTER 4 2021/22

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development briefly introduced the report.

Councillor Alder referred to Item 3, paragraph 1.4 of the report and voiced her concerns about the high number of staff vacancies which existed within the Planning and Housing and Health departments. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the vacancies which were being referred to were 'posts on hold', which were not

currently being actively recruited to on a permanent basis. This included 8 vacancies within the Planning Department. He continued by saying that these figures had not changed since the last quarter, and were currently being filled by agency staff.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that there was a countrywide shortage of planning staff, and that internal apprenticeships had been adversely affected by the pandemic not allowing for trainees to work alongside planners. He said that post pandemic the council needed to make savings, some of which would come from encompassing administrative roles to within the proposed Corporate Support Hub. He finished by saying that Service Reviews had now been performed on all departments.

Councillor Ruffles referred to paragraph 3.1.1 of the report and asked for clarification on how a staff member was counted as retiring when leaving the employment of the Council. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that these were real retirements, where the staff members had begun to draw down their pensions. He added that the pandemic had placed an extra burden upon the staff within the Revenues and Benefits Department, and this had contributed to an increase in staff within this service deciding to retire.

Councillor Ruffles referred to 3.3.3 of the report and asked if Members of the Committee should be recommending any measures to be taken forward to protect the mental health of staff. The Head of Human

Resources and Organisational Development said that the role of the Committee included monitoring, the querying of officers, making suggestions and approving recommendations when appropriate. He said that the council would again shortly be running its Wellbeing Survey, explaining that Covid had affected the survey results relating to staff mental health. He continued by saying that mental health issues are now more openly discussed, but were no easier managed, adding that it was disappointing that staff participation in wellbeing events was low.

Councillor Dumont also referred to the known spike in mental health issues due to the pandemic, which largely correlated with people being at home and not having interaction with others. He asked that this, alongside any questions surrounding productivity be considered when the blended working offer was reviewed in November. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that he agreed with points made by Councillor Dumont, and added that the current cost of living crisis was also impacting this already complex situation.

Councillor McMullen also referred to the productivity of staff working from home, and asked how managers were measuring this alongside ensuring that all staff remained well. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the way in which productivity was measured has not changed, managers continue to set tasks, and use 1-2-1 meetings and the appraisal system to monitor staff performance. He said that working in the office was good and should not be discarded, which was an area

that continued to be looked at. He followed on by saying that staff who work from home should be fully contactable, with Heads of Service being asked to monitor this.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that staff working from home also gave the council the option of creating enough space to enable the taking on of a large tenant in the building, thus generating income. He voiced his intention to include Members participation in the forthcoming Wellbeing Survey, which would provide a customer view.

Councillor Ruffles referred to 3.4.7 of the report which referred to the staff SkillsBuild training platform, encouraging Members to also participate in the modules on offer. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development agreed with Councillor Ruffles, adding that a full rollout of the courses to Members was being facilitated. Councillor Newton said that she too agreed with Councillor Ruffles and expressed her desire to complete the 'Bouncebackability: Rolling With Life's Punches' module which was to be offered to staff.

The Chairman referred to 3.4.2 of the report which referred to the PDR training which was delivered to both managers and staff during Quarter 4, and asked if plans were to continue this training virtually. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that this training would continue to be delivered by a mixed provision, both via zoom and with in-person sessions.

It was moved by Councillor Newton and seconded by Councillor Ruffles that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 4 (January - March 2022) be received.

29 ANNUAL TURNOVER REPORT 2021/22

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development briefly introduced the report.

Councillor McMullen asked for further information regarding the Council's review of the Staff Recognition Scheme. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the current scheme was being reviewed by the East Herts Together Group, with the intention of creating more categories and increasing recognition and celebration in line with the council's core values. He said that the new scheme would have sponsorship, and offer an annual awards ceremony. There would be no financial reward for winners, instead they would receive a small prize, such as a paperweight.

Councillor Dumont asked if productivity would be rewarded within the scheme alongside values. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that although productivity was not rewarded directly it did link into the Council's core

values. He gave the example of a very productive employee giving excellent customer service, and aiming high.

The Chairman referred to item 5 of the report and said that turnover of staff looked high, but that the stability rate which shows the retention of employees in their first year of service was good. She said it was disappointing that only 55% of people leaving the employment of the Council completed their exit questionnaire. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that a return rate of more than 40% for a questionnaire was statistically successful, and that it was not possible to force people to complete one. He said that turnover was slightly higher than the local government average, but the government average figures had not been updated since 2018/19. He continued by saying that he would explore providing further comparison figures for the Committee at the next meeting, and that the Leadership Team had requested to see future data expressed as figures as opposed to a percentages.

The Chairman said that it was good to see that the Council's vacancy rate significantly was lower than average, and that there had been lower recruitment costs. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that this was due to the deal which the Council had with Ideal, and the good advertising package which existed with ATS. He added that the Council attempted to avoid high agency fees, but this may be required to recruit specialist posts such as lawyers. He concluded by saying that there was a clear direction of travel with the costs of

recruitment, and that should this inflate there would be a reason which he would make Members aware of.

Councillor Dumont said that not all agency fees were high and that many agencies supported Local Authorities and such organisations well, with many of the soft costs not seen. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that he was only comparing percentages to advertising costs.

It was moved by Councillor Alder and seconded by Councillor Dumont that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Annual Turnover Report 2021/2022 including the actions (in section 11.0) planned for 2022/23 be received.

### 30 ANNUAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW 2021/22

The Chairman invited questions on the report.

Councillor McMullen asked how the lone working provision/ training was progressing. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the lone working provision was now under the central ownership of the Health and Safety Officer, and that this had resulted in improved monitoring.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development drew Members' attention to the

underspend in training, and clarified that it was mainly due to an increase in extra funding. He said that this was further impacted by the council's repayment scheme which saw training fees being recouped from employees should they leave shortly after completion.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development also advised Members of the use of 'Golden Hello's' to attract applicants to certain jobs. He said that this had been used in relation to a recent Planning vacancy, but that unfortunately this had not made any difference to the process.

It was moved by Councillor McMullen and seconded by Councillor Ruffles that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** - that the Learning and Development Review for 2021/2022 be received.

31 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING REPORT 2021/22

The Chairman invited questions and comments on the report from Members.

Councillor Alder referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report and asked if staff absence figures could be broken down into departments, and included in the next report. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that he would investigate if this was a possibility.

Councillor McMullen asked if there were still plans for another Staff Wellbeing Survey. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that this was the plan, and that the survey would include questions on what support staff would like, and what would make them take that support up.

The Chairman said that it was important that the Council continued to support the health and wellbeing of its staff, and that planned actions met these specific needs. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Staff Wellbeing Survey would include asking employees how they felt now in comparison to during the pandemic.

It was moved by Councillor Newton and seconded by Councillor Bull that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that the Annual Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2021/22 including the actions (in section 8.0) planned for 2022/23 be noted.

32 HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development briefly introduced the report. He said that plan had been considered by the Leadership Team on 17 May 2022, and that they had asked for the wellbeing section to be enhanced, and that a peer review be undertaken with the Local Government

Association in Quarter 4.

All Members indicated that they were happy to accept the report with the Leadership Team requests.

It was moved by Councillor Newton and seconded by Councillor Bull that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

**RESOLVED** – that (A) any comments and recommendations on the draft East Herts Human Resources and Organisational Development Annual Plan for the financial year 2022 /2023 be provided to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development; and

(B) the Human Resources and Organisational Development Annual Plan for the financial year 2022 /2023, subject to changes, be agreed and approved.

### 33 HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL TEAM UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development briefly introduced the report.

The Chairman asked for clarification on the findings of the audit, which had resulted in the payroll audit assurance level changing from 'significant' to 'reasonable'. She expressed her concerns that the remedial action from this change would involve further

checks from the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, and questioned if this was the best use of their time and skills.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that he had been asked to carry out these checks when he joined the organisation. He conceded that these checks took time, but said that they were useful. He reiterated that the audit had found no errors in payroll or accuracy, and that the change in the assurance level was ultimately 'a moment in time' due to staffing. He said that plans had now been put in place regarding the replacement of staff.

The Chairman said that it was good to see that Broxbourne Borough Council was now receiving services from East Herts Council's Human Resources and Payroll Team. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development agreed, and said that the new higher rates of fees and charges were being received for these services.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be received.

34 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.12 pm

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Chairman .....
Date .....

## Minutes of Safety Committee Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022, Hybrid on Zoom

**Present:** Simon O’Hear (SOH), Peter Dickinson (PD), Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), Ian Sharratt (IS), Geoff Hayden (GH), Graham Mully (GM), Steve Whinnett (SW), Jackie Bruce (JB) (Unison), Lisa Tilbrook (LT) Waste Team, Buntingford Depot

**Apologies:** Rowan Perrin (RP), Chloe Hipwood (CH), Dominique Kingsbury (DK), Jenny Francis (JF)

### **1.0 Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### **Action items:**

**PD to contact HCC regarding Lateral Flow Test Kits** – PD confirmed that we did get a stock of these, however the provision of lateral flow tests have now stopped and are no longer part of government guidance.

**GH to feedback to Committee concerning liaison between the Project Team and Property Services on ongoing projects and developments** – PD said that he hasn’t had an update on Hertford Theatre yet and he will follow up with GH saying that we haven’t had a response and to provide an update to the Committee.

**PD/GH to review occupant capacity of existing meeting rooms** - PD updated that they now have the measurements and just need room dimensions. They can then produce

infographics which can be published on the intranet and outlook.

## **2.0 Matters Arising from the minutes**

None (as above)

## **3.0 Coronavirus Update**

SOH confirmed that Covid protocols have been updated. As from the 1<sup>st</sup> April changes to the legislation and regulations that have come in, now means that they are no longer going to be called Covid protocols due to the removal of lateral flow testing. SOH and PD are working on an updated draft, CE Richard Cassidy has approved this and it is now with Unison to make the final agreements. Going forward it is essential to maintain safety in the building through hand hygiene, keeping hands sanitised and keeping desk/office/meeting spaces ventilated. If you are unwell with Covid you shouldn't work, if you are well enough to work from home you should do so to prevent the risk of spreading infection providing your service area can accommodate that.

JB updated that she has now gone through the updated office protocol and is just waiting on some guidance from Unison. JB is happy with the updated document and wants to add one section on general office cleanliness. JB would like employees to be considerate when in the office such as closing windows, cleaning up in the kitchen, using the dishwashers and leaving the toilets as you would wish to find them. SOH also added that further decluttering needs to take place around the offices.

PTJ requested for fire safety and hostels to go straight to Claire Bennett. This was at the request of Jonathan Geall.

## **4.0 Regulatory and Legislative Changes (Verbal Report)**

PTJ had no updates. PD updated that there are minor changes to PPE regs although it is language rather than substance.

## **5.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Compliance**

None

## **6.0 Capital Project Updates /Contractor Health & Safety Compliance**

### **6.1 Grange Paddocks – New Build**

PD updated that Grange Paddocks is now complete; just the access and service road to finish. 3G Pitch - PD mentioned that recent archaeological works have been carried out and a number of Roman graves as well as a Shrine have been identified.

### **6.2 Hartham Pool Upgrade**

PD updated that the pool re-aligning has been successful and the tanks have been filled. There is a little problem with the filtration system but that is being looked at. Two small leaks are causing some problems and there is an issue with a redundant sewer, however they are moving forward with the rest of the work.

### **6.3 Hertford Theatre – Growth and Project**

PD had nothing new to update on, however SOH confirmed that the project is still going ahead. PD will contact Julian Bullen to see how things are progressing.

### **6.4 Northgate End**

PD updated that there has been lots of discussions held around the opening times of the multi storey car park because of planning restrictions. Lighting on the top deck needs to be disabled from 11pm in the evening which will then make access to the top deck unsafe. They are going to be closing the top deck earlier and then installing some roller shutters across access ways and the premises information box will be installed on the exterior. PD has discussed with SW about providing access keys to the fire service in the box so that if they do need to gain access they will be able to do that. The project manager should discuss this with the fire safety service. GM and PD have stressed that they need to have fire consultants review the plans to lock down the top floor because that could affect fire escape routes if you are on level 4 and there is a fire on level 3 then you would need to go up.

**Action:** PD to ask GH to pursue the matter and SOH to update Leadership Team.

## **7.0 Contract Health and Safety Compliance**

Capital Projects have already been covered.

## **8.0 Shared Waste Service – Buntingford Depot**

PD commented that he has seen marked improvement to site. An agreement has been given the go-ahead to improve road safety on site which includes installing speed humps and digital signage. PD said that he has had a discussion with Lloyd Walker who is the contract manager for Urbauer and he is very happy with the proposals. PD also mentioned that he is waiting on costs to come back regarding a new defibrillator. LT mentioned that the only issue that was on her mind is the bridge at Buntingford. Some of the panels were going to be removed

because of wildlife nesting there. SW confirmed that not all of the panels have been removed only certain sections.

**Action:** Buntingford Bridge – GH to update LT fully on this.

## **9.0 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas**

IS updated that he hasn't seen RP's report, however a contract meeting took place last week with the contractor and they are not aware of any health and safety issues. PD updated that no new accidents have been reported by the contractors since the last meeting. PD said that grass cutting is underway across the District; three cuts have been done and everything is running to schedule. PD said that he had a meeting with RP and Emily this morning to look at the risk assessment and site layout for Love Hearts week in July.

## **10. Property – Premises Maintenance and Repairs**

PD added that when he was last at the depot talking to the crew they were thinking about moving over to re-chargable battery pack equipment and moving away from diesel powered; which is greener and more environmentally. SW said that he has been working with RP on the re-charging equipment and has just completed and installed another dozen charging points.

## **11. Facilities Management**

No updates – GH absent from meeting and apologies sent

## **12. List of Issues**

### **12.1 Employee side (UNISON)**

PD and Steven Linnett are identifying equipment that they feel needs to be replaced. Around 4 weeks ago PD and SOH did a full walk about the offices and purchased a number of laptop risers. They have also clarified details further on standing desks and hope that the info has now gone up onto Skedda. SOH observed that there is still far too much clutter and colleagues need to tidy up. JB is very pleased that colleagues are taking on board her suggestion that when meetings take place, i.e. staff briefings someone actually books a meeting room in order that a zoom can be done together. SOH updated that laptop deployment is now underway and that DSE assessments have now been rolled out. JB mentioned gel wrist pads and the lengthy process it currently takes for staff to get one of these if needed. JB offered some Unison branded equipment which PD said would be great. As LT is part of a shared service SOH said that he is happy to support Buntingford team also.

**Action:** PD and JB to discuss small office equipment.

## **12.2. Management side**

No updates from SOH

## **13.0 Health and Safety Training**

SOH mentioned that some staff still need to complete their e-learning health and safety training. With regard to cyber training, overall there was good compliance. SOH said that he attended a resilience programme and was impressed with what got covered. The recording will get published and shared soon. PD said following the previous fire drill the need for some additional safety signage was needed. Fire safety training on the e-learning platform was heavily based around Wallfields

which included familiarising yourself with exit routes and what to do in the event of a fire.

**14.0 Work and Non Work related accidents**

None

**15.0 A.O.B**

None

**16.0 Date of Next Meeting: TBC**

**Minutes of Safety Committee**  
**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022,**  
**Meeting Room 1.15 / Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Peter Dickinson (PD), Graham Mully (GM), Steve Whinnett (SW), Dominique Kingsbury (DK), Jackie Bruce (JB) (Unison), Andrew Betts (AB) Waste Team, Buntingford Depot

**Apologies:** Simon O’Hear (SOH), Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), Geoff Hayden (GH), Rowan Perrin (RP), Jenny Francis (JF), Ian Sharratt (IS), Chloe Hipwood (CH)

**1.0 Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action items:**

**PD to contact HCC regarding Lateral Flow Test Kits** – HCC no longer supply these, and we are just running down existing stock.

**GH to feedback to Committee concerning liaison between the Project Team and Property Services on ongoing projects and developments** – no update – PD to speak to Ben Wood.

**PD/GH to review occupant capacity of existing meeting rooms** – PD and GH have been looking at the occupancy of meeting rooms on both sides of the building. Safety guidance/user guides along with seating capacities and room configurations will be in every meeting room.

**PD and JB to discuss small office equipment** – re: footrests, this has now taken place.

**Buntingford Bridge** – GH to give an update on this.

## **2.0 Matters Arising from the minutes**

None (as above)

## **3.0 Coronavirus Update**

No updates. Most restrictions have been lifted. If staff test positive, they are to work from home to try and control the spread of the virus.

## **4.0 Regulatory and Legislative Changes (Verbal Report)**

Nothing to update.

## **5.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Compliance**

These have now resumed. Some additional work that JB, SL and PD have undertaken is looking at the condition of the standard operator chairs and marking up which ones are okay and which ones have been identified as defective or damaged etc. Some sample chairs from a new provider will be looked at before rolling out replacements.

## **6.0 Capital Project Updates /Contractor Health & Safety Compliance**

### **6.1 Grange Paddocks – 3G Pitch**

Due to complete in September.

### **6.2 Hartham Pool Upgrade**

Work is proceeding wells have gone up and the frame is advanced. No safety concerns raised.

### **6.3 Hertford Theatre – Growth and Legacy Project**

No issues and progressing. PD reported that he has now been given access to all documents relating to the project and has been invited to attend project meetings.

### **6.4 Northgate End MSCP & Residential / Commercial Premises**

GH attended LT this morning and raised some concerns about snagging. Ben Wood is going to compare the strategic risk register with the project risk register and Ben will write a summary up. The residential and commercial block isn't a safety concern. PD said that this raises the important point worth minuting that other parties are consulted at the outset of these projects before we get into the project to provide professional, technical input especially for those services that will be managing the facilities once they are handed over.

**Action:** To note that in future we need to bring to the attention of LT any future or ongoing projects; and that the relevant party involved should be in discussions. Those discussions should also be minuted.

## **7.0 Contract Health and Safety Compliance**

### **7.1 Shared Waste Service – Buntingford Depot**

AB said that July's report has come out with nothing to report from Urbaser or East Herts. PD said that the speed

humps and speed restriction signs have been installed and working well. SW has had feedback from Lloyd Walker, Urbaser Contract Manager that they seem to be doing the job well to control the speed of the vehicles in the depot yard. AB confirmed that there has been a definite reduction in the speed. CH asked AB to feed back to the group that the barrier is still not working, it was chased with property services, however they are not aware of it.

**Action:** SW to follow up regarding the barrier not working when he gets back to the office.

**Update:** SW has reported that a contractor would be on site on Thursday 01<sup>st</sup> September to make repairs to the barrier

## **7.2 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas**

The Operations team received an enquiry from a member of the public regarding the large climbing frame at Hartham. The Operations team spoke to the supplier and installer, there was no breach of any safety issues, just extra guidance and the issue is now resolved.

Main concern of late has been fire risks across all open spaces so the Operations Team have been working with the local fire brigade (Rowan Perrin has a main contact telephone number with the fire safety team) to put in place Fire Breaks across district in areas of conservation and/or long grass. Southern Country Park and Pishiobury Park, and various other smaller open spaces where long grass is left for biodiversity, to minimise potential fires. This is mapped and the fire brigade have copies so they know where to direct fire to if at all possible. These fire breaks were put in where housing was in line with trees and the prevailing wind

## **8.0 Property – Premise’s Maintenance and Repairs**

SW had nothing to report in regard to Property related matters and that the work that has been done on speed control at Buntingford Depot had been implemented. AB to feed back to CH.

GM said that the new buildings insurer will want to look at Grange Paddocks, the new residential parking at Northgate End and Buntingford Depot. PD said that as soon as we have some dates the Depot will let AB know. AB will feedback this info onto CH.

## **9.0 Facilities Management**

PD updated that the new meeting rooms have been completed. Currently waiting for some additional fire safety measures to be installed which will include additional alarm sounder and visual beacon. The building will be managed by the caretakers.

JB mentioned the ongoing cost of heating and whether that impacts on when the heating will be turned on at Wallfields as windows are open for air circulation. SW said no set date has been set. PD mentioned that SL was looking at funding for environmental controls and initiatives for older buildings. JB mentioned that there are staff complaints in the winter that the passive air control is draughty; going forward this needs to be monitored and staff made aware of the guidance on this.

JB suggested that the washing brushes that are put in all Wallfields kitchens every Friday night are not thrown away every week and that they are placed in dishwashers to sanitise them. PD agrees that these could be collected up and recycled.

**Action:** PD to speak to the caretakers about recycling the washing brushes by sanitising in dishwashers rather than being thrown away every week.

## **10.0 List of Issues**

### **10.1 Employee side (UNISON)**

JB thanked PD and SL for inviting her along to do the chair survey which was very helpful.

JB enquired when laptop bags and accessories will be given out. PD said that the laptop bags are all in the IT training room and keyboards/mice are in the Finance area. PD will speak to SL. JB said that Unison branded laptop bags are also available. PD to speak to Lydia regarding comms on this.

### **10.2. Management side**

No updates

## **11.0 Health and Safety Training**

PD said that the first of the First Aid refresher courses had taken place and all candidates passed. PD is also looking at personal safety, conflict management and difficult situations training. PD said that the rollout of new devices for the lone working has commenced and he will be contacting each team's administrators for the management portal so that they can coordinate deployment/training with the provider and have a closer working relationship them, the training also includes an e-learning package as well as Team's sessions.

## **12.0 AOB**

CH requested that we get depot user meetings into diaries. PD has already sent the dates out. CH doesn't have these, and PD will double check emails as it could be something to do with moving over to M365. PD to double check the rollout and copy AB into this as well.

**Update** PD has issued diary invites to all depot users for the remainder of 2022 / 2023

PD and the rest of the group wanted to say goodbye to GM who is leaving EH at the end of this week for all his support and wished him well for the future.

**Date of Next Meeting:  
8<sup>th</sup> November 2022 @ 1.30pm  
Teams/Meeting Room 1.15**

## East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 September 2022

Report by: Head of HR and Organisational Development

Report title: Health and Safety Quarterly Review (Q1) – April 2022 to June 2022

Ward(s) affected: N/A

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### Summary

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR (LT/Human Resources Committee):

- (a) To consider the Health and Safety Quarterly Review (Q1) – April 2022 to June 2022 and provide comments to the Head of HR & OD and the Health and Safety Officer.

#### 1.0 Executive Overview

- 1.1 This report sets out the Health and Safety (H&S) Management Statistics and service updates for Quarter 1 (April 2022 to June 2022) and includes a summary of;

#### **Non-Reportable and Reportable Accidents**

Accidents involving employees and members of the public on council premises.

Accidents reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013  
**(RIDDOR 2013)**

There have been no serious reportable accidents this quarter.

#### **Contract compliance and monitoring**

The Health and Safety Officer can report that there have been no safety incidents or site accidents in respect to the

following major contracts.

### **Capital Projects**

The Health and Safety Officer can report that there have been no recorded on-site accidents or incidents recorded for this period.

### **Premises and Sites**

Office premises inspections are now being undertaken with the Property Team and Unison.

### **Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas.**

There have been no reported incidents or accidents in respect to the parks, open spaces and play areas.

### **Lone Working Contract**

Roll out of new devices has commenced with the Revenues and Benefits Team.

Housing and Health are scheduled for September 2022.

### **Modern Workplace Review**

Inspection of office seating  
New meeting rooms

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 The Health and Safety Officer reports to the HR Committee each quarter. This report will be submitted to Safety Committee and has been considered by the Leadership Team and Executive Members, who review the report before it is submitted to the HR Committee.

## **3.0 Safety Committee**

- 3.1 Safety Committee met on Tuesday 30 August 2022. This DRAFT report will be shared with the Committee.
- 3.2 Contract Managers and Contract Project Managers are invited to attend Safety Committee to provide feedback on the main and capital projects.

#### **4.0 Work and Non-Work-Related Accident Reports**

**For the purposes of the report:**

**I.P refers to Injured Person**

**Non-Reportable Accidents do not need to be reported under RIDDOR 2013 and may include minor cuts etc.**

- 4.1 There were no reportable accidents under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) for the period April 2022 to June 2022.
- 4.2 There were no non reportable work-related accidents for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022; the continuing low trend is due to staff working from home or away from the office.
- 4.3 Swimming Pools and Open Spaces. There were 35 minor non reportable accidents reported across the 5 swimming pools and gyms between April 2022 and June 2022 in respect to users and 3 minor accidents concerning SLM employees. None of the reported accidents were the result of any procedural or equipment related failure and a sample of the type of accident recorded is included below:
  - IP Felt faint during gym workout – root cause over exertion
  - IP Scraped toe on steps of the spectator area – Area checked for defects and damage, none found.

- IP slipped in changing room – Young persons high spirited messing about.
- IP Bumped head on external play equipment – Root cause, balance skill execution
- IP felt lightheaded using gym equipment – Root cause IP had not eaten for 2 days.
- IP hit pool tank wall – Skill execution error.
- IP Slipped on steps as exiting the pool – Skill execution error, no fault or defect.
- IP Stung by wasp in outside play area - first aid provided.

Skill execution errors arise as a result of individual action and not as a result of any equipment or procedural failure.

The Health and Safety Officer would like to inform the Committee that the figures for Grange Paddocks remain consistent due to the high footfall and the slight increase is a result of higher use during the school summer holiday period.

### Q1 Non-Reportable Accidents – Apr, May, Jun 2022

Swimming Pool & Gym	April	May	June	TOTAL
Hartham	0	0	1	1
Fanshawe	0	2	2	4
Leventhorpe	0	0	3	3
Grange Paddocks	7	8	9	24
Ward Freman	0	0	0	0
Employees (SLM)	3	0	0	3
Contractors	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>35</b>

### Q4 Table for Comparison

Swimming Pool & Gym	January	February	March	TOTAL
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Hartham	1	0	0	1
Grange Paddocks	2	2	8	12
Leventhorpe	0	1	0	1
Ward Freman	1	1	0	2
Fanshawe	2	2	3	7
Employees (SLM)	3	0	1	4
Contractors	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>

### Q1 Non-Reportable Accidents – Apr, May, Jun 2022

Parks, Open Spaces, Members of the Public	April	May	June	TOTAL
Play Area	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### Q4 Table for Comparison

Parks, Open Spaces, Members of the Public	January	February	March	TOTAL
Play Area	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### Q1 Non-Reportable Accidents – Apr, May, Jun 2022

EHC Employees	April	May	June	TOTAL
	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

### Q4 Table for Comparison

EHC Employees	January	February	March	TOTAL
	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

An analysis of the number and type of accidents have not shown any abnormal trends or patterns over the course of the first quarter for 2022.

The Health and Safety Officer has discussed benchmarking options with the Contract Manager for SLM with a view to being able to benchmark the 5 East Herts Swimming Pools and Gym with comparable facilities managed by SLM.

The Contract Manager does not have direct access to provide a month-by-month review of the accident per 10K visit for other sites not under his management control. The Contract Manager can provide something which will look at quarterly benchmarking using information in the wider Everyone Active group, South East and East Herts.

The Contract Manager will ask for comparable sites to be built in to a comparison so we have like for like site's for the dual use with gym (Fanshawe and Leventhorpe, dual use pool only (Ward Freman), Large pool and gym site with no sport hall (Grange Paddocks) and a Medium site pool/ gym and no sport hall (Hartham). The Contract Manager is discussing this option with the Everyone Active Regional H&S Quality manager.

#### **4.4 Grange Paddocks**

##### 4.4.1 Milestones complete and latest updates:

Willmott Dixon are expected to attend site to complete the foul pump chamber works, due to the extra work needed the leisure centre will close early so work can commence at 1pm, this will be an 8pm finish

The Project Manager and Willmott Dixon held an aftercare meeting on Friday 5th August and reports that the only remaining defects (currently) are plaster cracks.

The haul road is due to be turned into a grass-crete emergency access road in the coming weeks (to be completed by the 3G contractor)

Milestones to come:

Next and final aftercare meeting is Friday 23rd September  
Glendale to begin restoration of Senior grass pitch 5 mid-September

#### **4.5 3G pitch**

Progress Update

4.5.1 All archaeological work has concluded on site.

4.5.2 Milestones complete and latest updates:

Astroturf carpet can't go down until the shock pads arrive, last update was that they are stuck in customs.

Floodlights are programmed to arrive in due course, but no updates have come from the supplier, there is a strong suspicion that they will arrive post PC, potential for a partial completion at the end of the month

Milestones to be completed:

Anticipated 3G pitch construction completion is still 2nd September 2022

#### **4.6 Hartham Leisure Centre (HLC)**

Milestones complete & latest updates:

Groundwork and digging to build the foundations is ongoing

Pockets of asbestos has been found while digging for the foundations, this has caused minor delays but nothing substantial.

Concrete pouring for the foundations has also had to cease as the temperatures are too hot, forecasts indicate that they can resume from 16th August.

Despite the foundations issues the steel frame can still go up from the 15th August as they can begin building on top of the finished areas

Milestones to be completed

Foundations could be finished in their entirety by the end of August

Steel frames to be erected by 2nd September

Glulam beams to be in place by 16th September

Underfloor drainage and ducting to be in place by 23rd September.

Phase 3 due to complete by 15th May 2023

Conversion of the current gym into additional gym changing rooms and a spin studio to start by 19th May 2023

## **4.7 Summary**

4.7.1 The project manager overseeing the work has maintained a high standard of inspections and the Health and Safety

Officer has observed exceptional levels of health and safety practice demonstrated throughout.

## **5.0 Contract Management and Compliance**

5.1 In order to fulfil its duty of care, all contracts are overseen by a contract manager who is responsible for ensuring the contract is being delivered safely and the contractor has the appropriate safety procedures in place. The Health and Safety Officer works with the service contract managers to improve the information reporting processes and to ensure pertinent information is being monitored/reported and relevant action is being taken (when required) to Safety Committee, Leadership Team and Human Resources Committee.

The following updates should be noted:

### **5.2 Buntingford Service Centre**

5.2.1 The Health and Safety Officer can report that the Councils Property Team commissioned the installation of speed humps and digital speed control signs in the depot yard, and it was observed during a site visit that vehicles were reducing speed.

5.2.2 The Health and Safety Officer can report that quarterly Depot User Meetings have been diarised for the remainder of 2022 and for 2023.

5.2.3 There has been a significant improvement to the site housekeeping and a number of repairs have been completed including.

- Yard safety enhancements
- Refurbishment of external WC's

- New barrier installed at the front car park

5.2.4 The Health and Safety Officer is supporting the Project Officer on the provision of a specialist waste consultant to facilitate the procurement of a waste collection and street cleansing contract. In particular facilitating soft market testing and providing technical support through the tendering process. This is the initial groundwork for the preparation of the re-tendering of the Shared Waste Service Contract. The Health and Safety Officer will continue to support the Project Officer throughout the process.

## **6.0 Capital Projects**

6.1 The Health and Safety Officer assisted the Project Officer and the Insurance and Risk Business Advisor in undertaking a physical inspection of the residential apartments and the commercial unit of the Northgate End development accompanied by the development contractor, at the time of the inspection no health and safety concerns were identified. Leadership Team have been advised that numerous snagging and design issues have been identified since opening which are being addressed between the Property and Parking Teams and the contractor, Real.

## **7.0 Parking Enforcement Contract**

**For the purposes of the report the Councils Parking Contract Provision is delivered by APCOA - APCOA's name originates from the former US parent company and is an abbreviation for Airport Parking Corporation of America**

7.1 The Health and Safety Officer receives monthly site inspections from the Service Development Manager and Parking Contract Manager on the overall performance of the Parking Enforcement contract (with APCOA) and it can be reported that that there have been no accidents in regard to

car parks or Multi Story Car Parks (MSCP's) during this quarter.

## **8.0 Parks and Open Spaces Management Contract**

- 8.1 There have been no incidents or accidents reported for this period and no incidents involving the Councils Grounds Maintenance Contractor, Glendale.
- 8.2 The Health and Safety Officer can advise the Committee that two events were held for Love Parks Week, one event was held at Southern Country Park on Tuesday the 26th July and the second event took place at Pishiobury Park on Wednesday 27th July. The Health and Safety Officer is pleased to report that both events were well attended, approximately 300 people attended Southern Country Park and approximately 250 at Pishiobury Park. The events showcase the Councils Green Flag award winning open spaces and provides an opportunity for the Council to proactively engage with the community. The Councils Ground Maintenance Contractor Glendale not only provided support in setting up but managed parking control for the events and brought along the large tractor to display. In addition, the Council had stands promoting health and wellbeing and running activities for attendees. The two Friends of Groups were running nature activities and
- 8.3 Main concern of late has been fire risks across all open spaces so the Operations Team have been working with the local fire brigade (Rowan Perrin has a main contact telephone number with the fire safety team) to put in place Fire Breaks across district in areas of conservation and/or long grass. Southern Country Park and Pishiobury Park, and various other smaller open spaces where long grass is left for biodiversity, to minimise potential fires. This is mapped and the fire brigade have copies, so they know where to direct fire

to if at all possible. These fire breaks were put in where housing was in line with trees and the prevailing wind.

With long term forecasts predicting similar weather patterns going forward the Operations Team have been liaising with Hertfordshire County Councils Countryside Management Services Team on new plans to manage open spaces during periods of excessive heat and are building in contingencies in the Opens Spaces Management Plans.

## **9.0 Lone Worker Contract Update**

9.1 The Health and Safety Officer would like to advise the Committee that the new lone working service provision implementation has now commenced. This will be a phased programme and comprises the following:

- New devices being set up and linked to user profiles.
- Recall old Microguard devices currently in use.
- New devices to be sent, linked and ready for use
- On-line user training and training for team administrators.

## **10.0 Contract and Development Support for Leisure Development Projects / Capital Programmes**

10.1 The Health and Safety Officer continues to liaise with the Leisure and Parks Development Officer (Leisure) on the progress of the improvement programmes.

10.2 The Health and Safety Officer will be supporting the Theatre Team for the delivery of Christmas events at Ware's Drill Hall in December 2022.

10.3 Work has commenced on the next phase of Hertford Theatres Growth and Legacy Project. The Health and

Safety Officer has received a suite of documents in relation to the design and build and will be liaising with the Project Manager and the Theatre Team as the project evolves.

- 10.4 The Health and Safety Officer can advise the committee that there have been no on-site accidents or incidents.

## **11.0 Modern Workspace**

- 11.1 The Health and Safety Officer, Head of Strategic Finance and Property and the UNISON Branch Secretary have undertaken an audit of office seating. In addition to this the chairs in the Council chamber have been replaced after a number were found to be defective and beyond repair, the metal frames were sent to be recycled and the remaining elements disposed of. The chairs have been replaced with seating that the Council already had which avoided the expense of purchasing new chairs.
- 11.2 As part of the review 307 office operator chairs were inspected of which 71 were identified as no longer fit for purpose, the Committee are advised that some of the chairs are over 30 years old the average life expectancy of a standard operator chair is between 7 and 8 years.

The following factors were considered when identifying chairs for replacement.

- Wear and tear
- Functionality of component parts such as wheels, arms, back rest, adjustment mechanisms
- Defect or damage

The head of Strategic Finance and Property has identified a procurement framework from which we can

acquire sample chairs to trial to ensure that we obtain chairs that are fit for purpose.

11.3 The Health and Safety Officer has been working with the Corporate Property Services Manager on updating the furniture and layout of the meeting rooms at Wallfields to create greater flexibility. Room layout guides and capacities will be developed and calculated so people will be able to make informed choices for events and meetings.

11.4 The Health and Safety Officer has been working with the modern workspace transformation team on the changes being implemented in Wallfields to create new working space and meeting rooms.

Work on the Rivers Suite of meeting room has been completed and additional fire safety measures are being installed including an additional alarm sounder and a flashing beacon to alert users with hearing impairment or loss to know when the fire alarm is sounding.

Additional safety guides and information will be displayed for users.

## **12.0 Learning and Development – Partnership training and future events**

12.1 The Health and Safety Officer is exploring options for a personal safety awareness course.

12.2 With the new lone working contract now in place a series of training sessions are to be planned and implemented as part of the roll out.

- 12.3 The Health and Safety Officer has commenced the First Aid refresher training and has reviewed the consistency of First Aid cover, resilience has increased with all three of the Caretakers now First Aid trained, this will cover any evening meetings.

### **13.0 Options**

N/A

### **14.0 Risks**

- 14.1 As stated in the report where health and safety risks have been identified appropriate assessment has been made with relevant controls or mitigation put in place.

### **15.0 Implications/Consultations**

#### **Community Safety**

As covered by the report the measures or controls put in place will impact positively on community safety e.g. re parks and open spaces or reception re-opening to the public.

#### **Data Protection**

No

#### **Equalities**

No patterns or links in the data that accidents are related to any protected characteristics. In terms of developments reasonable adjustments are made to support disabilities and ensure disabled access.

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

#### **Financial**

No

#### **Health and Safety**

Yes – as described in the report

## **Human Resources**

Yes – Health and Safety is part of the HR & OD Service

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

Yes - Health and Safety practice, reporting and monitoring is in place to comply with legal requirements and the report has been reviewed by LT which includes the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **16.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

N/A

### **Contact Officer**

Simon O'Hear – Head of HR and OD  
Contact Tel No – Ext 2141  
[simon.o'hear@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:simon.o'hear@eastherts.gov.uk)

### **Report Author**

Peter Dickinson – Health and Safety Officer  
[Peter.dickinson@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.dickinson@eastherts.gov.uk)

## East Herts Council Report

**HR Committee**

**Date of Meeting: 21 September 2022**

**Report by: Head of HR and OD**

**Report title: Annual Equalities Report 2021/22**

**Ward(s) affected: None**

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### Summary

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR Committee:**

- (a) The Annual Equalities Report 2021/22 be noted.
- (b) The recommendations set out in the 2022/23 action plan are considered and approved.

### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider the Annual Equalities Report 2021/22 and approve the 2022/23 action plan.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Human Resources produce an annual equalities report which provides a detailed analysis of the council's workforce and external applicants applying for jobs, by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.2 The Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, which include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

1.3 Public sector bodies with more than 150 employees are required to publish data on equality in their workforces annually.

1.4 Leadership Team approved the report and action plan on 30 September 2022.

### **3.0 Report**

3.1 Please see Appendix A for the full report.

### **4.0 Implications/Consultations**

#### **Community Safety**

No

#### **Data Protection**

No

#### **Equalities**

As detailed in the report

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

#### **Financial**

No

#### **Health and Safety**

No

#### **Human Resources**

As detailed in the report

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

No

## **Specific Wards**

No

## **5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

Appendix A – Annual Equalities Report 2021/22.

### **Contact Officer**

Elly Starling, Interim Head of HR and OD

Contact Tel No 01279 502141

[elaine.starling@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.starling@eastherts.gov.uk)

### **Report Author**

Claire Kirby, HR Officer

[Claire.kirby@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.kirby@eastherts.gov.uk)

# Staff Annual Equalities Report

2021/22



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# Introduction

This report provides a detailed analysis of the council's workforce and external applicants applying for jobs, by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. This report relates to staff and employment only. The council's responsibility for wider equalities issue sits under the Communications, Strategy and Policy service.

The Equality Act (2010) consolidated the legislation for groups protected by previous equalities legislation. Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and the Equality Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics.

The Act sets out the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public sector bodies with more than 150 employees to publish data on equality in their workforces annually.

The council is committed to complying with the Equality Act across all its services and continues to increase awareness and understanding through its policies, training and staff groups.

This report provides a detailed analysis of the available monitoring data for 2021/22.

It covers five areas:

- Employee Profile
- Recruitment
- Discipline and Grievance
- Training
- Leavers

# Executive Summary

## Employee Profile

The council's employee profile as at the end of March 2022 is broadly reflective of the profile of the working population in East Hertfordshire and the East of England in terms of ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability and sexual orientation.

The areas where the employee profile is not as closely reflective are sex (gender) and age. The council has a considerably higher percentage of females than males (73%:27%) compared to the working population of East Hertfordshire (51%:49%), however this is common in the public sector and is further impacted at East Herts by many of the more traditionally male areas of work such as refuse and grounds maintenance being contracted out.

The council has a considerably higher proportion of employees aged between 50 and 64 compared to East Herts residents. The size and structure of the council means that there are a limited number of entry level posts meaning that the majority of posts require experience and are likely to be filled by older individuals who have the required experience. In recent years the council has introduced more trainee and career graded posts which require less experience and support staff developing in the role to both increase the younger age profile and provide succession planning but these posts can also be filled by career changers. The council also has a significant number of long serving employees which also impacts on the workforce age profile. The percentage of employees under the age of 20 (0.3%) is lower than East Herts residents in this age group (5.9%) however it must be noted that it is compulsory to remain in full time education or training until the age of 18.

## Recruitment

The report identifies an issue with the recruitment data for 21/22 in that equalities data for almost 50% of applicants is unknown as they either did not complete the equalities monitoring form (this the main reason) or chose not to disclose their equalities data. This makes the data analysis much less reliable and not statistically significant. The application form in use for the data in this report was a Microsoft Word application form which had a separate equalities monitoring form which many candidates chose not to complete or missed. We have now procured and implemented an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) which has the equalities form as an automatic next step on from the application form. This should improve recruitment equalities data for the next

report although the system was not introduced until August 2022 so we will not see a full year's benefit until the 23/24 report.

From the data that we do have however, in 2021/22 the council was successful in attracting a diverse range of external applicants in terms of most of the protected characteristics. The council was particularly successful in attracting applicants from the 20-29 age group, from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and applicants who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, when compared with the overall East Herts population.

At the shortlisting stage, the conversion from application to shortlist is closely aligned for males (29% to 30%) and increases slightly for females (36% to 42%). There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to shortlisting (39.1% to 46.5%). For applicants from BAME groups, there is an increase from application to shortlisting (14.3% to 17.2%). For the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups the percentages of those applying compared to those shortlisted stayed fairly closely aligned. For the Under 20 and 60-64 categories the percentage decreased to 0% at the shortlisting stage but this equated to just 4 applicants in total. In 2021/22, there were 7 applicants (2.7%) who stated that they have a disability. Of these, 4 met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview. 3.9% of applicants were lesbian, gay or bisexual and 4% were shortlisted.

At the interview stage, there is an increase in 5 percentage points between the number of females being shortlisted to appointed and a reduction of 11 percentage points between the number of males being shortlisted to appointed. This may indicate some potential bias, however the change is based on just 36 appointments and the gender of 35% of the appointees is unknown. The conversion from shortlisting to appointment drops slightly for both white applicants (46.5% to 44.4%) and BAME applicants (17.2% to 13.9%) but increases for 'Unknowns'. In terms of age, from the shortlisting to appointment stage the percentage reduced in the 20-29 and 40-49 age categories and increased in the 30-39 and 50-59 age categories. Of the 4 disabled applicants who met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview, unfortunately none were appointed. The percentage of lesbian, gay or bisexual applicants decreases from 4% at shortlist to 2.8% at interview stage.

## **Discipline & Grievance and Training**

There was one formal disciplinary case and one formal grievance in 2021/22. We are unable to report on equality data due to the possibility of the individuals being identifiable.

We are satisfied that training and development is provided on a fair and equal basis across the council and allows all employees to take advantage of the opportunities.

## **Leavers**

The report found that there were no concerns regarding leavers in terms of gender, ethnic origin, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

There were 4 times the percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age group but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement. The percentage of leavers in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups were higher than the percentage of employees in these age ranges. This is most likely to be for career progression and due to the small teams at the council employees may have to seek this progression outside of the council.

The percentage of leavers with a disability (6.8%) was slightly higher than the percentage of employees with a disability (4%). HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has also not indicated any concerns regarding disability.

## **Action plan**

All actions in the 21/22 action plan have either been progressed or rolled forward into the 22/23 action plan.

## Achievements against July 2021 – June 22 staff & employment equality action plan

Action	Progress
<b>Employee Profile</b>	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2021.	This was published in March 2022
Develop guidance on supporting employees who are changing gender so that best practice is available to both staff and managers where required. This will be supported by the HCC Equalities Officer.	This has not been progressed due to other work priorities and the Equality Officer leaving and not being replaced. This will be carried forward to the action plan for 22/23.
Send all staff a reminder to check and update their personal details on MyView ahead of the data being analysed for the next annual equalities report to ensure we have fuller rather than partial data (especially religion, sexual orientation and disability) reminding staff that we are not interested in their individual data but global percentages.	This was carried out in February 2022 ahead of the report being run.
<b>Recruitment</b>	
Continue to require managers to return all recruitment paperwork before an offer letter can be sent out to ensure HR have full shortlisting data to be able to report on	This has been in place since October 2019 and has improved the shortlisting data. However despite data now being consistently collected from shortlisting panels, a significant number of candidates are still choosing not to complete the equalities form or choosing 'Prefer not to say'. In August 2022 we launched our new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) which includes the equalities form as an automatic next step on

	from the application form to improve recruitment equalities data (as opposed to a separate form which we had before which candidates often missed or did not complete).
Each interview panel chair to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is as diverse. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds.	The HR team have been encouraging managers to try to ensure that interview panels are as diverse as possible and some 'meet the team' sessions have taken place. Ultimately some teams are limited in terms of how diverse they are so it is not always possible to demonstrate a full range of diversity in every recruitment process.
Work with Shaw Trust to advertise our jobs with them to attract more disabled applicants.	This has not been progressed due to other work priorities and will be carried forward to the action plan for 22/23.
Finalise staff case studies that demonstrate diversity in our workforce and use them as part of our recruitment literature	The case studies were finalised and are on the council's careers site which is included with our package with the ATS provider. This is where all of the council's jobs are advertised.
Implement an ATS that will include an electronic application form which automatically directs applicants to the equalities monitoring form and also enables name blind recruitment	This was implemented in August 2022, later than planned due to delays with IT and name blinding. Unfortunately, the system has had to be implemented without name blinding as the system was losing key data from the CVs in the name blinding process. We are waiting for an alternative solution from the ATS providers.
<b>Discipline, Grievance and Probation</b>	
Continue to monitor equalities data for all disciplinary, grievance and formal probationary cases.	This data has been collected and is contained within this report.
<b>Training</b>	
Continue to ensure that all staff complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-learning training programme. Offer further equalities based training as identified	All staff were expected to complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-learning programme run in November 2021.

by annual training needs analysis undertaken by the OD and HR Co-ordinator.	
Continue to ensure that managers are briefed in the PDR process and that effective and appropriate personal development plans are put in place for all employees, including those rated as 'exceeding expectations' and above.	Managers are provided with guidance on the PDR process and HR Officers provide a briefing to new managers in the service areas they support. PDR training for all managers has been delivered. The HR and OD Manager reviews PDRs to inform the annual training plan. PDRs for 21/22 have been recorded and the training plan is in development.
Continue to develop both wellbeing programmes/guidance and maintain sufficient Mental Health First Aiders to support staff experiencing mental health issues.	The Live Well Work Well Programme for 2022-23 includes support for staff in relation to mental health. Training and refresher training was delivered in September 2021 for new and existing Mental Health First Aiders.

# Employee profile

## Introduction

This section provides information on employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2022. Casual employees, agency workers and contractors are not included. The total number of employees employed by the council as at 31 March 2022 was a headcount of 313. This has decreased from 333 in the previous year.

The data has been analysed using 6 of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

- Sex (Gender)
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Disability status
- Sexual orientation

Although marital status data is recorded this is not reportable from the HR system.

Pregnancy is not a permanent characteristic but a state in time. 6 employees took maternity leave in 2021/22 and it should be noted that no concerns have been raised regarding this protected characteristic.

Although the HR system has capacity for employees to indicate if they are transgender the new starter forms do not request this and instead the council has focused on the current gender and not the past in line with our recruitment forms. It is worth noting there have never been any complaints in this area. The council does employ staff who have changed gender without any complaints being made and HR are going to develop guidance on supporting employees who are changing gender so that best practice is available to both staff and managers where required.

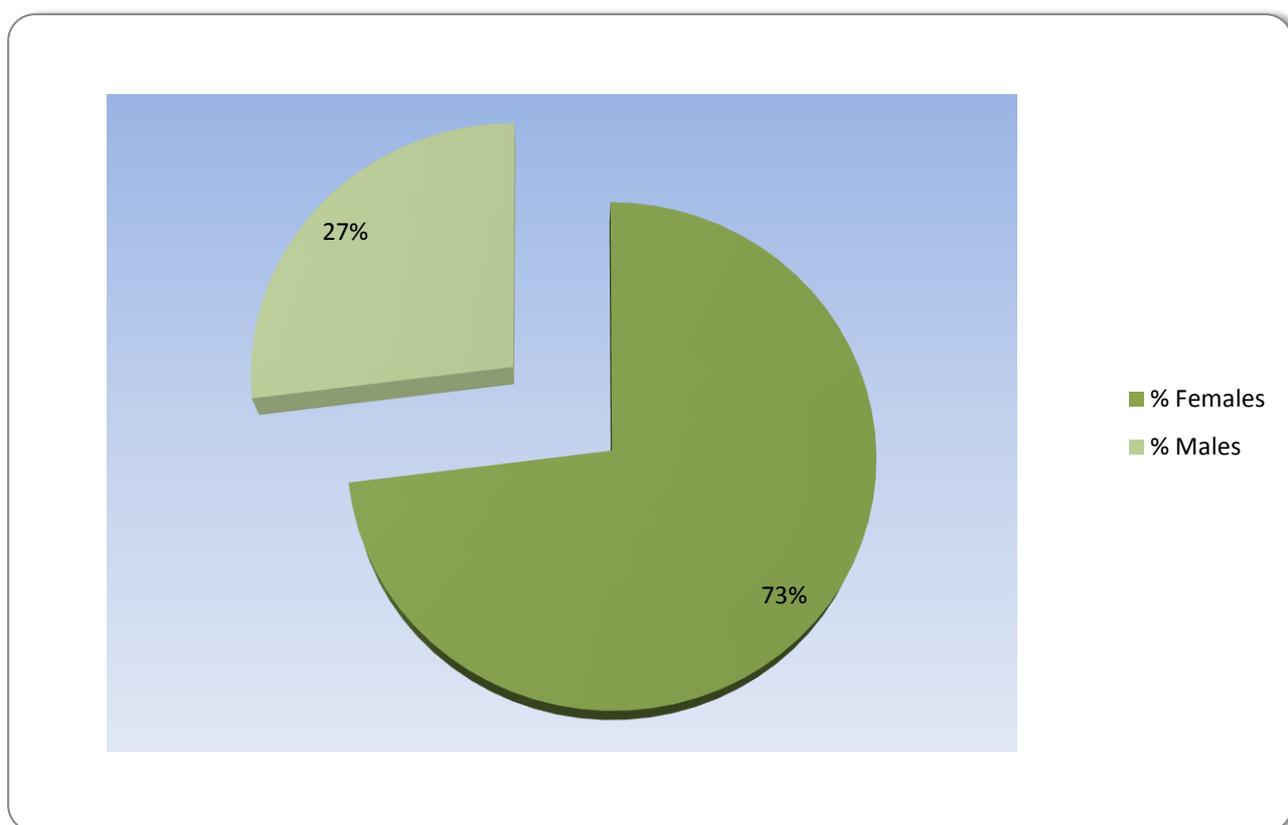
Various comparison data has been used to understand how the employee profile of the council compares to the wider context in which it operates and to identify whether there are any areas of concern which the council needs to take action on.

Where possible, comparisons have been made at the most local level (i.e. with East Herts residents) and using the most recent data available. However where this data

has been unavailable at this level, comparisons have been made with East of England residents. Most of the comparison data has been taken from either the Nomis or Office for National Statistics (ONS) websites.

It is noted that the Census data is over 10 years out of date but we have been unable to source more up to date data for religious belief, ethnic origin and disability as the 2021 Census data is not available yet for these areas.

## Sex (Gender)



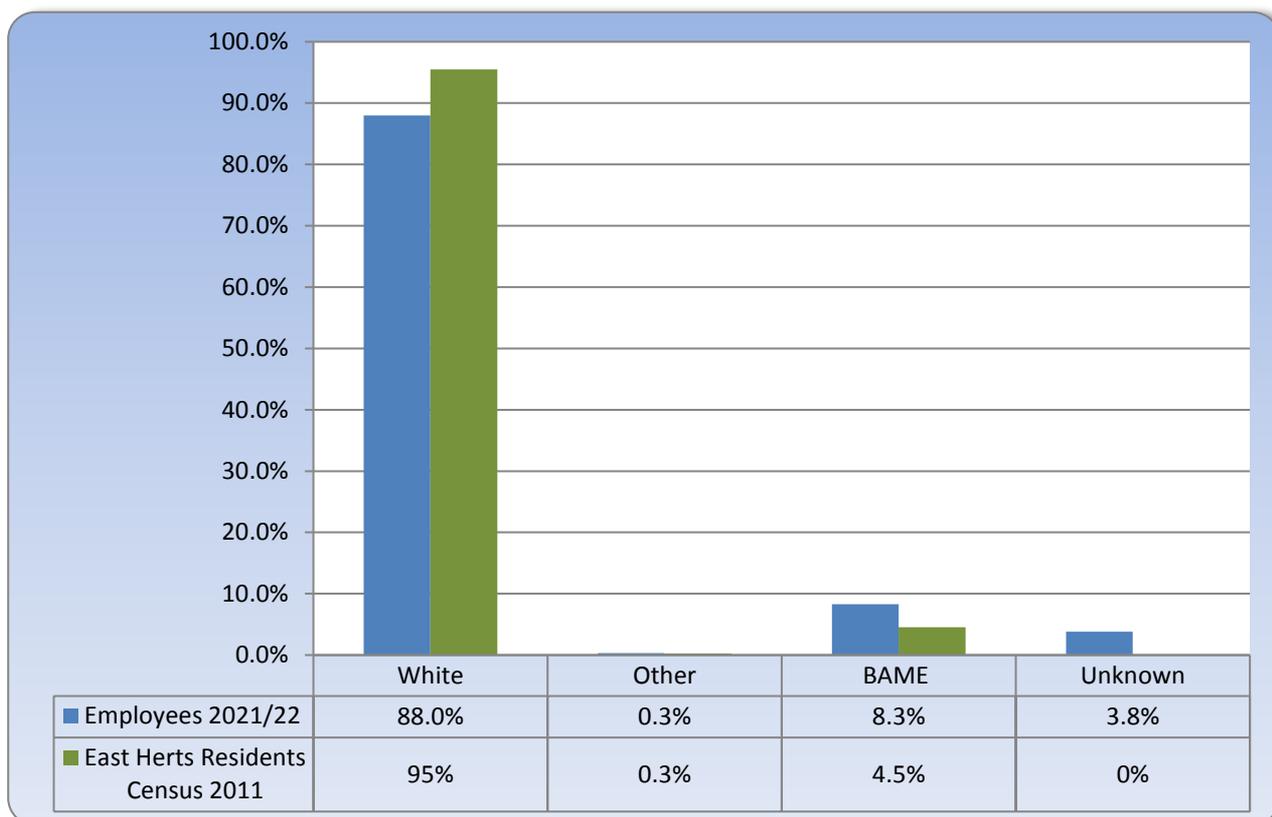
**Figure 1.0 Employee profile by sex**

Figure 1.0 shows the sex profile of employees at the council. The profile does not closely reflect that of the East Herts working population. The council has a considerably lower percentage of male employees (27%) compared to the overall male population in East Herts (49%) (Census 2021).

A high female to male workforce ratio is common in public sector with 68% being female and 32% being male (ONS: Public sector employment by gender (2015)). In addition, the council has contracted out many of the more traditionally male dominated

areas of work such as refuse, grounds maintenance and IT which has affected the male to female ratio further. The percentage of males working at the council has increased by 1 percentage point this year.

## Ethnic origin

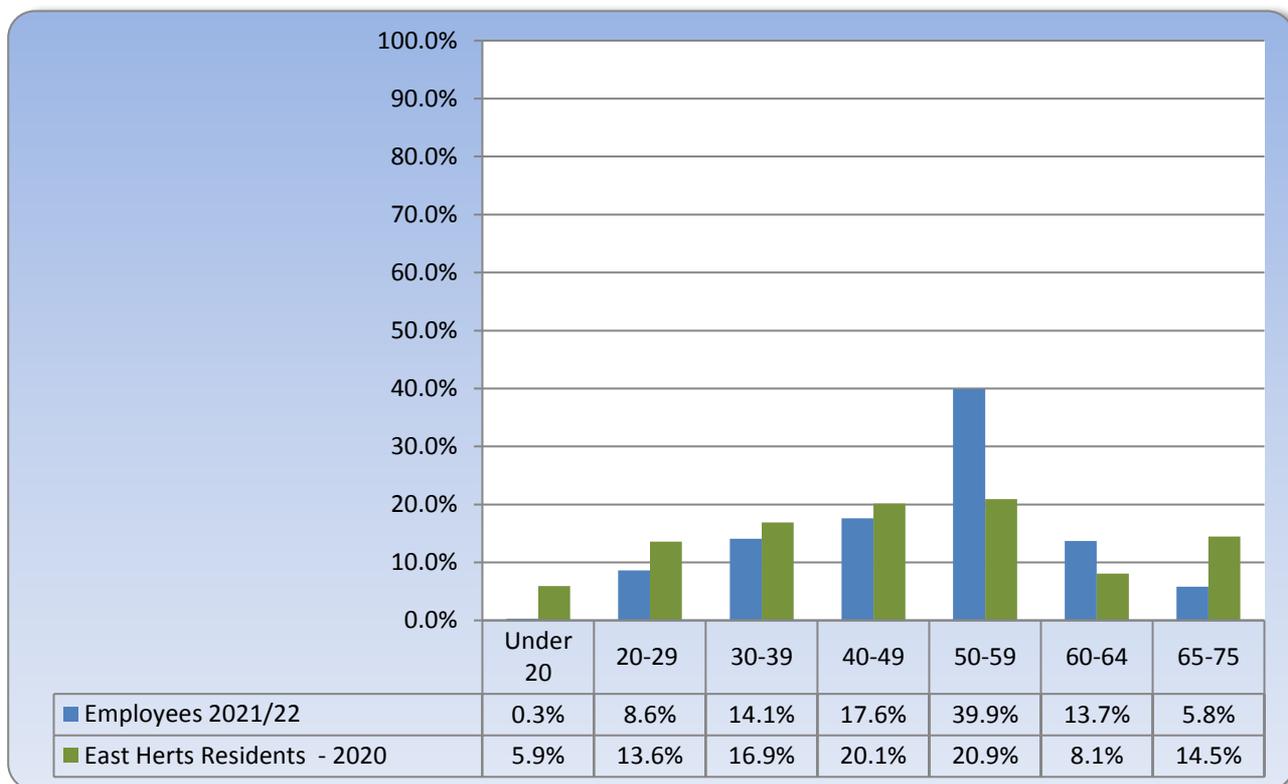


**Figure 2.0 Employee profile by ethnic origin**

Source: ONS Census 2011 - Ethnic Group by Measures

Figure 2.0 shows that the percentage of black and minority ethnic employees is above that of East Herts residents as at the Census in 2011. The EHC White origin compared to the census is 7 percentage points down, 3.8% of staff are unknown, unfortunately this has not improved since last year despite asking staff to refresh their equalities data. There is no more recent data available from ONS for East Herts, Hertfordshire or the East of England for comparison purposes. There should be some data available from the 2021 Census when the next report is run. The total percentage of BAME employees has increased from 6.9% in 2020/21 to 8.3% in 2021/22 and is higher than the BAME residents in East Herts (4.5%). It is positive to see that the council is attracting and retaining a wider diversity of staff in terms of ethnicity.

## Age



### Figure 3.0 Employee profile by age

Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics – Population Estimates in East Herts (2020)

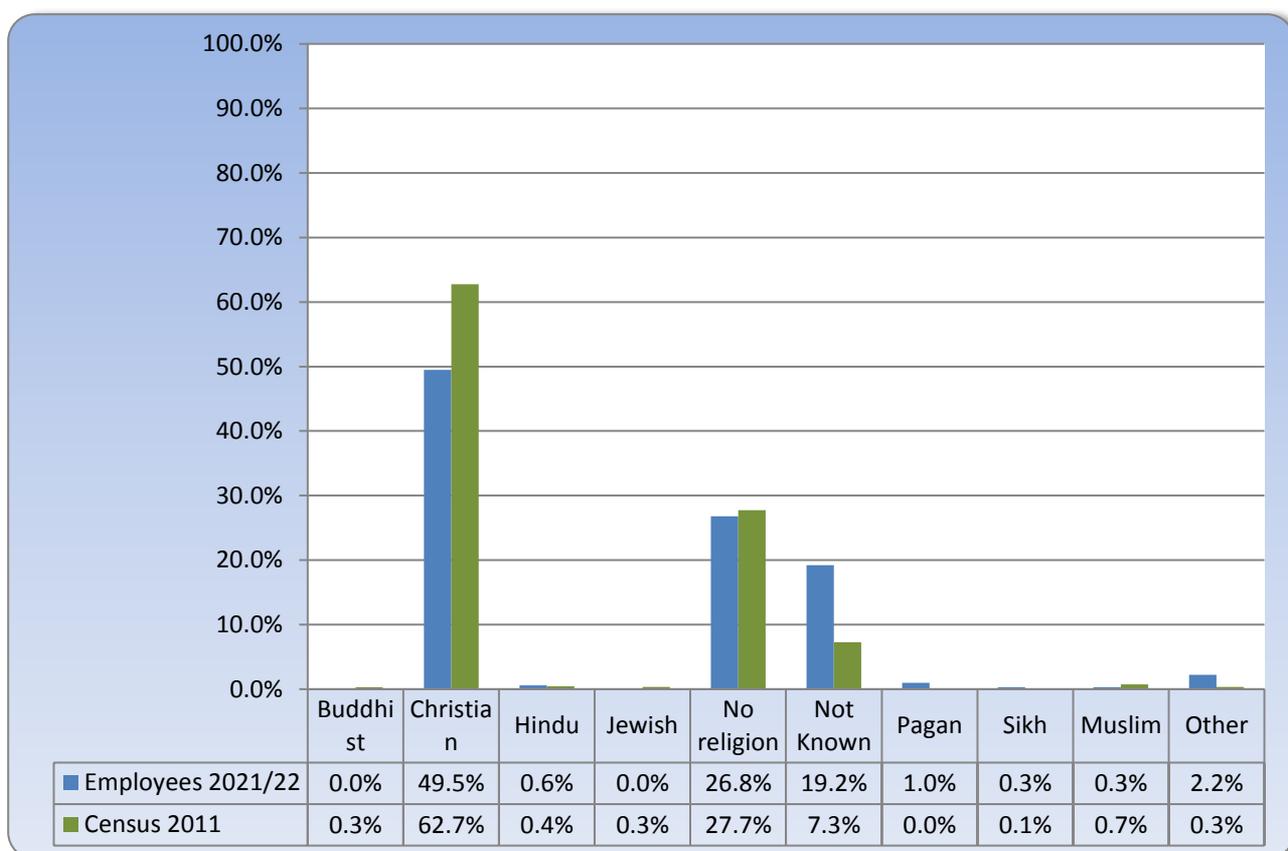
*Note: The percentages shown for East Herts residents are the percentage of 16-75 year olds, not the total population.*

Figure 3.0 shows that the council has a considerably higher proportion of employees aged between 50 and 64 compared to East Herts residents. 53% of employees are in the 50-59 and 60-64 age groups compared to 29% of East Herts residents in these age groups. The size and structure of the council means that there are a limited number of entry level posts meaning that the majority of posts require experience and are likely to be filled by older individuals who have the required experience. The council has introduced more trainee and career graded posts (in recent years) which require less experience and support staff developing in the role to both increase the younger age profile and provide succession planning but these posts can also be filled by career changers with appointment based on merit. The council also has a significant number of long serving employees which also impacts on the workforce age profile.

The percentage of employees under the age of 20 is lower than East Herts residents in this age group (5.9%) however this is likely to be due to it being compulsory to remain in full time education or training until the age of 18. The percentages of staff in the different age groups has not substantially changed from 2020/21.

Although there are differences in the age profile of the workforce to that of the East Herts residents there are no significant concerns or evidence of discrimination or bias.

## Religion and Belief

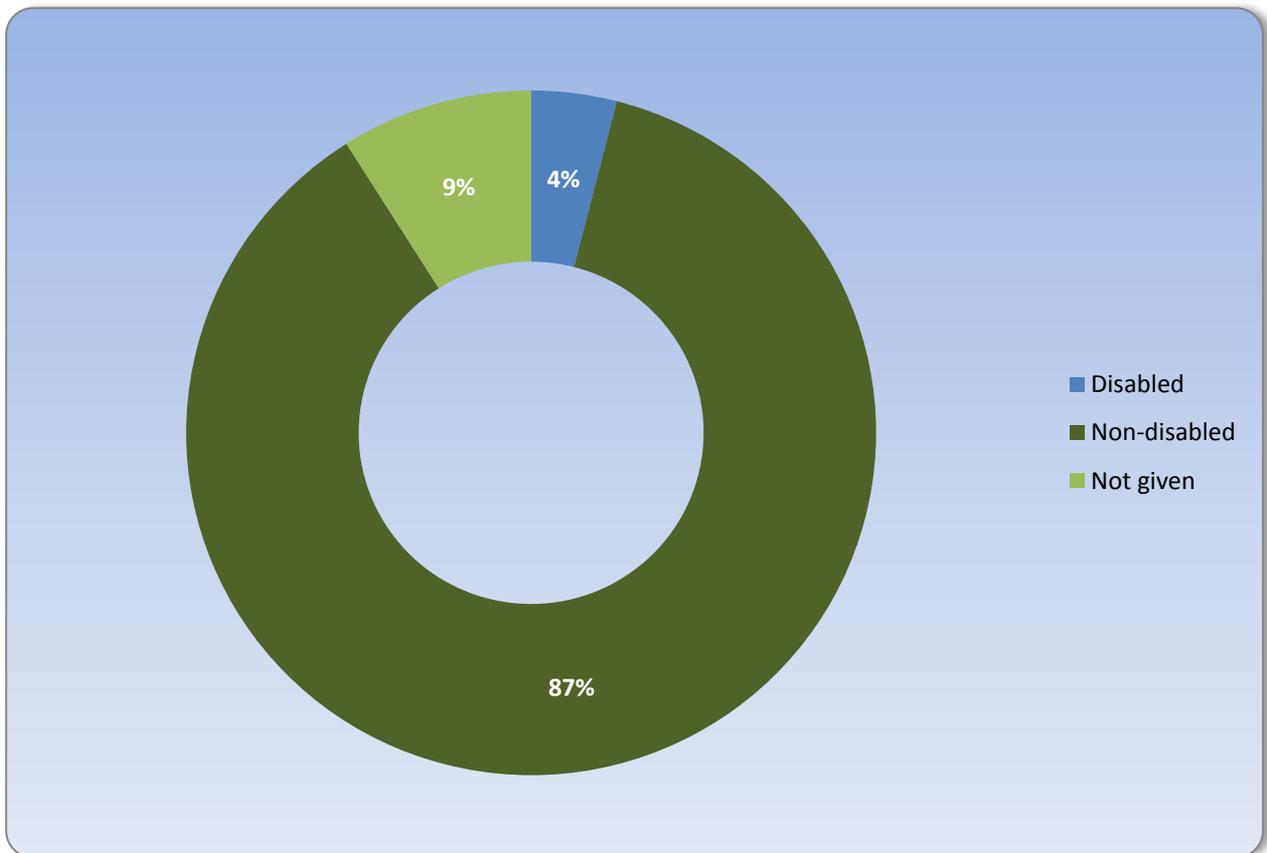


**Figure 4.0 Employee profile by religion and belief**

Source: ONS Census 2011 - Religion

Figure 4.0 shows that the religions and beliefs of employees are generally reflective of East Herts residents and therefore there are no suggested concerns in this area, although it should be noted that the census data is somewhat out of date. As is common with employment data on Religion (staff often do not wish to state) a significant amount of staff (19.2%) have not stated or have indicated they do not wish to. The percentages of staff under each religion remain similar to the past two years.

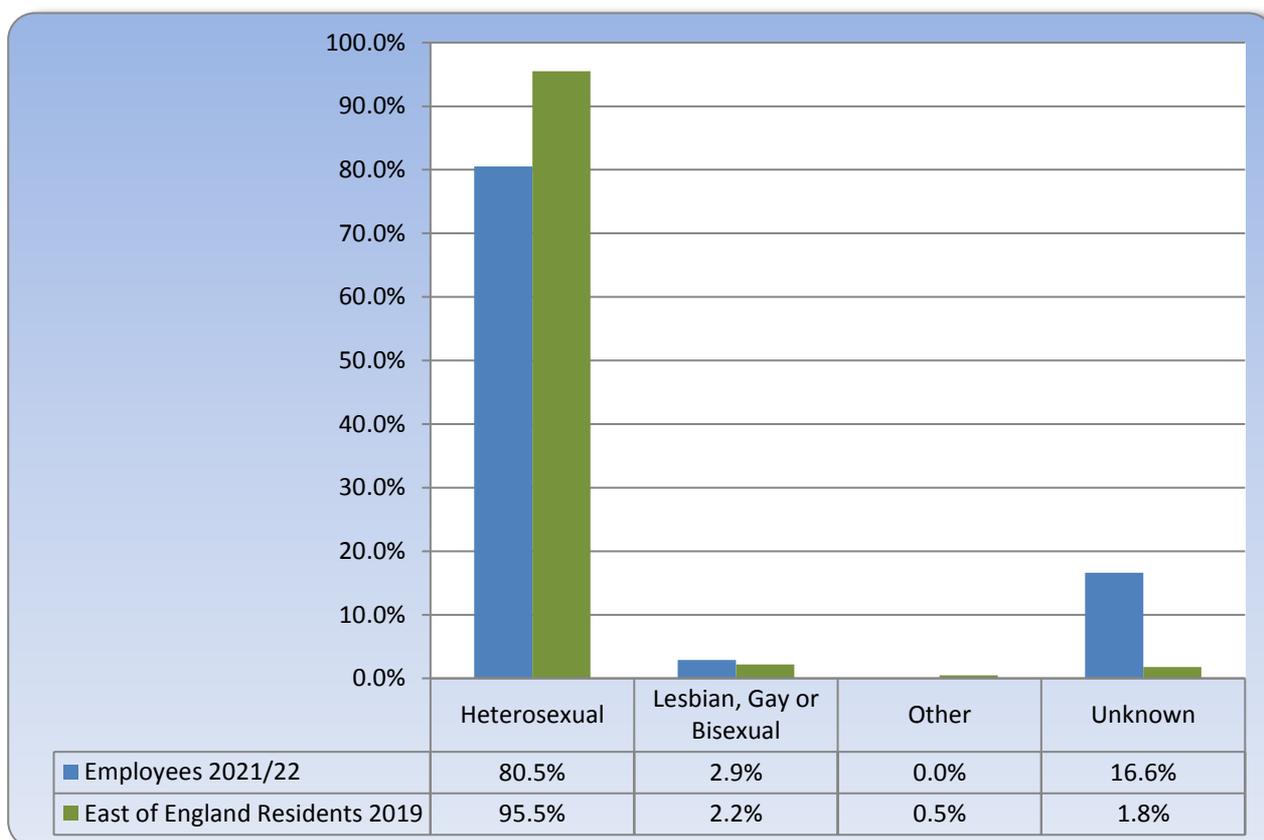
## Disability



**Figure 5.0 Employee profile by disability status**

Figure 5.0 shows that as at 31 March 2022, 4% of employees had a disability, which is one percentage point lower than 2020/21. This is slightly less than the East Herts residents with a disability (5%) (ONS Census 2011 - Long Term Health Problem or Disability). It is worth noting however that the 2011 Census data was household based (not individual) and in addition people with a long term health problem may be unfit to work.

## Sexual Orientation



**Figure 6.0 Employee profile by sexual orientation**

Source: ONS – Sexual Identity by Region (East of England) – 2019

Figure 6.0 shows that there are no indicated concerns with regard to the council's employee profile in terms of sexual orientation when compared to much more recent 2018 data. The council has less heterosexuals in terms of percentage but has a higher unknown percentage which would close the gap. There is close alignment with lesbian, gay and bisexual employees where EHC had a very slightly higher percentage of 2.9% compared to residents in the East of England in 2019 (2.2%). The percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees has increased by 0.5 of a percentage point since 2020/21.

# Recruitment

## Introduction

This section provides information on external applicants who applied for jobs at the council between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. Data has been collected at the application, shortlist and appointment stages. There were 49 external recruitment campaigns between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. A total of 258 external applicants applied for jobs with the council.

Recruitment data has been analysed using 5 of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- Sex (Gender)
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Disability status
- Sexual orientation

The council's position is that Transgender people should be respected as part of the gender they have chosen and therefore does not monitor separately in terms of their past gender or transition they have undertaken.

In terms of pregnancy and marital status these are not asked for at the recruitment stage. Regarding pregnancy, individuals may not wish to disclose this and by asking the wrong message maybe given to potential candidates and this also applies to a lesser extent to marital status (this is also a protected characteristic that can change and again could cause concern for candidate if asked based on previous discrimination in the employment market to newly married women re potential pregnancy/maternity in the future).

Although data is collected for religion or belief, this has not been reported on due to the low number of applicants reporting a religion other than Christian or not stated (4% in total across all other religions).

Due to the small numbers in each of the individual BAME groups, they have been combined and include:

- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic – includes White & Black Caribbean, White & Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed.

- Asian/Asian British – includes Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian.
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – includes African, Caribbean, Other Black.
- Other – includes Arab, Any other ethnic group.

'White' includes English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Other White.

(Definitions of Ethnic Groups taken from the 2011 Census)

The data has been collected from the Equalities Monitoring Forms which are part of the application form and are detached before sending to managers. The application form in use for the data in this report was a Microsoft Word application form which had a separate equalities monitoring form which many candidates chose not to complete or missed. Unfortunately this means that the percentage of 'Unknowns' is as high as 49% in some areas. This makes the data analysis much less reliable and not statistically significant. We have now procured and implemented an ATS which has the equalities form as an automatic next step on from the application form. This should improve recruitment equalities data for the next report although the system was not introduced until August 2022 so we will not see a full year's benefit until the 23/24 report.

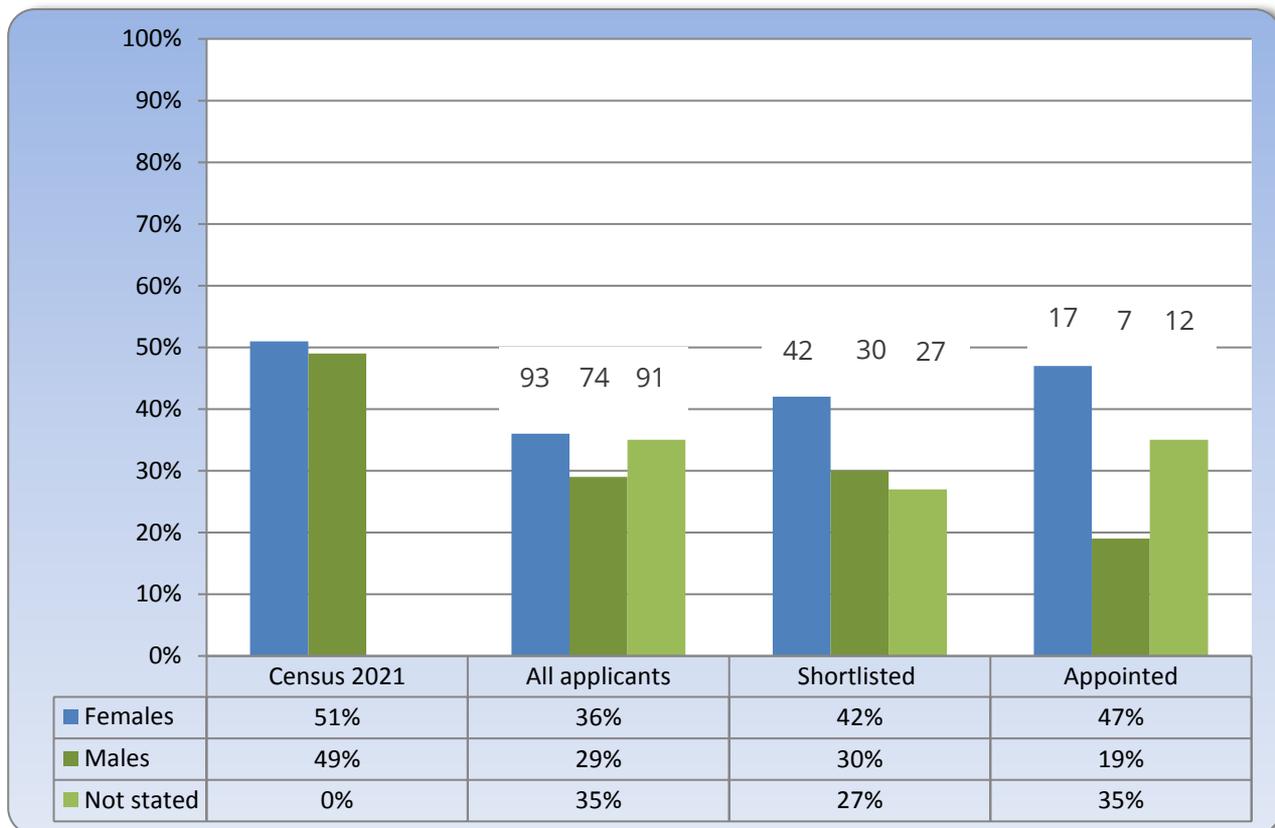
Although equalities data is mostly known for appointees we have chosen not to populate the data with this known data on our HR system for appointees and have used the original equalities monitoring forms for applicants. By adding data in for appointees this can distort the data when looking at the conversion of applicants from application through to interview and then appointment, particularly because the number of 'Unknowns' is so high.

Comparisons have been drawn to the profile of the working population of East Herts to understand whether the council has been successful in attracting a diverse range of applicants that are reflective of the local population. Where possible, comparisons have been made at the most local level (i.e. with East Herts residents) and using the most recent data available. However where this data has been unavailable at this level, comparisons have been made with East of England residents. Most of the comparison data has been taken from either the Nomis or Office for National Statistics (ONS) websites. It is noted that the Census data is 10 years out of date but we have been unable to source more up to date data for religious belief, ethnic origin and disability as the 2021 Census data is not available yet for these areas.

The equalities data of applicants reaching the shortlisting and appointment stages has been compared to the data of all applicants to understand whether certain groups are being disadvantaged and at what stage of the recruitment process. At the application

stage applicants will drop out of the process where they do not meet the required criteria and at this stage in the process the recruiting manager does not have any equalities information regarding the applicants. Therefore it is particularly important to note the shortlisting to appointment data as it is at this point that there is more opportunity for bias to occur once the recruiting manager has met the applicants.

## Sex (Gender)



**Figure 7.0 Applicant profile by sex compared to the population of East Herts**

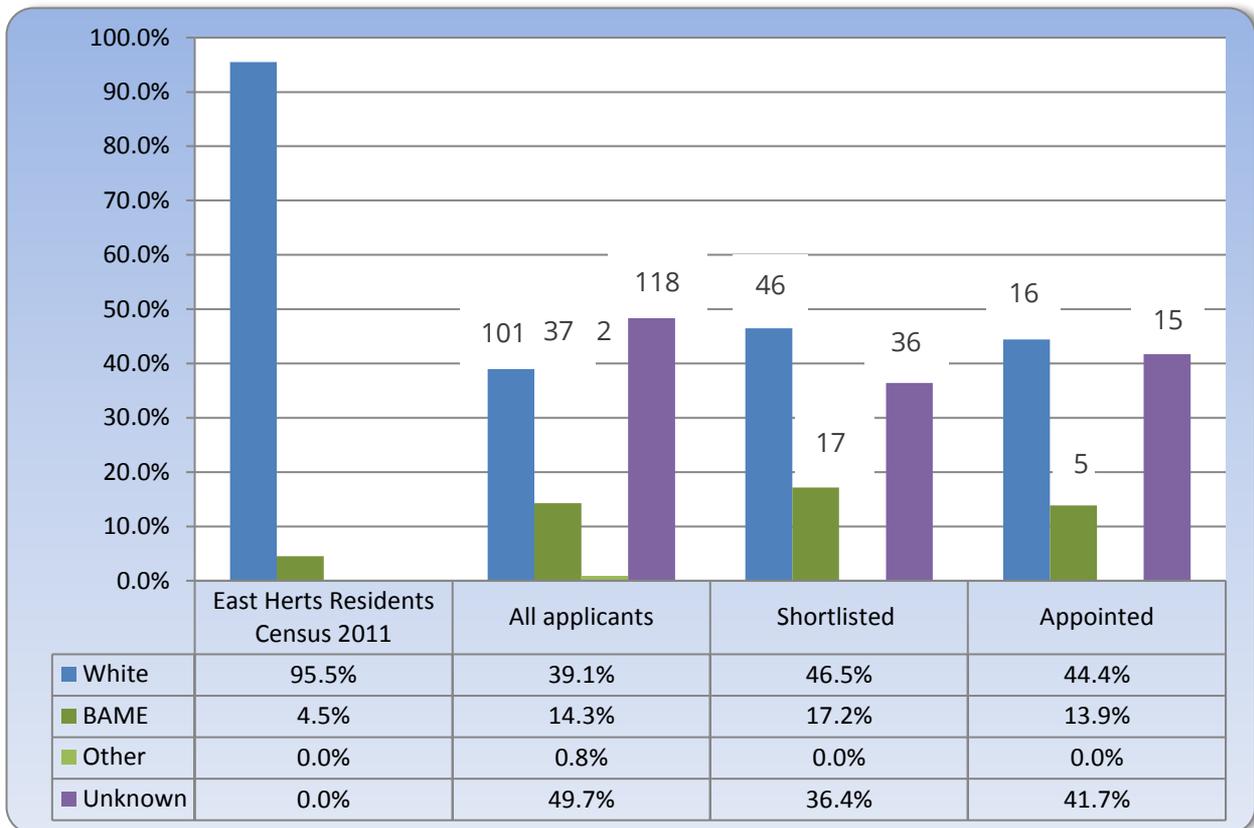
Source: Census 2021

Figure 7.0 shows that in 2021/22, of those that completed the equalities monitoring form, there was a higher proportion of female applicants than male applicants: 36% (93) of applicants were female and 29% (74) were male compared to the profile of the working population of East Herts (51% and 49% respectively). This is a change from 2020/21 where 31% of applicants were female and 24% were male. However, as can be seen from the data, 35% of applicants either did not complete the equalities form or did not disclose their data.

Figure 7.0 also shows that of the 99 applicants shortlisted for interview, 42 (42%) were female and 30 (30%) were male, with 27 (27%) unknown. Figure 7.0 shows that of the 36 applicants appointed, 17 (47%) were female and 7 (19%) were male. However with such a high percentage of 'Unknowns' it is quite likely that the percentage gap between male and female appointees will be smaller in reality.

The conversion from application to shortlist are closely aligned for both females (36% to 42%) and for males (29% to 30%). There is an increase in 5 percentage points between the number of females being shortlisted to appointed and a reduction of 11 percentage points between the number of males being shortlisted to appointed. This may indicate some potential bias, however the change is based on just 36 appointments and the gender of 35% of the appointees is unknown. Although equalities data is mostly known for appointees we have chosen not to populate the data with this known data on our HR system for appointees and have used the original equalities monitoring forms for applicants. By adding data in for appointees this can distort the data when looking at the conversion of applicants from application through to interview and then appointment, particularly because the number of 'Unknowns' is so high.

## Ethnic origin



**Figure 8.0 Applicant profile by ethnic origin compared to the population of East Herts**

Source: ONS Census 2011 - Ethnic Group by Measures

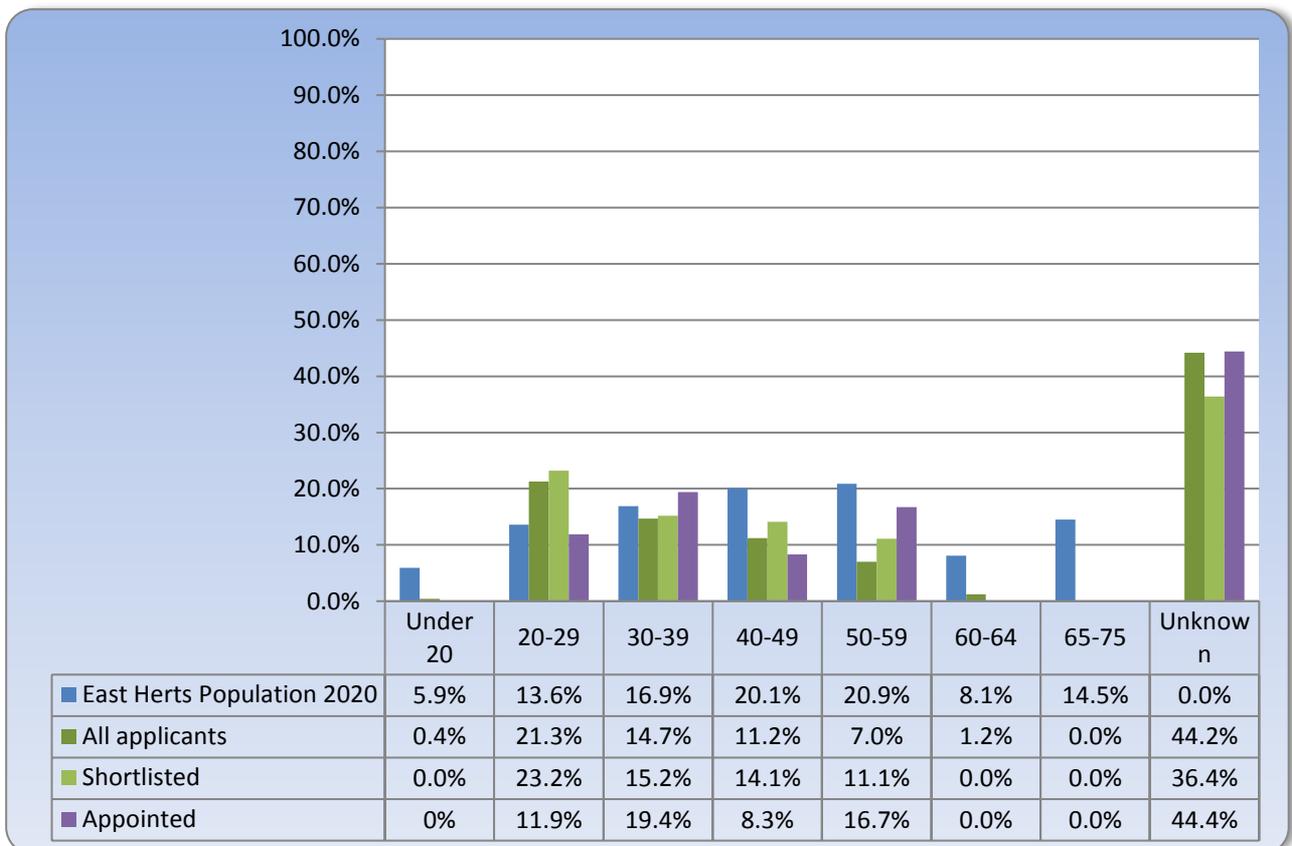
Figure 8.0 shows that in 2021/22 the council attracted applicants from a diverse range of ethnic origins reflective of those of East Herts residents; 37 applicants (14.3%) were from BAME groups which is significantly higher than the percentage of East Herts residents in these groups (4.5%). The figure is also slightly higher than 2020/21 where 13.8% applicants were from BAME groups. However, with the number of 'Unknowns' being at almost 50% of applicants this does make data analysis unreliable.

There is an increase in the percentage of white applicants from application to shortlisting (39.1% to 46.5%) but between shortlisting and appointment it drops (46.5% to 44.4%). For applicants from BAME groups, there is an increase from application to shortlisting (14.3% to 17.2%) and then drops back down to 13.9%. The percentage between application and appointment is closely aligned for BAME applicants which is positive and is an improvement on the 2020/21 data. As reported, equality data is removed from applications, names are shared as the HR system cannot 'blind' these,

managers are trained in equality and avoiding bias so there are sufficient measures in place.

It should also be noted that East Herts has not had challenge from a candidate suggesting any bias or discrimination over a shortlisting decision. The shortlisting process involves a panel scoring candidates against the job person specification criteria and these forms are collected by HR to evidence the merit based scoring undertaken.

## Age



**Figure 9.0 Applicant profile by age compared to the working population of East Herts**

Source: Nomis Population estimates - local authority based by single year of age (2020).

*Note: The percentages shown for East Herts residents are the percentage of 16-75 year olds, not the total population. Numbers could not be added to this chart due to the size of the columns.*

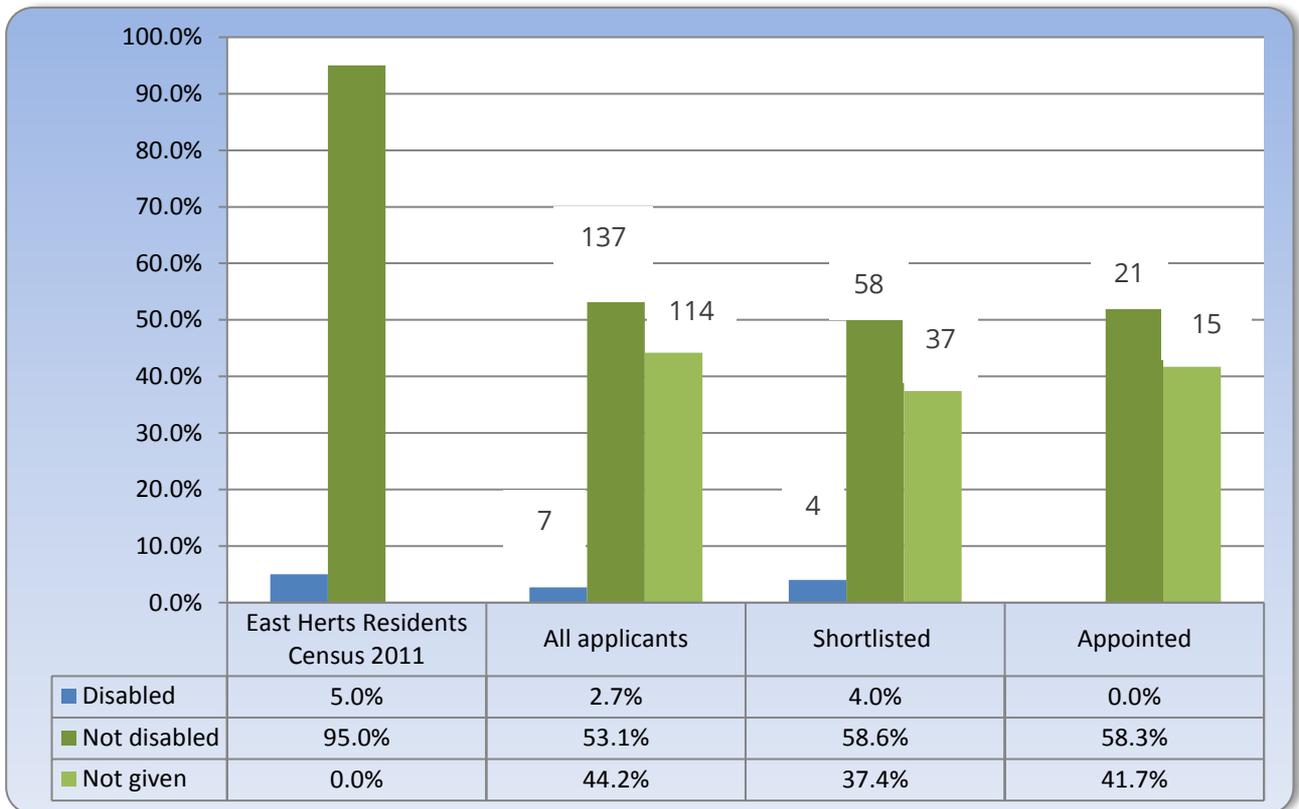
Figure 9.0 shows that the council attracted applicants from a wide range of age groups broadly reflective of those of East Herts residents in the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups. Percentages of applicants in the other age groups are lower than that of East Herts

residents, however the age of 44% of applicants was unknown as they either did not complete the equalities form or did not disclose their data. This makes the data analysis very unreliable and it is likely that if the full data was known, the percentage of applicants in those underrepresented age groups would be higher. In the older age groups it is likely to be due to people taking retirement. There were fewer applicants under the age of 20 compared to East Herts residents in that age group (5.9%), however this is likely to be due to it being compulsory to remain in full time education or training up to the age of 18.

There is some variation in the percentages of applicants at the various age groups and the percentage of those shortlisted. For the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups the percentages of those applying compared to those shortlisted stayed fairly closely aligned. For the Under 20 and 60-64 categories the percentage decreased to 0% at the shortlisting stage but this equated to just 4 applicants in total. As previously mentioned the very high level of 'Unknowns' makes data analysis unreliable. The number of 'Unknowns' remains decreased slightly from application to shortlist (44.2% to 36.4%).

From the shortlisting to appointment stage the percentage reduced in the 20-29 and 40-49 age categories and increased in the 30-39 and 50-59 age categories. The number of 'Unknowns' increased slightly from shortlist to appointment. Despite the slight variation at the different stages there are no obvious areas for concern.

## Disability status



**Figure 10.0 Applicant profile by disability compared to the working population of East Herts (Disability status)**

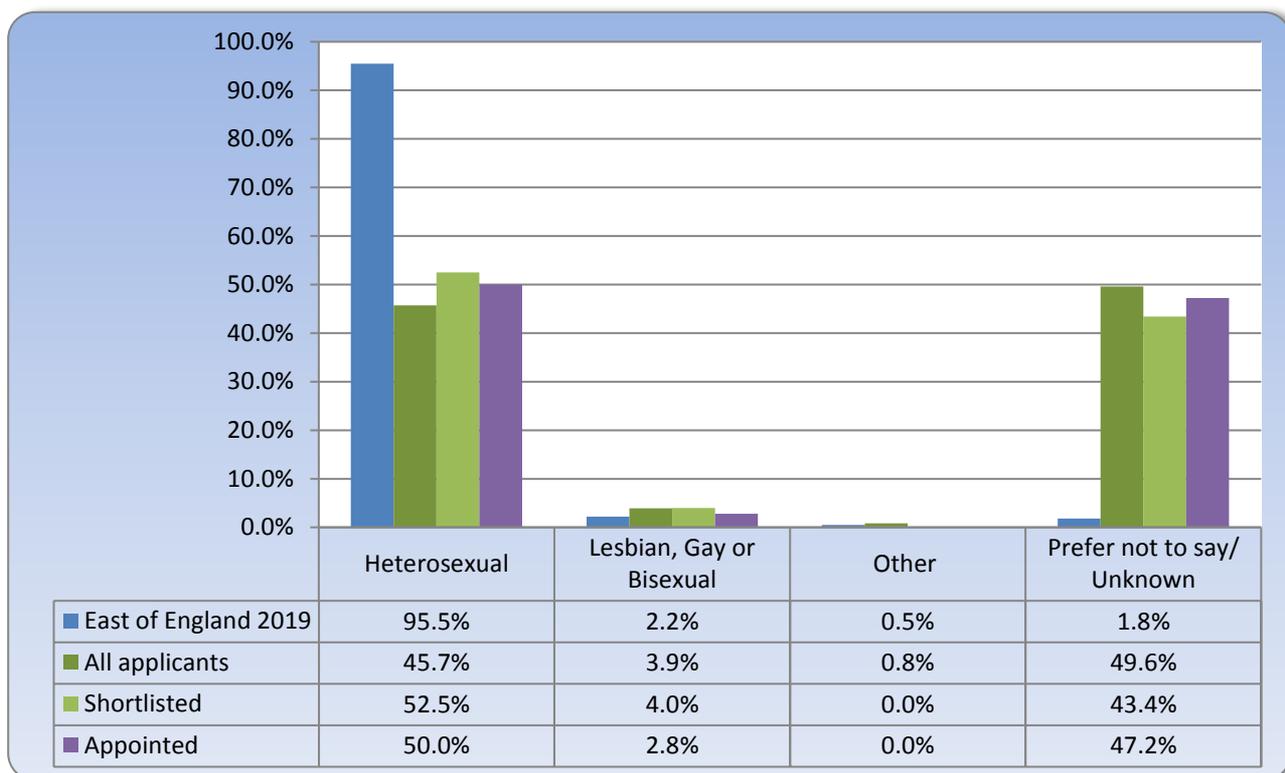
Source: ONS Census 2011 - Long Term Health Problem or Disability

Figure 10.0 shows that, of those that completed the equalities monitoring form, 2.7% of applicants had a disability in 2021/22 which is lower than East Herts residents with a disability (5%) and is a very slight decrease from the 2020/21 figure of 2.9%. It is worth noting the figure for East Herts residents includes those with a long term health problem which may mean they are unfit to work and is based on households rather than individuals. In addition, the disability status of 44% of applicants was unknown.

The council would like to attract more applications from disabled people. The council's recent move to blended working may help to attract more disabled people. The council guarantees that disabled applicants under the Disability Confident Scheme will be invited for an interview if they meet the minimum essential criteria for the role (the Symbol is displayed on our recruitment messages and our website to help attract disabled candidates). In 2021/22, there were 7 applicants (2.7%) who stated that they have a disability. Of these, 4 met the essential criteria and were shortlisted for interview

but unfortunately no disabled people were appointed. As previously mentioned, the disability status of 44% of applicants was unknown as they either did not complete the equalities form or did not disclose their data which makes the data analysis unreliable.

## Sexual orientation



**Figure 11.0 Applicant profile by sexual orientation compared to the East of England**

Source: ONS – Sexual Identity by Region (East of England) – 2019.

Note: Numbers could not be added to this chart due to the size of the columns.

Figure 11.0 shows that 3.9% of applicants in 2021/22 were lesbian, gay or bisexual, this is slightly higher than the percentage for the East of England population (2.2%) and is higher than 2020/21 (2.5%). It is positive to see that this rises to 4% at shortlisting although it does drop back down to 2.8% at appointment.

# Disciplinary, Grievance and Probation

**(Grievance includes Bullying & Harassment complaints)**

There was one formal disciplinary case and one formal grievance in 2021/22. We are unable to report on equality data due to the possibility of the individuals being identifiable.

## Training

The 2021/22 Learning and Development Programme offered a range of learning and development opportunities designed to meet corporate, service and individual needs. Development needs were identified corporately and through individual PDRs. The delivery of development opportunities available for staff was adjusted to align with the move to hybrid working. Most training was delivered via facilitated virtual events, virtual coaching, webinars and e-learning. All employees were trained in equality and diversity, safeguarding, health and safety and data protection as part of the council's annual mandatory training programme.

Corporate training events are advertised to all staff via email bulletins or employees are contacted directly for specific events. Attendance is subject to manager approval and places are offered on a first come first served basis. Requests for funded professional and vocational training are approved by Leadership Team. No formal requests for professional or vocational training were refused in 2021/22.

We are satisfied that the training and development opportunities at the council are made available on a fair and equal basis cross the council which enables all employees to take advantage of the opportunities.

# Leavers

## Introduction

This section provides information on employees who have left the council (both voluntarily and involuntarily) between the period 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. The figures exclude casual employees who have left the council and those who are on a career break.

The total number of leavers during the period is 44. Of these, 37 left voluntarily and 7 left involuntarily. There was also one death in service. The involuntary leavers include those whose temporary contract had come to an end, dismissal, ill health retirement or redundancy. Please refer to the Annual Turnover Report for 2021/22 (Human Resources Committee May 2022) for full details in terms of reasons for leaving, leavers by length of service, leavers by service area etc. This section looks at leavers in terms of equalities and protected characteristics but does not go in the same details as the Turnover Report.

Leaver data has been analysed using 5 of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

- Sex (Gender)
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Disability

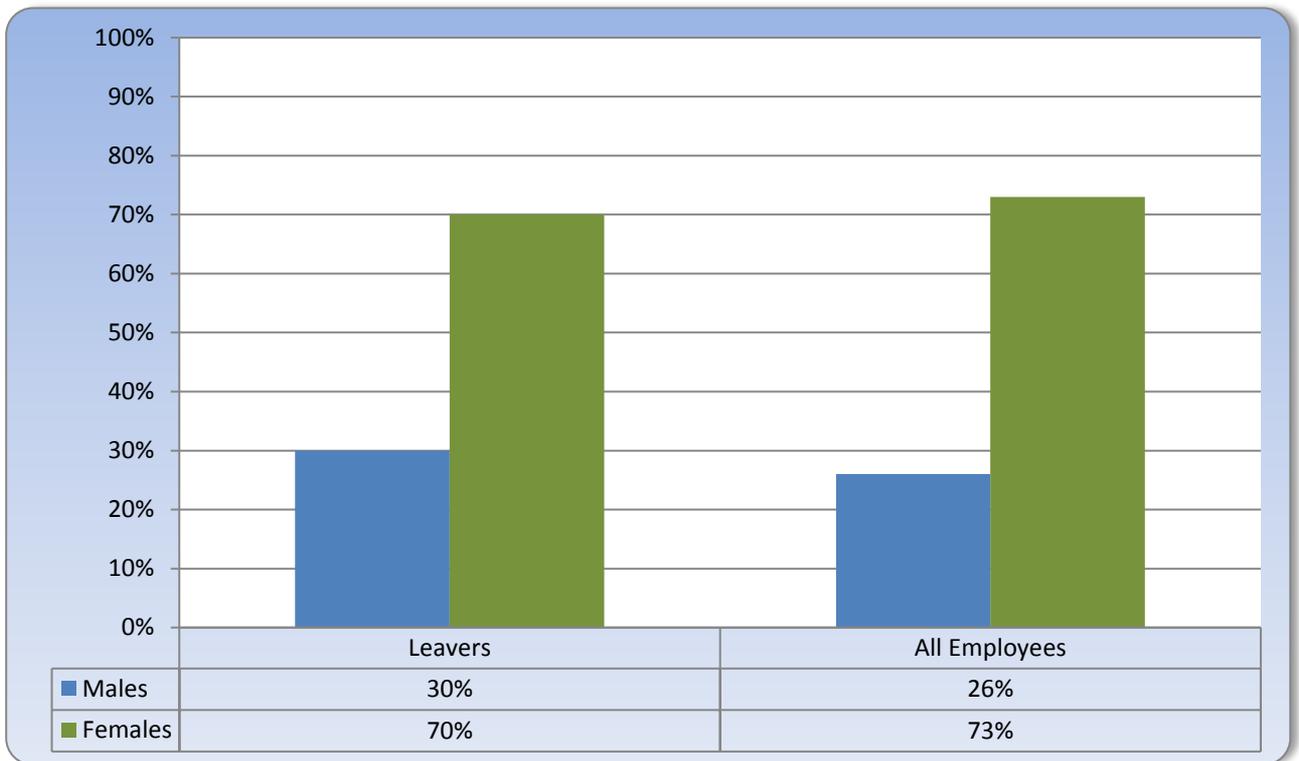
Sexual orientation was not provided due to the small numbers of employees in some categories which may identify individuals. There are no concerns in this area.

Although marital status data is recorded this is not currently reportable from the system.

Pregnancy is not a permanent characteristic but a state in time. 6 employees took maternity leave in 2021/22 and it should be noted that no concerns have been raised regarding this protected characteristic.

Although the HR system has capacity for employees to indicate if they are transgender the new starter forms do not request this and instead the council has focused on the current gender and not the past.

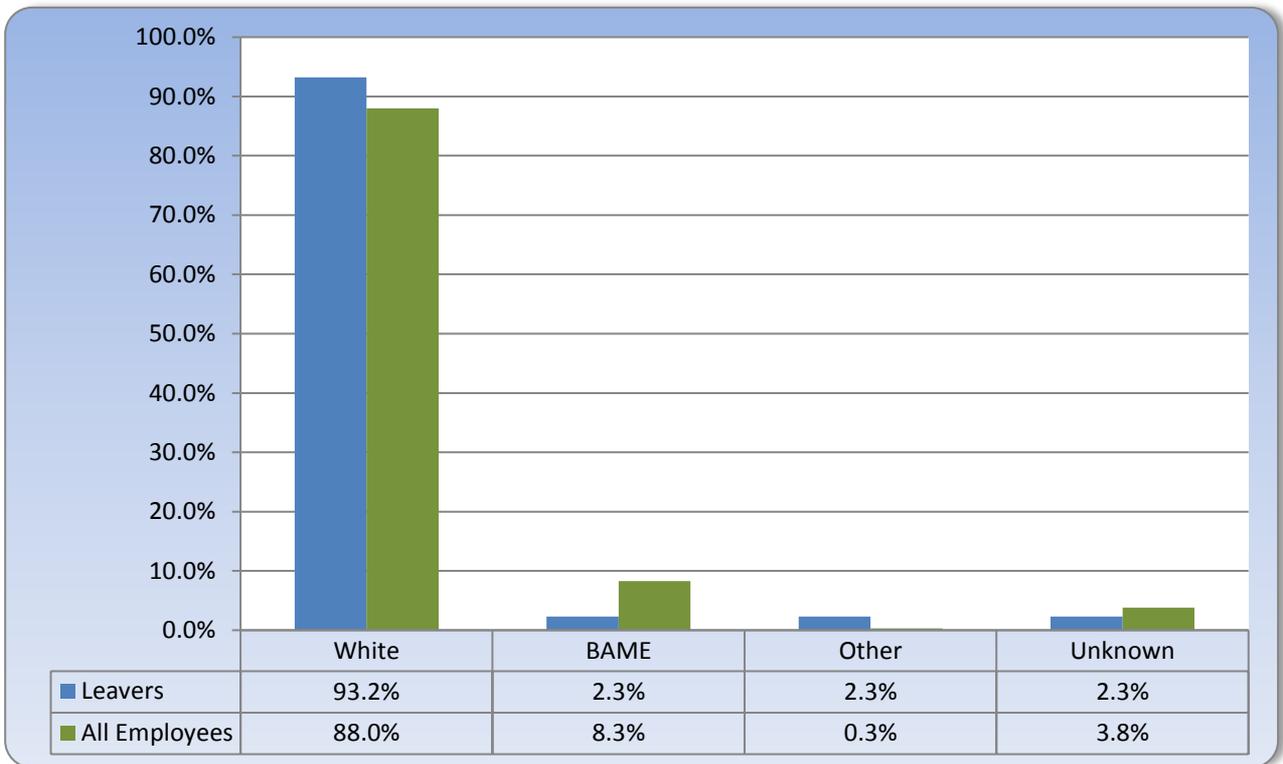
## Sex (Gender)



**Figure 12.0 Leavers by sex**

There are no concerns in this area, the gender of leavers in 2021/22 was generally reflective of the overall employee profile.

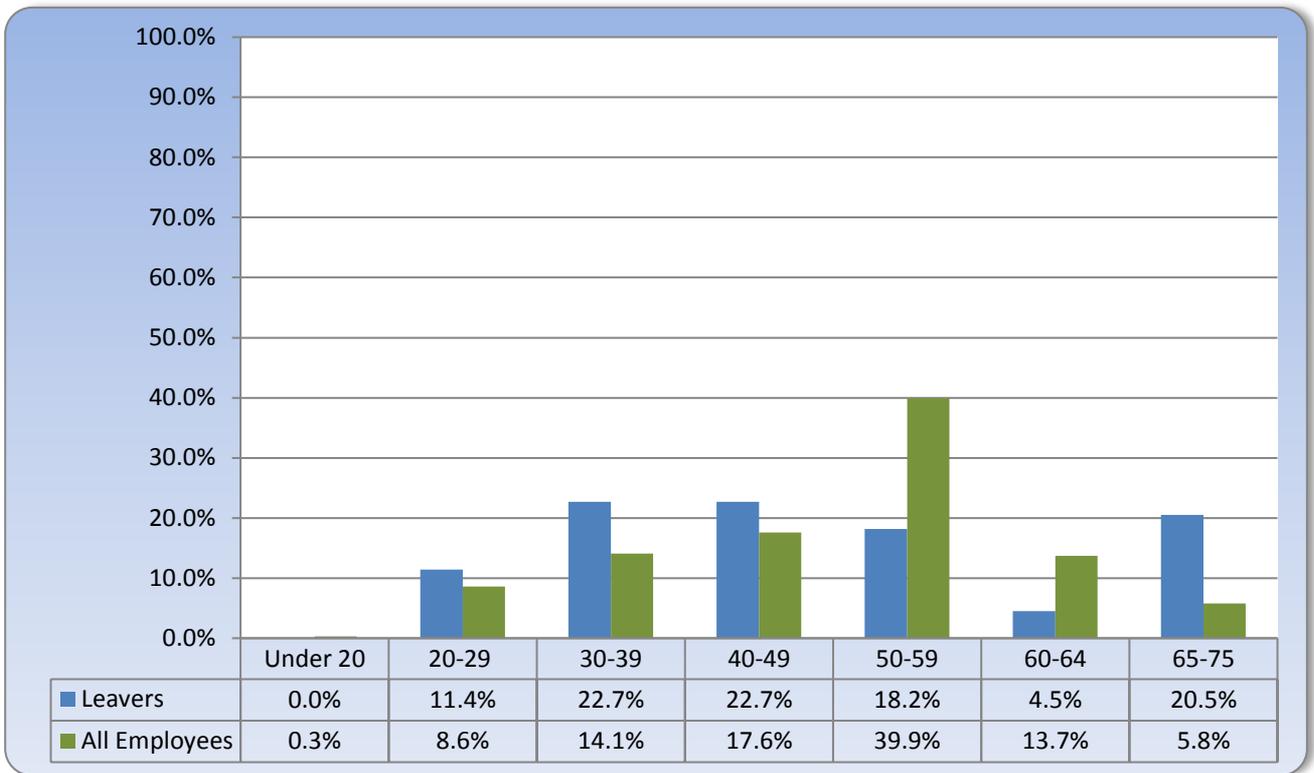
## Ethnic Origin



**Figure 13.0 Leavers by ethnic origin**

Figure 13.0 shows that there was a lower percentage of BAME leavers when compared to the percentage of BAME employees and the percentage of white leavers was higher compared to the percentage of white employees; 2.3% of leavers were from BAME groups and 93.2% were white compared to the employee profile of 8.3% BAME and 88% white. HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has also not indicated any concerns regarding ethnic origin.

# Age

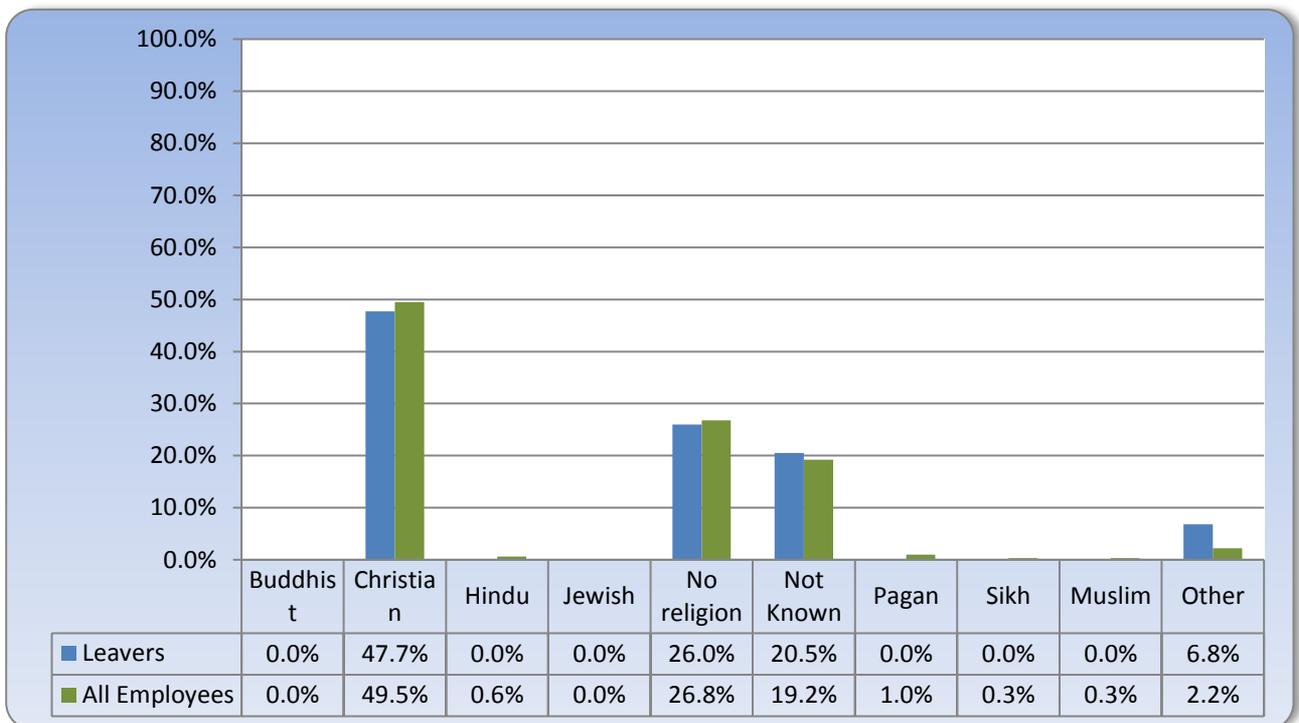


**Figure 14.0 Leavers by age**

Figure 14.0 shows that there was 4 times the percentage of leavers in the 65-75 age group but this is due to employees in this age group taking retirement.

The percentage of leavers in the 20-29, 30-39 and 40-49 age groups were higher than the percentage of employees in these age ranges. This is most likely to be for career progression and due to the small teams at the council employees may have to seek this progression outside of the council. This is an area the council continually tries to address but is ultimately limited by the overall size and structure.

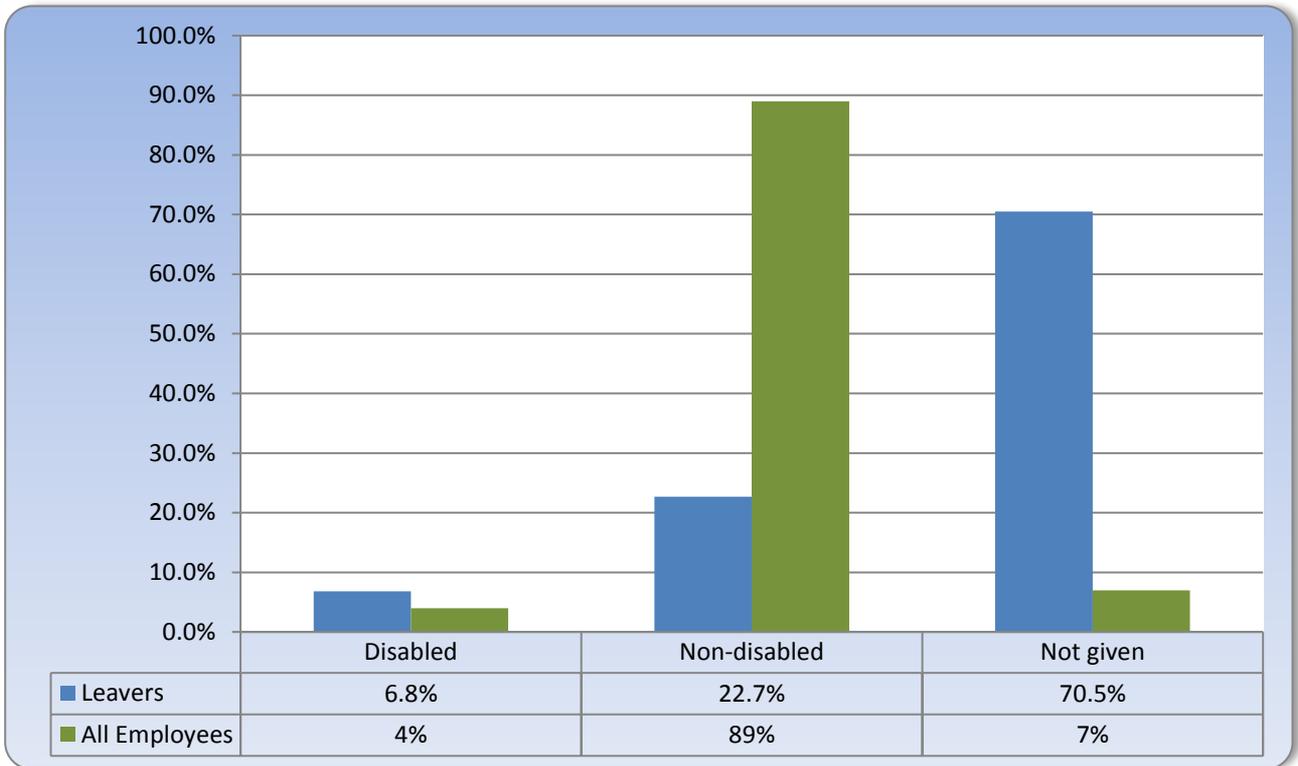
## Religion or Belief



**Figure 15.0 Leavers by religion**

There are no concerns in this area, the religious belief of leavers in 2021/22 were generally reflective of the overall employee profile given the small numbers involved.

## Disability



**Figure 16.0 Leavers by disability**

Figure 16.0 shows the percentage of leavers with a disability (6.8%) was slightly higher than the percentage of employees with a disability (4%). HR have reviewed exit questionnaires which has also not indicated any concerns regarding disability.

## Staff and Employment Equality Action plan 1 July 22 – 31 June 23

The actions listed below refer to staff and employment only.

Action	Timescale
<b>Employee Profile</b>	
To complete the required annual Gender Pay Gap report for 2022.	Published by March 2023
Develop guidance on supporting employees who are changing gender so that best practice is available to both staff and managers where required.	January 2023
Send all staff a reminder to check and update their personal details on MyView ahead of the data being analysed for the next annual equalities report to ensure we have fuller rather than partial data (especially religion, sexual orientation and disability). Provide staff with more detailed information about what constitutes a disability as some employees may have developed a disability since joining the council and not updated HR and may also not be aware that their condition could be classed as a disability.	February 2023
Leadership Team to promote diversity and equality and awareness weeks.	Ongoing
<b>Recruitment</b>	
Continue to require managers to return all recruitment paperwork before an offer letter can be sent out to	Ongoing

ensure HR have full shortlisting data to be able to report on	
Each interview panel chair to give consideration to the diversity of the interview panel and where possible try to ensure the panel is as diverse. This will include using panel members outside of their own service areas where appropriate. HR will publish a list of recruitment trained staff once the management training has taken place. Where this is not possible try to ensure that other elements of the panel show staff diversity, for example 'meet the team' sessions to demonstrate the diversity at East Herts and to appear as welcoming as possible to applicants of all backgrounds.	Ongoing
Work with Shaw Trust to advertise our jobs with them to attract more disabled applicants.	December 2022
Look into working with Inclusive Employment at HCC who organise work tasters for disabled people to help them get into work.	December 2022
Continue to investigate with the ATS provider how to name blind CVs without losing key data.	Dependent on ATS provider
Audit a selection of recruitment decisions to ensure there is no bias and shortlisting and appointment decisions are based on merit.	January 2023
<b>Discipline, Grievance and Probation</b>	
Continue to monitor equalities data for all disciplinary, grievance and formal probationary cases.	Ongoing
<b>Training</b>	
Continue to ensure that all staff complete the equality and diversity module as part of the mandatory e-	Ongoing

learning training programme. Offer further equalities based training as identified by annual training needs analysis undertaken by the HR and OD Manager.	
Continue to ensure that managers are briefed in the PDR process and that effective and appropriate personal development plans are put in place for all employees, including those rated as 'exceeding expectations' and above.	Ongoing
Continue to develop both wellbeing programmes/guidance and maintain sufficient Mental Health First Aiders to support staff experiencing mental health issues.	Ongoing

## East Herts Council Report

### HR Committee

**Date of Meeting: 21 September 2022**

**Report by: Head of HR and OD**

**Report title: Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April - June 2022)**

**Ward(s) affected: None**

### Summary

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR Committee:**

- To consider the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April – June 2022) and provide any comments to the HR Officer/Head of HR and OD.

#### **1.0 Proposal(s)**

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider the Human Resources (HR) Management Statistics for Quarter 1 (April – June 2022).

#### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 This report outlines the current performance against the annual HR targets as approved by the HR Committee and available benchmarking data.

### 3.0 Report

#### 3.1 Vacancy Data and Recruitment

3.1.1 There were 31 vacancies at the end of Quarter 1 (30 June 2022).

3.1.2 11 of the 31 posts (35%) have either been appointed to or recruitment processes are taking place.

3.1.3 20 of the 31 posts (65%) are being held due to reviews of the service structure as part of the transformation project, are yet to commence recruitment and are being covered by agency staff where required. 1 in Communications, Strategy and Policy, 4 in Strategic Finance and Property, 1 in Legal and Democratic services, 11 in planning, 3 in Revenues and Benefits.

#### 3.2 Employee Turnover

3.2.1 There were 11 leavers in Quarter 1 (April – June 2022) giving a turnover rate for the quarter of 3.5%. Based on the leavers from quarter 1, it is estimated that the turnover rate for the annual period 2022/23 will be **14.4%**. This has increased by 1.8% since quarter 3 (21/22) and is now slightly higher than the local government average (14% for 2018/19 for Local Authority districts in the UK).

**Figure 1 - Leavers and Turnover throughout 2021/22**

	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Number of Leavers 2021/22	12	11	9	15
Turnover rate 2020/21	3.6%	3.4%	2.8%	4.6%

Number of Leavers 2022/23	11			
Turnover rate 2021/22	3.5%			

3.2.2 Reasons for leaving in Quarter 1 included 3 staff leaving to achieve promotion, 1 to relocation, 1 to personal reasons, 1 to retirement, 2 for family responsibilities, 1 to compulsory redundancy and 2 for being unhappy in their role.

### 3.3 **Sickness Absence**

#### **ALL absence**

##### **ALL Absence – Quarter 1**

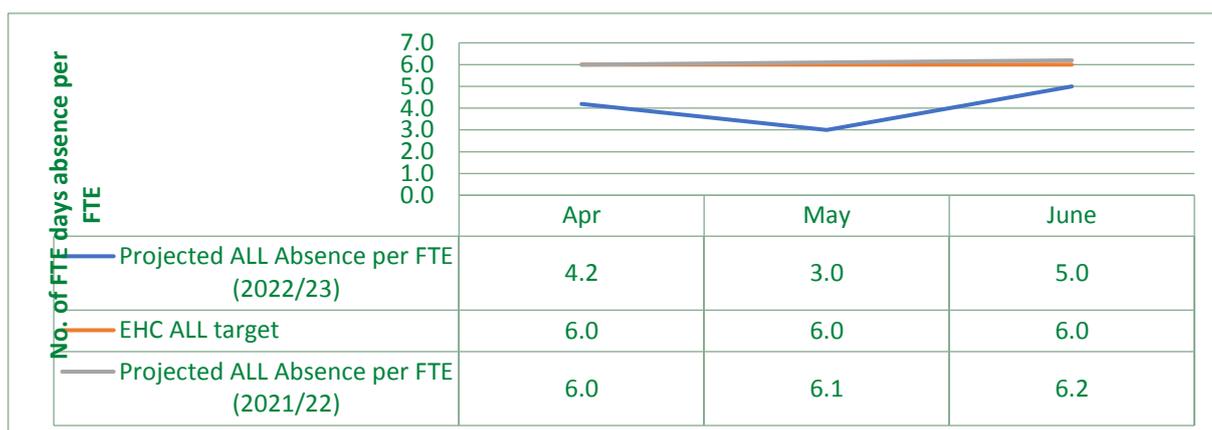
3.3.1 At the end of Quarter 4, the total number of sickness days taken was 303.62 full time equivalent (FTE) days. Of these, 253.54 FTE days (83.5%) were due to short term sickness and 50.08 FTE days (16.5%) were due to long term sickness. The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness is 1.4% and the percentage of time lost due to long term sickness is 0.3% which equates to a total percentage lost time of 1.7%.

3.3.2 At the end of Quarter 1, the number of FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 1.25 days.

##### **ALL Absence - Annual period 2022/23**

3.3.3 Figure 2 below shows that, based on the absences for the year so far, (i.e., absences at the end of June 2022) Projected sickness absence for the annual period 22/23 is estimates to be **5 days per FTE**. This is below the council’s annual target of 6 days.

**Figure 2 – Annual absence for 2022/23**



### **Short term absence**

3.3.4 Absences of less than four weeks are considered to be short term sickness absence.

### **Short term absence - Quarter 1**

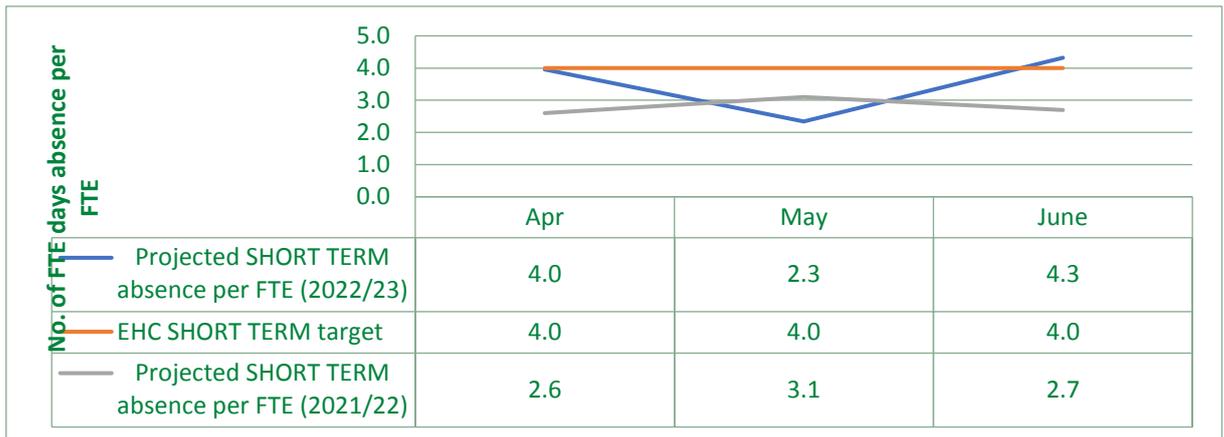
3.3.5 Sixty-five employees (19.6% of the total headcount) had short term sickness absence during Quarter 1 totalling 253.54 FTE days. This represents a percentage lost time rate of 1.4%.

3.3.6 At the end of Quarter 1, the number of short term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 1.08 days.

### **Short term absence - Annual period 2022/23**

3.3.7 Figure 3 below shows that, based on the absences for the year so far, (i.e., absences at the end of June 2022) It is estimated that short term sickness absence for the annual period 22/23 is estimates to be **4.3 days per FTE**. This is slightly above the council’s short term target of 4 days.

**Figure 3 – Annual SHORT TERM absence for 2022/23**



**Long Term absence**

3.3.8 Absences in excess of 4 weeks/28 consecutive calendar days are considered to be long term sickness absence.

**Long term absence – Quarter 1**

3.3.9 Four employees (1.2% of the total headcount) had long term sickness absence during Quarter 1 totalling 50.08 FTE days. This represents a percentage time lost rate of 0.3%.

3.3.10 All employees were offered support through the Employee Assistance Programme and a referral to Occupational Health. The reasons for long term absence were due to stress (one employee) and minor reasons (three employees) All employee’s have now returned to work.

3.3.11 At the end of Quarter 1, the number of long term FTE days absent per FTE was 0.18 days.

**LONG TERM absence - Annual period 2022/23**

3.3.12 Figure 4 below shows that, based on long term absences for the year so far (i.e. as at the end of June 2022), it is estimated that long term

sickness absence for the annual period 2022/23 will be **0.7 days per FTE**. This is significantly below the council’s long term target of 2 days.

**Figure 4 Annual LONG TERM absence for 2022/23**



### 3.4 Learning and Development

3.4.1 In Quarter 1, we stated a programme of Resilience Workshops with an outside provider, *'Art of Brilliance'*. We commissioned 8 x one-hour workshops which commenced in April 2022, and which will run to December 2022, (excluding August), which are available to all staff. Three sessions took place during the quarter, with a total of approx. 65 people attending the online sessions. We also commissioned 2 x half day, face to face Resilience workshops for managers, which were delivered in-house in June 2022. A total of 20 managers attended these workshops.

3.4.2 In Quarter 1, Three in-house corporate learning and development events were held over seven sessions and one hundred and twenty-one employees participated. Please note these figures do not include the in-house e-learning courses delivered through the Skills Build platform. These will be included in the Annual Learning and Development report.

3.4.3 The Information Governance and Data Protection Manager, Tyron Suddes delivered training to employees on Data breach. Three

sessions were held in quarter 1, and eighty-three employees attended.

3.4.4 Our Corporate Induction took place in June 2022. The event was delivered virtually through Zoom by Jane Mackie, HR & OD Manager and included revised and updated content. Seven employees attended.

3.4.5 In Quarter 1, training was delivered on Sustainability by David Thorogood, Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator. Thirty-one employees attended over three sessions.

3.4.6 Employees continue to complete the annual mandatory training programme through SkillsBuild, the council's e-learning platform. The following courses went live from December 2021 for all employees to complete, in line with their PDR:

- Safeguarding 2021/22
- Fire safety 2021/22
- Email Etiquette and email management
- Data Protection 2021/22
- Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace 2021/22

3.4.7 The following is a summary of the learning and development events that were held in Quarter 1:

<b>Event/Course</b>	<b>No of Participants</b>	<b>Number of sessions held</b>
Corporate Induction	7	1
Sustainability Training	31	3
Data Breach Training	83	3
Resilience Workshops – Staff	65	3

Resilience Workshops - Managers	20	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>12</b>

### 3.5 Equalities Monitoring Indicators

3.5.1 The table below shows a summary of employee equalities data at the end of Quarter 1 (i.e. 30 June 2022).

	<b>Comparison to population data</b>	<b>EHC Percentage</b>
<b>Disability</b>		
Leadership Team with a disability	5% CENSUS 2011	0%
Employees with a disability	5% CENSUS 2011	3.9%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Leadership Team members from BAME groups	4.5% CENSUS 2011	10%
Employees from BAME groups	4.5% CENSUS 2011	13.5%
<b>Gender</b>		
Leadership Team members who are female	51% NOMIS 2019	40%
Employees who are female	51%	74%

	NOMIS 2019	
<b>Sexual Orientation (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual)</b>		
Leadership Team	2.1% ONS 2018	20%
Employees	2.1% ONS 2018	2.3%

The Leadership Team comprises the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and all Heads of Service.

#### **4.0 Implications/Consultations**

##### **Community Safety**

No

##### **Data Protection**

No

##### **Equalities**

No

##### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

##### **Financial**

No

##### **Health and Safety**

No

##### **Human Resources**

As detailed in the report

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

No

**Specific Wards**

No

**5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

None

**Contact Officer**

Jane Mackie, HR and OD Manager

Contact Tel No 01992 531652

[Jane.Mackie@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Mackie@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Report Author**

Emily Cordwell, HR Officer

[Emily.Cordwell@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Emily.Cordwell@eastherts.gov.uk)

## East Herts Council Report

### Human Resources Committee

**Date of Meeting: 21 September 2022**

**Report by: Head of HR and Organisational Development**

**Report title: HR and Payroll Team Update Report**

**Ward(s) affected: N/A**

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### Summary

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:**

#### **A. To note the HR and Payroll Team Update Report**

##### **1.0 Proposal**

1.1 This report provides an update on key areas the HR and Payroll team have been working on during Quarter 1 of 2022/23 (April to June 2022).

##### **2.0 HR Team**

2.1 Simon O'Hear, Head of HR is currently off work on long term sick leave, which commenced in July 2022. An Interim Head of HR; Elly Starling has been appointed to provide strategic support and guidance to the Executive Team and HR Team in Simon's absence. Elly has a wide and varied experience of HR and OD roles at a senior level in local government.

##### **3.0 Payroll Service**

3.1 Payroll continues to deliver its primary mission of ensuring all

Staff, Councillors and Contractors on Payroll are paid accurately and on a timely basis.

- 3.2 Payroll processed all year end statutory requirements for the 2021/22 financial year to HMRC and LGPS Pension provider which included balancing to the general ledger and closing down the ResourceLink system then worked with IT to install the 2022/23 new financial year service pack on the test system which they fully tested before agreeing to install on the live system to begin the 2022/23 monthly processing. The pension year end return that payroll processed was in a different format to previous years which was challenging due to the complex calculations required to ensure pension records are correct for different circumstances like maternity/sick and unpaid leave.
- 3.3 Payroll processed a separate election payroll for the Sawbridgeworth Parish ByElection.
- 3.4 Payroll processed P60's for all Staff and Councillors for the 2021/22 tax year then released onto 'My View' also processed and printed P60's for the Election payroll which were posted to the 562 individuals on the payroll.

#### **4.0 Learning and Development**

- 4.1 The HR Quarterly Management Statistics Report provides the data and details regarding the learning and development events from April to June 2022.
- 4.2 Employees continue to complete the revised mandatory e-learning courses that went live in December 2021:
  - Data Protection Briefing 2021/22
  - Fire Safety 2021/22
  - Email Etiquette 2021/22
  - Safeguarding 2021/22

- Diversity and inclusion in the workplace 2021/22
- Lone Working (for selected officers identified as lone workers)

4.3 A programme of Resilience Workshops for both staff and managers commenced in April 2022, presented by the training organisation - Art of Brilliance. 20 managers attended a half day workshop – Leadership Reboot in June 2022 and approx. 65 staff attended 3 x 1 hour resilience workshops in April, May and June. The sessions were: *Art of Being Brilliant, The Why Factor and Mindfulness*. Recordings of the 1 hour sessions were also made available on the intranet for staff to view. Feedback was very positive from all who attended, with some staff providing testimonials to this effect.

The programme of 1 hour workshops continues up to December 2022, with a session per month (excluding August).

4.4 The Information Governance and Data Protection Manager, Tyron Suddes delivered training to employees on Data breach. Three sessions were held in quarter 1, and eighty-three employees attended

4.5 Our Corporate Induction took place in June 2022. The event was delivered virtually through Zoom by Jane Mackie, HR and OD Manager. Seven employees attended.

4.6 In quarter 1 training was delivered on Sustainability by David Thorogood, Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator. Thirty-one employees attended over three sessions.

## **5.0 Human Resources Update**

### **5.1 East Herts Together (EHT) Development Update**

The East Herts Together Group has continued to meet on Zoom due to differing work patterns of group members in

terms of home/office days.

- 5.1.1 The Core Staff and Management Competencies and redesigned PDR process including the competencies and 360 feedback (for managers only) were rolled out for the 22/23 PDR cycle. The appraisal period was extended to the end of June 2022 to allow the new process to be implemented. The HR and OD Manager is now reviewing the individual training needs from the PDRs to inform the training plan for 2022/23.
- 5.1.2 The one page plan has been updated for 22/23.
- 5.1.3 The EHT group agreed and implemented a revised recognition scheme which moved from monthly to quarterly awards with 4 categories covering each of our values and a change champion. There will also be an annual awards ceremony sponsored by the council's larger contractors.
- 5.1.4 The Transformation Programme Manager has joined the EHT group and attended the last meeting to give an update on the Transformation Programme. The intention is that the Transformation Programme will be a regular item on the EHT agenda with the group giving feedback and suggestions as well as supporting some of the actions.

## 5.2 Recruitment

### 5.2.1 Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

HR implemented the ATS system with Webrecruit on 1 August 2022. The council's careers site with Webrecruit is live through which applicants can view our vacancies and apply via the ATS. There is an automatic redirect from our website to the careers site. We are also using online job board credits with Web Recruit. Most managers have been trained on how to use the system by Web Recruit and the HR team will provide day to day support for managers using the system. Unfortunately, we

have had to go live without name blinding as it became apparent during testing that the name blinding technology was causing some key data to be lost from CVs. We are waiting for Web Recruit to explore some different name blinding technology.

### 5.3 HR Services provided to external organisations

The HR team continue to provide HR support to Hertford and Ware Town Councils. The team are currently supporting Ware Town Council with some complex casework.

Hertford Town Council have quarterly manager surgeries and are being supported under the revised offer. The HR team have supported HTC with a variety of queries.

Borough of Broxbourne Council (District Council) has requested considerable support with case work and a TUPE transfer. The HR Manager, Jane Mackie has provided much of this support. Clarie Kirby, HR Officer had started the process of reviewing BCC HR policies – with approx. 6 policies reviewed. Gill Coleman is providing ongoing telephone payroll advice. This is all being charged at the new revised pricing structure.

## **6.0 Casework**

6.1 Support has been provided by HR on a number of cases in terms of disciplinary, absence and capability.

## **7.0 HR and Payroll System Development**

7.1 The HR Officer is still finalising sickness absence on the system to ensure it is recorded and managed in hours rather than days. There have been delays with this due to other work priorities.

7.2 IT have been liaising with Zellis on installing BAM (Business alert manager) which allows for date triggered notifications and emails which will improve efficiency and stop the need for manual processes.

7.3 The HR Officer has continued working with the provider on developing the overtime module on My View to allow employees to submit claims through the online portal which will cease the paper process. This did not unfortunately progress as hoped so has been paused until further updates can be provided and also as LT want to review Overtime as covered in the Annual HR and OD Plan.

## **8.0 Options**

N/A

## **9.0 Risks**

N/A

## **10.0 Implications/Consultations**

### **Community Safety**

No

### **Data Protection**

No

### **Equalities**

No

### **Environmental Sustainability**

No

### **Financial**

No

**Health and Safety**

No

**Human Resources**

Yes – as described in the report

**Human Rights**

No

**Legal**

No

**Specific Wards**

No

**11.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

N/A

**Contact Officer**

Elly Starling – Interim Head of HR and OD, Tel: 01279 502141  
[elaine.starling@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.starling@eastherts.gov.uk)

**Report Author**

Elly Starling – Interim Head of HR and OD, Tel: 01279 502141  
[elaine.starling@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.starling@eastherts.gov.uk)