



James Ellis
Head of Legal and Democratic
Services

MEETING : HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2023
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 Rachel Carter (Chairman)
Councillors M Connolly, T Deffley, D Hollebon, V Smith, Swainston and
D Willcocks

Substitutes

Green Group:	Councillors J Dunlop and G Hill
Conservative Group:	Councillor R Buckmaster
Liberal Democrat Group:	Councillor S Marlow
Labour Group:	Councillor Jacobs

*(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member
to Democratic Services 24 hours before the meeting)*

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- 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. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

2. Chairman's Announcements

3. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

4. Minutes - 15 February 2023 (Pages 7 - 19)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2023.

5. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member's Declaration of Interest.

6. Safety Committee Minutes - 9 May 2023 (Pages 20 - 30)

Minutes of Safety Committee - 09.05.2023

7. H&S Annual Report 2022/2023 including Q4 summary (Pages 31 - 50)

8. HR Quarterly Statistics Report Q4 2022-2023 (Pages 51 - 60)

9. Learning and Development Review 2022/23 (Pages 61 - 69)

10. Annual Turnover report 2022-23 (Pages 70 - 89)

11. Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2022-2023 (Pages 90 - 112)

12. 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 4

HR

HR

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY
2023, AT 7.00 PM

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
Simon O'Hear	- Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

350 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

351 MINUTES - 23 NOVEMBER 2022

It was moved by Councillor Bull and seconded by Councillor Ruffles that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 November 2023 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. It was noted

that Councillor Newton abstained from the vote as she was not present at the meeting on 23 November 2023.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

352 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were rolling declarations of interest from Members of Parish/Town Councils which are receiving services from East Herts Council's Human Resources Department.

353 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

The Chairman said that the meeting was the last of the current administration and extended her thanks to Members and Officers for their contributions and hard work in association with the Committee. She said that Officers rarely received praise and requested that her thanks be passed on to all of the staff within the Human Resources and Democratic Services Department.

The Chairman said that many Members of the Committee had served as Councillors for many years, and that some may not be returning after the Elections

in May. She thanked these Members for their years of selfless commitment, giving both their time and skills so generously and acknowledged that the residents of East Herts had benefited from this, receiving high quality services.

Several Members of the Committee then extended their thanks to the Chairman for the way she had conducted the meetings of the Committee over her tenure.

354 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE: MINUTES - 8 NOVEMBER 2022

The Chairman thanked the Health and Safety Officer for the Minutes from the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 8 November 2022.

The Health and Safety Officer confirmed that a meeting of the Health and Safety Committee was held on 7 February 2023, but that the Minutes of this meeting had not been available in time to also be included on the agenda.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 8 November 2022 be received.

355 HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY REVIEW - QUARTER 3, OCTOBER 2022 - DECEMBER 2022

The Health and Safety Officer introduced the report and asked Members if they had comments or

questions. There were no Members comments or questions.

The Chairman thanked the Health and Safety Officer for his report.

RESOLVED – that the Health and Safety Quarterly Review – Quarter 3, October 2022 – December 2022 be considered and received.

356 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STATISTICS - QUARTER 3, OCTOBER 2022 - DECEMBER 2022

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report and asked for Members' questions.

The Chairman referred to page 37 of the report and asked for further information pertaining to the large number of job vacancies which were outstanding within the Planning Department.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that thirteen of the job vacancies had gone live on 3rd February 2023. He said that the closing date for these vacancies was 3rd March 2023, but that consideration to shortlist potential applicants before this date was being given.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that measures to help recruit to the Planning vacancies included a Planning banner on the East Herts website, a powerful recruitment campaign

video and job adverts appearing on both the Public Sector Today and the South East Times.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that to further aid recruitment and retention twelve of the Planning job vacancies also included market supplements.

The Chairman asked for clarification of market supplements. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that market supplements were additional payments on top of a post's basic salary which are awarded where market pressures would otherwise prevent the recruitment and retention of staff. He said that market supplements were only be applied to posts where recruitment for the role had already been unsuccessful, and that this was why the Enforcement Officer vacancy did not include such a payment.

Councillor Alder asked if it was correct that those who expressed an interest in the Planning vacancies could arrange to be shown around the Department in person. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the recruitment video on the website did say 'come and see us' and so he assumed arrangements for such visits could be made. He reiterated that positive applications could be interviewed prior to the vacancy closing date to avoid losing good candidates.

Councillor Dumont asked if the Grants Officer role was to be recruited to. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Grants

Officer role was currently frozen as part of the Transformation agenda, with the role's duties moved to another area.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 43 of the report and asked when the census figures used would be updated. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the new figures were released approximately two weeks ago (after the report was written) and would therefore be used in the next report.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 42 of the report and asked how often staff were required to undertake cyber training and if there were any plans to increase the frequency of the training as cyber threats increased. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that cyber training was IT led, but he would make enquires regarding such training.

Councillor Ruffles referred to page 40 of the report and asked if there was a common cause for staff who were long term absent, and if the council should be doing more. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that such staff were referred to Occupational Health as standard. He said that those suffering from stress were risk assessed and signposted towards specialists with managers made aware.

Councillor Newton asked how the council were able to assess the working environment of those staff who were working from home. The Head of Human

Resources and Organisational Development said that all such staff had undergone a Display Screen Equipment Assessment (DSE). He said that any specialist equipment required by staff had been allowed to be taken home by those working in both blended and full time from home patterns.

Councillor Newton asked if any analysis had been done in regard to the stress of working from home. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that 160 responses had been received in response to the Blended Working Review, which showed that most staff wanted to work from home.

It was moved by Councillor Alder 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 – Quarter 3, October 2022 – December 2022 be considered and that any comments provided to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

357 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2022

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report and highlighted the two recommendations for the Committee. He said that the report had already been considered by Leadership Team, resulting in the action plan being

strengthened.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the gender pay gap had increased, but this was due to the lack of men in the lowest pay quartiles at the Council. He explained that the council's waste and leisure services were outsourced, and so these generally male dominated lower paid roles were not included, causing disproportion to the mean figures.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 51 of the report and asked if other local authorities had a similar female gender dominance. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that all local authorities had more female staff. He said that this was due to the flexibility of the roles which local authorities offered, for example, part time admin jobs which appealed to women as the traditional main childcare providers.

The Chairman referred to the investigations which were being made into enabling the name blinding of CV's submitted to the Council via the Applicant Tracking System (ATS). She said that it was disappointing that this was not currently possible without losing other key data from CVs. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that it was evident that there was not a male bias, and that the Council did not have a problem with recruiting women. He said that the Council had received a good deal with ATS which was still being developed.

Councillor Newton said that the bottom line was that applicants should be given jobs because they can do them, by whatever means of application. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development agreed with Councillor Newton and said that he was confident that the Council was a merit-based organisation, with no issues regarding equal pay.

Councillor Dumont referred to page 43 of the report and said that there was no evidence of any employee bias, adding that the Council had done a good job in ensuring this.

It was moved by Councillor Dumont and seconded by Councillor McMullen 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) the Gender Pay Gap Report 2022 be noted.

(B) that the Action Plan 23/24 be considered, and any further suggestions be added where appropriate.

358 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report. He said that the report had not changed significantly since last year but had been updated to include the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 pay awards. He referred to paragraph 3.4 of the report which detailed these awards and included the additional day of annual leave awarded to National

Joint Council (NJC) posts with effect from 1 April 2023.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development drew Members' attention to Section 7 of the report which gave clarification on Market Supplements, and paragraph 5.12 which gave detail on the spread of East Herts Council's pay grades, which start from spinal point 4. He said that Payroll had now processed the pay awards for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, which staff had received.

Councillor Alder asked if there was any indication of what the pay award for 2023-2024 would be. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the Trade Unions had made a request, but with the council's budget and savings requirements negotiation would be required.

It was moved by Councillor Bull and seconded by Councillor Alder 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 Pay Policy 2023/2024 be recommended for approval by Council.

359 HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL TEAM UPDATE REPORT
- QUARTER 3

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced the report, noting that the last such report to the Committee had been a verbal update.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the lean process review had identified an over reliance on the Payroll Manager. He said that administration back-up for this position was in place and that future payroll provision was being reviewed, to include the option to outsource the service.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the external Human Resources support which was being provided to Broxbourne Council had ceased, as Broxbourne now had staff in place.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that East Herts Council did not operate a blanket annual leave year for all staff. He said that instead each staff member's annual leave year aligned with their start date. He said that the pay award which gave an extra day of annual leave to staff members effective from 1 April 2023 had therefore been administered on a pro rata basis.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that the ATS system was not currently being used for onboarding as a more personal approach for new starters was preferable at this time.

Councillor Alder applauded the council's approach to having a non-fixed leave year and said that this was very sensible.

Councillor Dumont asked for more detail regarding the Payroll problems identified by the lean process review. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that efficiency was being looked at within Payroll. He said that a heavy reliance upon one individual within the Payroll team meant that back-up and an effective use of the system was necessary.

Councillor Dumont said that he had experience of using an outsourced payroll provider and warned of the mistakes and stress which can occur. He said that the council therefore needed to be sure that the outsourcing of payroll was the right decision.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development agreed with Councillor Dumont and said that he had been asked to make exploration into the option of outsourcing payroll. He said that any decision regarding such outsourcing would not be taken lightly, with costs, quality of service and in house requirements considered. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development added that any provider would need to have local authority experience and supply case studies.

Councillor Dumont said that the purpose of the Committee was to give steer, and he wished to express strong caution to the outsourcing of the Payroll Department.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 4.10 of the report and said that it was good to see the two elements of the Management Development Programme. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

thanked the Chairman for this and confirmed that the Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development had led on the first element of the programme, known as First Step, and that he had developed the five- day programme for the second element, known as Blueprint.

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources and Payroll Team Update Report be noted and received.

360 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman
Date

Minutes of Safety Committee
Wednesday 9th May 2023,
Meeting Room 1.15 / Microsoft Teams

Present: Peter Dickinson (PD), Simon O’Hear (SOH), Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), Jackie Bruce (JB), Ian Sharratt (IS), Emily Tickridge (ET), Steve Whinnett (SW), Chloe Hipwood - Norton (CH-N), Geoff Hayden (GH), Benjamin Wood (BW), Jeanette Lowden (JL) Waste Team,

Apologies: Rowan Perrin (RP), Jennifer Frances (Unison), Georgia Adamson (GA), Dominique Kingsbury (DK)

1.0 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

Action: None

2.0 Matters Arising from the minutes

Last meeting actions below

Actions not on the agenda (see AOB section 13 as well):

- *GH to have a talk with project team to improve the link between property services and project team (no update at February meeting)*
- GH informed the Committee that discussions were now taking place with the Project Team and this was an ongoing matter, important for two way communication to be maintained.

3.0 Coronavirus / Office Housekeeping update

With all restrictions now lifted S O'H tabled that this item be lifted from future agendas. Office Housekeeping matters can be reported under Facilities Management.

S O'H advised Committee that he is currently producing a Blended Working Policy that will cover arrangements for home and office working.

Action: Remove 3.0 from future Agenda PD

4.0 Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

PD will be submitting the H&S Annual Report incorporating the Q4 summary to Committee w/c 22.05.2023.

The H&S Officer can report that there have been no serious incidents or accidents reported other than very minor cuts etc and no action was required. In addition, the Health and Safety Officer can report that there have been no safety incidents or site accidents in respect to the major contracts or the current capital projects.

Action: Send H&S Annual Report incorporating the Q4 summary once agreed by LT to the Safety Committee PD

5.0 Regulatory and Legislative changes (Verbal report)

PD and PTJ reported no changes to Health & Safety legislation or regulations to update the committee with at this stage.

With regard to changes to fire safety legislation this does not directly affect the Council as it does not have any residential buildings that meet the high-rise criteria. As of January 23,

2023, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 mandates the installation of Wayfinding Signage in all high-rise residential buildings (18m in height or 7 storeys) in England as a legal requirement. The signage must include clear indications of floor numbers and individual flat numbers, this change was introduced as a result of the Grenfell fire.

PD reported that the new regulations do not affect Northgate End residential accommodation. GH advised that the Council have taken the pro-active step of ensuring that wayfinder signage has been installed in the residential accommodation.

The changes currently only affect residential buildings such as high-rise accommodation and not commercial or industrial premises.

It should be noted that the Property Services Team, Facilities Management Team and Health and Safety Officer have taken pro-active steps to introduce new controls ahead of possible further changes to legislation.

Action: None

6.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Contract Compliance

PD informed Committee that there are no issues requiring remedial or corrective actions following completed inspections and feedback from contract managers.

6.1 Buntingford Depot

PD informed the Committee that a number of emails had been received in respect to various issues at the site with vehicles and the housekeeping/cleaning on site. Vehicle concerns included: Parking at the entrance to the site from the A507, Bulk carrier vehicles parking on the footpath at the front

of building 01 (mixture of vehicles due on site and otherwise), Bulk carriers parking on the A507 due to the volume of vehicles using the site. There were also site housekeeping and office and WC hygiene and cleanliness. The H&S Officer carried out research to determine ownership of access land and compiled a report for the Contract leads at the depot outlining the findings so if issues continue they can be escalated appropriately.

PD expressed concern that bulk carriers parking on the footpath opposite the service road can obscure visibility for vehicles. C H-N advised that she will discuss the matter further with Urbaser (as lead site operative) and assured Committee that every effort is made to manage the timing and departure of bulk vehicles to and from the site (however it should be noted that factors such as road traffic accidents, traffic volume etc cannot be controlled so the schedule of arrivals can drift). Urbaser do everything possible to manage the arrival of vehicles and will monitor the matter, there is not room established on the site to act as a holding bay and there is a need for staff parking so no obvious space can be created. The matter will be monitored and an update provided to the next meeting. It was also noted that communication between the contractors on site has declined and needs to improve as had been previously established.

The issue of internal housekeeping and hygiene is an ongoing matter with cleaning (cover) not taking place when the regular cleaner is absent. A refund for work not done r has been achieved from the provide and is being used for some deep cleans. Concern about cover not being provided has been raised and the matter will be monitored. There are still issues with the standard of cleanliness in the male WC's inside the building, options to bring portable WC's are being considered as well as operating a key system to control access.

Site housekeeping in the yard where some concern has also been raised is the responsibility of respective contractors who should ensure rubbish is controlled and spillages etc managed.

C H-N advised Committee that there had been an incident involving an Urbaser operative being physically assaulted in North Herts and this is being investigated by local police, there had also been an incident of verbal abuse at crews. A public campaign is being launched for both North Herts and East Herts.

The following site items have been identified for attention. Property Services have put these items on the capital spend for approval by the Head of Strategic Finance and Property.

1. Workshop Heating
2. Remaining LED light upgrades
3. Installation of EV charging points
4. Feed to vehicle wash

6.2 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas

IS provided a report to the Committee on matters across the districts parks, open spaces and play areas.

IS informed Committee that Glendale have completed a schedule of programme of tree inspection work and that all significant risks have been dealt with.

Play area inspections have improved following a minor drop in service standards which has now been resolved.

Area Inspectors are continuing to undertake district wide inspections.

IS reported that Glendale had cut through a cable at the Hartham Pool site that feeds the temporary gym, no injuries or harm sustained but it was reported that the cable was not clearly marked. The contractor Cadman and Sport and Leisure Management are liaising with Glendale to ensure cables are clearly identified and marked.

The disabled WC at the pavilion is being repeatedly vandalised with fixtures and fittings being extensively damaged, a decision is being considered to close the facility with access provided instead to WC's at Hartham Leisure Centre (which are monitored).

A survey of bridges is scheduled to be undertaken to determine the condition of assets. JB advised IS that there may be access to Section 106 funding that could be used to repair or replace bridges.

IS raised a matter in regard to the structural integrity of Marshgate Bridge which provides the only access to Hartham Kingsmead. EHC do not own the bridge and the matter needs to be raised to the owner.

Actions:

IS to discuss Section 106 funding with JB

SW to speak to Estates and Asset Manager to confirm ownership which SW believed had been established and the owner will then written raising the concerns.

7.0 Capital Project updates/contractor Health & Safety Compliance

PD in the absence of BW (who left the meeting after 30 minutes) provided an update on current capital projects

Hartham

Project Manager attending site to discuss delays with the completion of the roof.

No site accidents or incidents to report

Soft handover scheduled for March / April 2024.

Hertford Theatre

No accidents or incidents to report

Minor construction snagging issues were picked up which were resolved immediately

Northgate End

GH advised that a number of snagging issues require attention as June is the defects liability period these include.

- Fault on internal phone handset
- Water ingress
- Fire alarm activations arising from water penetration
- Alarm response processes and procedures need to be established (GH felt that the Parking Contractor would be the best option).

Action: GH to liaise with DK/Parking Services to discuss operational response arrangements.

Northgate End – Commercial Unit

GH informed Committee that Launchpad has now relocated to the Northgate End commercial unit from Charringtons House. He has been working with the H&S Officer and Launchpad to put the necessary safety documents and safety procedures in place including arrangements for testing fire alarms, carrying out fire evacuation drills, procedures for out of hours use etc.

8.0 Property – Premise’s Maintenance and Repairs

SW advised Committee that there were no health and safety related issues to report.

Action: None

9.0 Facilities Management

GH advised Committee that cleaning standards at the Wallfields and Buntingford were an ongoing issue that was being monitored and raised with the providers.

Action: None.

10.0 List of Issues

10.1 Employee side (UNISON)

JB raised a question in respect to insurance management arrangements (following the departure of Insurance and Risk Business Advisor GM who used to sit on this committee), specifically in regard to claims management support and insurance checks during contract procurement. IS also stated that he had concerns with the gap created and had raised this with the Head of Operations.

SOH responded that this was not really a matter for the committee but concerns should be directed to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property who is responsible for this area and determined the work can be managed differently. IS asked that his concerns were included in an email and PD agreed to raise the matter.

Action: PD to send an email to the Head of Strategic Finance and Property with concerns raised.

10.2. Management side

No specific issues to raise. The H&S Officer advised Committee that new workstation chairs had arrived and would be deployed. Old damaged, redundant, and defective chairs are being removed for disposal.

Action: None

11.0 Health and Safety Training

Training modules on the E-learning platform have been updated through HR. PD has updated the Fire safety E-learning module to emphasise that everyone has a responsibility for safety and evacuation procedures (especially with Blended working meaning on site staff change), and this is explained in the module with appropriate guidance. A new Display Screen Equipment E-Learning module has been developed and will be released to support staff further in this area on the new Skillgate e-learning platform.

Community Safety accreditation scheme training has proven difficult to secure now that the Police are no longer making arrangements. Various providers have been identified but costs are high and include travel costs as there is not a suitable local provider or an online option. SW the Licensing and Enforcement Officer has been working with the H&S Officer on this matter. Consideration is now being made for SW to develop a suitable course from the training she has undertaken which could then be delivered internally and offered externally to other local accredited organisations.

Action: PD to work with SW and update the safety committee once consideration has taken.

12.0 AOB

12.1 CO2 Detectors

GH confirmed that these will be installed within the Wallfields building by the end of May 2023 with clear signage. A message will be drafted for distribution by the Communications Team explaining the purpose of the monitors, why the alarm may sound and arrangements for taking readings will be put into place. If there are consistently high levels recorded, then the monitors audible alert alarms will be set. IS asked why CO2 might be an issue. PD advised this is due to the lack of ventilation within the building and staff are not opening the windows enough CO2 levels can rise and cause fatigue/headaches and make staff feel unwell. The monitors therefore support the need to maintain ventilation.

JB asked if ventilation was still an issue in the Customer Services Office as staff had raised some concern. BW advised that CO2 readings in the Customer Services Office have been regularly taken and were within acceptable levels and monitoring will continue.

13.2 E-Vehicles

IS advised Committee that the lease company will not permit the carrying of animals in the lease (car) E-Vehicles so an alternative E-vehicle (van), suitable for this purpose is being sourced from the leasing company as an alternative to outsourcing this work to another provider.

E-Vehicles have now been marked with high visibility notices and a demountable strobe light bar on licensing and enforcement vehicle. PD is currently producing a corporate risk assessment on E-Vehicles

Action: PD to prepare and distribute E-Vehicle Risk Assessment

13.3 Election Duties

Members of Safety Committee reported that concerns had been received from employees who supported the local elections in respect to the number of hours officers worked from the opening of polling stations to count duties after polls closed. Some employees reported fatigue concerns about driving home.

Action:

S O'H to check position with regard to Working Time Directive in terms of breaks, night working, potential opt outs etc. Once this is gathered PD will send an email to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services with the guidance and concerns raised.

Date of Next Meeting: 8th August 2023 @ 14:00pm

Meeting Room – Mimram Room, 1st Floor, Old Building

and

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

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Meeting ID: 389 859 903 86

Passcode: QYiRzL

Agenda Item 7

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting:

Report by: Head of HR and Organisational Development

Report title: Annual Health and Safety Report 2022/23 (which includes the Health and Safety Quarter 4 statistics and update) – April 2022 to March 2023

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee:

- (a) To consider the Annual Health and Safety Report 2022/23 which includes the Health and Safety Quarter 4 statistics and provide any comments/amendments to the Head of HR & OD and the Health and Safety Officer.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

Members are invited to consider the Annual Health and Safety Report 2022/23 (April 2022 to March 2023) which includes the Quarter 4 (January 2023 to March 2023) Health and Safety Management Statistics and update. Section 3.0 provides an executive summary of the report.

2.0 Background

The Health and Safety Officer provides a Health and Safety report to the Leadership Team and then HR Committee after each quarter and provides an annual report after year end which incorporates the Q4 update. This report will also be provided to the Safety Committee after it has been considered by the Leadership Team, who review the report before it is submitted to the HR Committee.

3.0 Executive Summary (for the year)

3.1 Non-Reportable and Reportable Accidents

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

There have been no serious non reportable accidents for this year and this quarter. These are accidents that are not reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences.

There have been no accidents reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations.

3.2 Contract compliance and monitoring

The Health and Safety Officer can report that there have been no safety incidents or site accidents requiring further investigation or enquiry in respect to the contracts.

3.3 Capital Projects

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

3.4 Premises and Sites

There have been no serious accidents requiring further investigation to report at the Councils Office premises or at the sites of Charringtons House, Buntingford Deport, Hillcrest and Rectory Hall Homeless Hostels. Inspections are currently undertaken with the Property Team and Unison.

3.5 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas.

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

3.6 Lone Working Contract

Following a joint procurement exercise with Stevenage Borough Council the Council awarded the lone working contract to Peoplesafe, formerly SkyGuard to provide a fully supported lone worker provision.

3.7 Covid-19 / Blended Working

The Health and Safety Officer, HR Colleagues, and Head of HR and OD are continuing to review and update information in line with Government guidance. Staff have completed Display Screen Equipment assessments on their home work stations in line with the roll out of Laptops and appropriate adaptations provided. Further work will be undertaken in 22/23 to develop the telephone system so this can work from home through computers and head-sets.

4.0 Safety Committee

- 4.1 Safety Committee last met on Tuesday 09 May 2023. These minutes will be shared with the Committee. No significant issues arose, no significant accidents, appropriate investigation and action is being taken where required to make improvements. An item to note is that e-vehicles have been developed with signage to ensure they are highly visible to support safety. Consideration of adding a e-van rather than car is being undertaken so this can be used re animal collection for which the e-cars are not suitable.

4.2 Contract Managers and Contract Project Managers are invited to attend Safety Committee to provide feedback on the main and capital projects.

5.0 Work and Non-Work-Related Accident Statistics

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.

5.1 Quarter 4 (January 2023 to March 2023)

5.1.1 There were no reportable accidents under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) for the Q4 period January 2023 to March 2023.

5.1.2 Three non-reportable work-related accidents were recorded for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023; the low trend is due to staff working from home or away from the office and due to the low risk working environment and good practice.

5.1.3 Swimming Pools and Open Spaces. There were 41 minor non reportable accidents reported across the 5 swimming pools and gyms between January 2023 and March 2023 in respect to users and 2 accidents concerning SLM employees. The numbers in Q4 have seen some slight increases compared to Q3 in Leisure but this is mainly explained by increased footfall. None of the reported accidents were the result of any procedural or equipment related failure and a sample of the nature of the type of accident recorded is included overleaf:

- IP struck finger on weights during exercise – Skill execution error

- IP struck another swimmer during session – Root cause, no parental supervision
- IP experienced muscular discomfort during training session – IP has pre-existing condition and left unaided
- IP sustained minor cut on grass football pitch – IP collided with another player
- IP landed awkwardly on ankle jumping off equipment – Skill execution error, area checked and no fault found.
- IP slipped in car park, contact injury to face – IP not seriously hurt, area inspected no fault or defect found
- IP Mis-stepped exiting the pool – Skill execution error.

Q4 Non-Reportable Accidents – Jan, Feb, March 2023

Swimming Pool & Gym	January	February	March	TOTAL
Hartham	4	3	5	12
Grange Paddocks	5	8	4	17
Leventhorpe	0	0	2	2
Ward Freman	0	2	1	3
Fanshawe	3	3	1	7
Employees (SLM)	2	0	0	2
Contractors	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	14	16	13	43

Parks, Open Spaces, Members of the Public	January	February	March	TOTAL
Play Area	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0

EHC Employees	January	February	March	TOTAL
	2	0	1	0
TOTAL	2	0	1	3

COMBINED TOTAL	16	21	16	53
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Q3 table for comparison

Q3 Non-Reportable Accidents – Oct, Nov, Dec 2022

Swimming Pool & Gym	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
Hartham	0	2	1	3
Fanshawe	1	1	0	2
Leventhorpe	0	0	1	1
Grange Paddocks	3	5	5	13
Ward Freman	2	1	2	5
Employees (SLM)	1	1	0	2
Contractors	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	7	10	9	26

Q3 Non-Reportable Accidents – Oct, Nov, Dec 2022

Parks, Open Spaces, Members of the Public	July	Aug	Sept	TOTAL
Play Area	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0

Q3 Non-Reportable Accidents – Oct, Nov, Dec 2022

EHC Employees	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	1	0	0	1

COMBINED TOTAL	8	10	16	27
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5.2 Annual Accident Statistics (2021-2022 and 2022-2023)

5.2.1 There were no reportable accidents under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) for either annual period.

5.2.2 The following table shows the total number of accidents for the annual periods 2021 / 2022 and 2022 / 2023. Accident numbers have increased in line with usage and

footfall. Each quarter has been previously reported on and showed no concern with numbers reported. During both years (less so in 22/23) the Coronavirus Pandemic meant that all leisure facilities had to close or limit numbers under the Governments lockdown measures which explains the low rate of figures across the different reporting headings. Other factors that explain the fluctuations in figures include:

- Closure and demolition of the old Grange Paddocks swimming Pool in Bishops Stortford (and then reopening of the new larger facility) and the partial closure of the Pool Hall and Gymnasium as part of the Hartham Swimming Pool and Gymnasium redevelopment.
- These developments were also subject to delays arising from Brexit in terms of taking delivery of materials and equipment, further delays arising from Covid and the effect on supply chains and material costs.
- Closure and redevelopment of Hertford Theatre (accidents are in employee category or members of the public category when they are recorded).

The following table overleaf is a summary of non-reportable accidents between April 2021 to March 2022 and April 2022 to March 2023

Swimming Pools & Gyms	2021/22	2022/23
Hartham	8	25
Grange Paddocks	36	69

Leventhorpe	3	7
Ward Freman	3	9
Fanshawe	23	15
Employees (SLM)	5	7
Contractors	0	0
TOTAL	78	132

	2021/22	2022/23
Parks, Open Spaces, Members of the Public / Contractors	1	0
TOTAL	1	0

	2021/22	2022/23
EHC Employees	1	3
TOTAL	1	3

COMBINED ANNUAL TOTAL	80	135
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5.2.3 An analysis of the accident numbers and types have not shown any abnormal trends or patterns over the course of the two years. The increase in figures in 22/23 reflects the increase in usage following the easing and ending of Covid restrictions and the opening of larger facilities.

5.2.4 **Benchmarking.** 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.

Although benchmarking options are being considered it is important to understand in terms of health and safety what information is desirable and for what purpose.

There are 4 benchmarking models:

1. **Performance benchmarking** involves gathering and comparing quantitative data (i.e., measures or key performance indicators). Performance benchmarking is usually the first step organizations take to identify performance gaps.
2. **Practice benchmarking** involves gathering and comparing qualitative information about how an activity is conducted through people, processes, and technology.
3. **Internal benchmarking** compares metrics (performance benchmarking) and/or practices (practice benchmarking) from different units, product lines, departments, programs, geographies, etc., within the organisation.

4. **External benchmarking** compares metrics and/or practices of one organisation to one or many others.

In order to gain any benefit from benchmarking it should be understood that comparing the facilities managed by SLM on behalf of the Council will differ to other facilities offering different options, for example Westminster Lodge in St Albans in comparison to Grange Paddocks includes a climbing wall, soft play area, badminton, and tennis courts therefore differences in accident statistics will not provide a true reflection of the safety record of either venue.

The Health and Safety Officer will look to add external benchmarking to the next annual report if suitable data can be gathered. Internal comparison will continue to be made.

5.3 Leisure Updates over the annual period

5.3.1 **Grange Paddocks (GP).** GP handover was 26 October 2021. Aftercare and post completion meetings have taken place with the Project Manager, SLM and Wilmott Dixon and final snagging has taken place. The final meeting is scheduled to take place at the end of May 2023.

5.3.2 **3G pitch at GP.** The 3G pitch was completed 05th October 2022 and opened 08th October 2022 and is now in full use with no incidents or accidents being reported.

5.3.3 **Hartham Leisure Centre (HLC)**

[Summary of project](#)

The following milestones are planned for 2023

Phase	Programmed delivery	Work Activity
1	August 2023	Demolition and building of the new extension
2	November 2023	Converting the old gym into upstairs changing room and spin studio

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.

6.0 Annual Contract Management and Compliance

6.1 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:

6.2 Buntingford Service Centre

6.2.1 The Property Team installed speed control humps and digital speed deterrent signs in the depot yard to enhance vehicle and pedestrian safety. The Health and Safety Officer, Property Services Manager and Surveyor

met with Urbaser to discuss the issues of the surface lining and Urbaser agreed that the enhancements would be more beneficial.

The Health and Safety Officer can report that there has been a significant improvement to the site housekeeping and a number of repairs have been undertaken or are scheduled including.

- Replacing the heating in the vehicle workshop
- Refurbishment of external WC's
- New barrier installed at the front car park
- Installation of a new defibrillator with user training

6.2.2 The Health and Safety Officer can report that the Buntingford User Group Meeting took place on Wednesday 16th March. There have been no on-site incidents or accidents to report.

6.2.3 Urbaser have reported that they are planning to introduce an onsite scheme to use spare parts from damaged bins to replace missing components and extending the life of current bins, significant progress has been made to reduce the number of surplus bins on site.

6.2.4 The Health and Safety Officer is supporting the Project Officer on the provision of the shared waste services and street cleansing contract and has worked with the Health and Safety Officer, North Herts Council to review the Health and Safety specification of the contract.

7.0 Capital Projects (annual update)

7.1 The Health and Safety Officer has been supporting the Head of Operations with the opening of Northgate End Multi Storey Car

Park. The Health and Safety Officer and the Property Team have installed a Premises Information Box at the site along the same lines as those installed at Buntingford, Hillcrest and Rectory Hall Hostels and Wallfields.

7.2 The Health and Safety Officer has supported the recommendations for the closure of the top deck of Northgate End due to lighting restrictions in the Planning Consent.

7.3 The Health and Safety Officer has also provided support and guidance to the Parking Team in regard to the placement of planters on level 3 which provide ease of access to an open parapet, the recommendation to remove these is supported by the Property Team and the Parking Services Team.

7.4 Launchpad has re-located to the commercial unit at Northgate End and the Property Team are waiting for the Fire Risk Assessment report to review the findings.

The Corporate Property Services Manager supported by the Health and Safety Officer have been providing support to the Launchpad team on specific health and safety responsibilities.

8.0 Parking Enforcement Contract (annual update)

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

8.1 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.

9.0 Parks and Open Spaces Management Contract (annual update)

- 9.1 There have been no incidents or accidents reported for this period and no incidents involving the Councils Grounds Maintenance Contractor, Glendale.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 Following the unusually hot weather in 2022 the Operations Team have been working with the local fire brigade 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.

10.0 Lone Worker Contract Annual Update

10.1 A procurement exercise was undertaken using the Procurement for Housing framework with support from PFH in sense checking tender documents, quality checks and managing clarification questions.

10.2 The aim of the exercise was to secure a single provider for both Councils but under two separate operating contracts to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

10.3 The MySOS device is not a personal alarm but a durable and compact personal safety unit that is monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year.

10.4 A single press of the SOS button immediately alerts a continuously monitored Alarm Receiving Centre controller who can respond in seconds.

The ARC can open the device and listen to activity and if required.

- Connect directly to the appropriate blue light responder
- Locate users through dedicated GPS
- Provide user details to responders in the event they are unable to respond using information on a secured management portal holding details of medical conditions, contact and escalation details.

10.5 As a provider of dedicated lone worker support services PeopleSafe are fully accredited to the highest levels of security standards.

10.6 Devices and training have been issued to employees designated as lone workers and each team has a dedicated portal management administrator who can access and manage team details.

10.7 The Health and Safety Officer has overall contract management for East Herts Councils service.

11.0 Contract and Development Support for Leisure Development Projects / Capital Programmes

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

11.2 The Health and Safety Officer provided support to the team from Hertford Theatre for the delivery of Christmas events at Ware's Drill Hall in December 2022. The production run concluded successfully with no incident or accidents to report.

11.3 Work is continuing on the development of Hertford Theatres Growth and Legacy Project.

11.4 The Health and Safety Officer can advise the committee that there have been no on-site accidents or matters of safety concern in relation to the Theatre development.

12.0 Blended Working Programme/COVID Protocols

12.1 The Health and Safety Officer and the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development have significantly re-worked the Protocols now that Covi-19 restrictions have been lifted. The new 'Office Housekeeping and Safety Protocols' are aimed at reinforcing and maintaining the good hygiene practices implemented for Covid control and to encourage decluttering of

the workspace. Unison have actively participated and supported the revised protocols

12.2 The Health and Safety Officer, Head of HR and Leadership Team continue to monitor guidance and messaging from Government in order to respond proactively to any substantive changes.

12.3 The Health and Safety Officer worked 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 have been developed and calculated so people will be able to make informed choices for events and meetings.

12.4 Staff have completed Display Screen Equipment assessments on their home work stations in line with the roll out of Laptops and appropriate adaptations provided. Further work will be undertaken in 22/23 to develop the telephone system so this can work from home through computers and head-sets.

12.5 The Health and Safety Officer has been working with the Corporate Property Services Manager on the installation of Carbon Dioxide monitors by the end of May 2023. Staff are advised to ensure windows are regularly left open to create ventilation. The monitors will be used to measure CO2 levels and will include a programme of monitoring and recording the readings to determine the air quality in the offices.

12.6 The Health and Safety Officer working with the Head of Strategic Finance and Property and the UNISON Branch Secretary completed an asset review of operator chairs, some of which had outlived their purpose and were no longer considered suitable.

12.7 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

12.8 Health and Safety Officer has signed up to ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) purchasing framework to ensure value for money and working with the Head of Strategic Finance has selected a suitable supplier and acquired replacement chairs that have been deployed.

13.0 Learning and Development – Partnership training and future events

13.1 The Health and Safety Officer and Human Resources Officer have successfully launched the new e-learning platform Skillgate. Health and Safety learning modules have been updated and a new module on display screen equipment and workstation safety has been developed for the platform.

13.2 With the new lone working contract now in place a series of training sessions have taken place with teams as part of the implementation and roll out.

13.3 The Health and Safety Officer has reviewed the cover arrangements for First Aid in line with the blended working programme to ensure that consistent first aid cover is maintained.

13.4 The Health and Safety Officer is working with colleagues on securing training for officers with enforcement accreditation, this

was formerly managed by Hertfordshire Police, but they have devolved this.

14.0 Options

N/A

15.0 Risks

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.

16.0 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

17.0 Background papers, appendices, and other relevant material

N/A

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Agenda Item 8

East Herts Council Report Template

HR Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 June 2023

Report by: Head of HR and OD

**Report title: Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 4
(January - March 2023)**

Ward(s) affected: None

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR Committee:

- To consider the Human Resources Management Statistics for Quarter 4 (January – March 2023) 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 4 (January - March 2023).

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 As at 31 March 2022, there were 37 vacant posts across the council. Four (4) posts were on hold (e.g. pending job or structure review), advertising/recruitment has commenced for 31 of the 33 vacancies, the remaining 2 are being reviewed

before advertising. From the 31 posts advertised 11 posts have now been filled i.e. an offer has been made and accepted, the candidates are being pre-employment checked or have agreed a start date following checks or have started.

- 3.1.2 The 31 posts include 22 vacancies in Planning which include new posts agreed in the restructure, from this 22, seven (7) have now been filled which includes 4 internal job moves (a further new planning vacancy was filled prior to the 31/3).
- 3.1.3 In terms of the other 9 vacancies four (4) have now been filled and the other 5 are being readvertised or searched for and they are in the following areas: 2 Solicitors in Legal and Democratic Services, one Technical Officer in Environmental Health, one HLF Officer in Operations (Parks) and one Senior Control Officer in Revenues and Benefits.
- 3.1.4 In addition to the 37 vacant posts 10 further vacant posts that had been on hold have now been deleted as a saving for 23/24 so have not been included as vacancies. These consisted of four (4) posts in Finance and Property, four (4) posts in Housing and Health (which includes savings for the corporate support hub) and two (2) posts in Revenues and Benefits.

3.2 Employee Turnover

- 3.2.1 There were 9 leavers in Quarter 3 (October - December 2022) giving a turnover rate for the quarter of 2.9%. The turnover rate for the annual period 2022/23 is **11.9%**. This has decreased by 0.1% since quarter 3 and is lower than the local government average 14% for 2021/22 for Local Authority districts in the UK).

Figure 1 - Leavers and Turnover throughout 2021/22

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
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	8	9	9
Turnover rate 2021/22	3.5%	2.5%	2.9%	2.9%

3.2.2 Reasons for leaving in Quarter 4 including 2 to retirement, 3 to change in career, 2 due to the end of fixed term contract, 1 for family responsibilities and 1 due to work related issues.

3.3 Sickiness Absence

ALL absence

ALL Absence – Quarter 4

3.3.1 At the end of Quarter 4, the total number of sickness days taken was 663.90 full time equivalent (FTE) days. Of these, 371.9 FTE days (56%) were due to short term sickness and 292 FTE days (44%) were due to long term sickness. The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness is 6.5% and the percentage of time lost due to long term sickness is 5.1% which equates to a total percentage lost time of 11.6%.

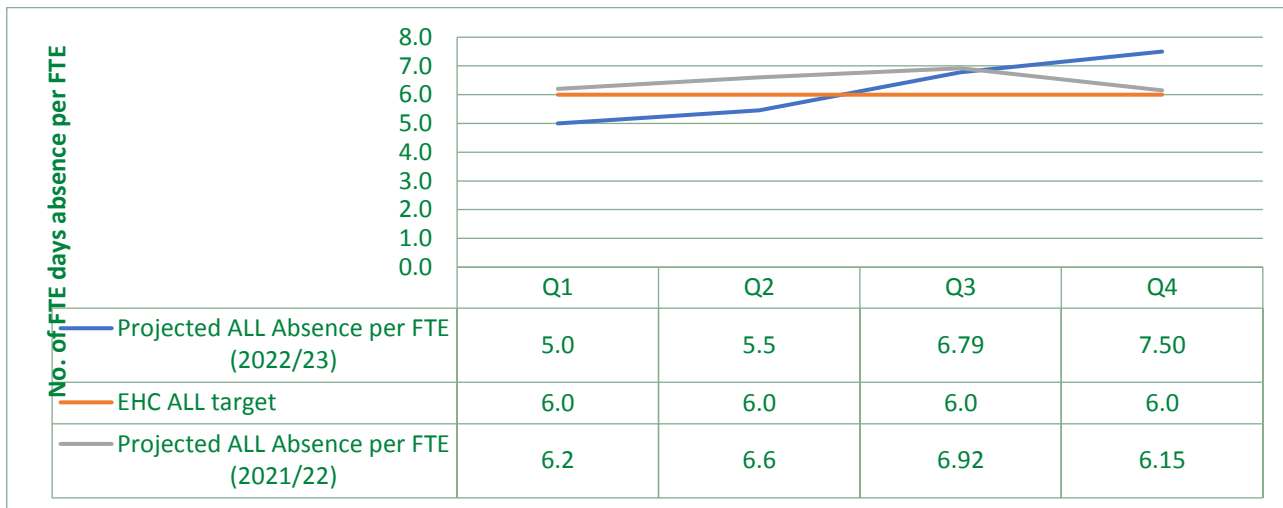
3.3.2 At the end of Quarter 4, the number of FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 7.5 days.

ALL Absence - Annual period 2022/23

3.3.3 Figure 2 below shows that, based on the absences for the year, sickness absence for the annual period 22/23 is **7.5 days per FTE**. This is slightly above 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 4

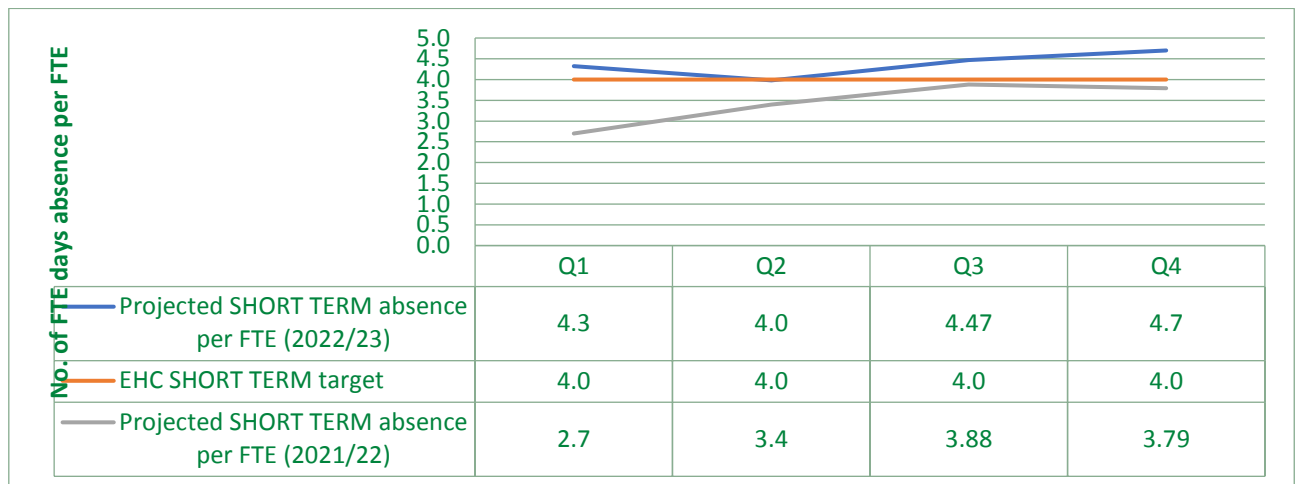
3.3.5 Seventy-five employees (24% of the total headcount) had short term sickness absence during Quarter 4 totalling 371.9 FTE days. This represents a percentage lost time rate of 6.5%.

3.3.6 At the end of Quarter 4, the number of short-term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 4.7 days.

Short term absence - Annual period 2022/23

3.3.7 Figure 3 below shows that, based on the absences for the year, short term sickness absence for the annual period 22/23 is 4.7 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 4

3.3.9 Five employees (1.6% of the total headcount) had long term sickness absence during Quarter 4 totalling 292 FTE days. This represents a percentage time lost rate of 5.1%.

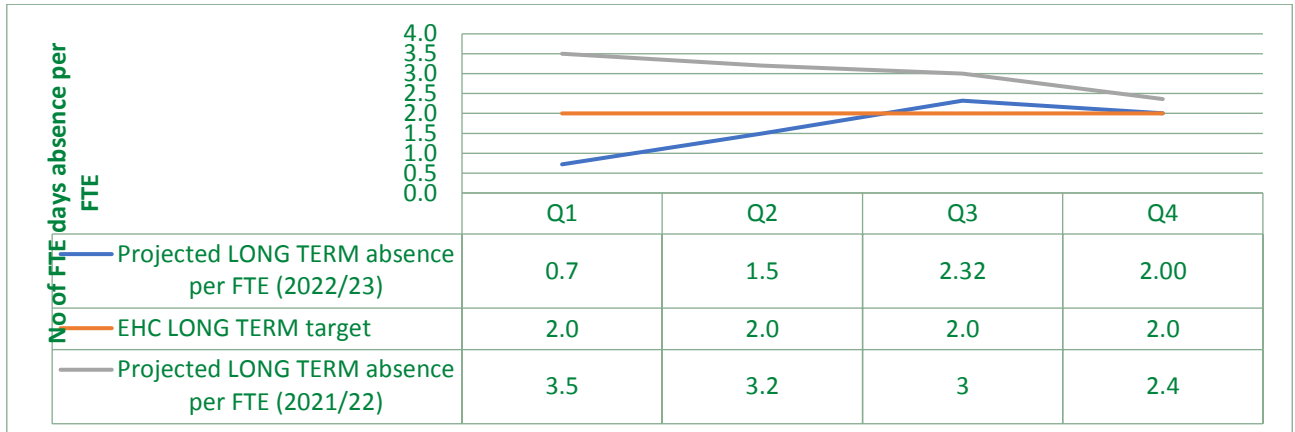
3.3.10 All employees were offered support through the Employee Assistance Programme and referred to Occupational Health. The reasons for long term absence were all stress related. Four of the five employees resigned from their post and the other employee is now back to work.

3.3.11 At the end of Quarter 4, the number of long-term FTE days absent per FTE was 2.80 days.

LONG TERM absence - Annual period 2022/23

3.3.12 Figure 4 below shows that, based on long term absences, the sickness absence for the annual period 2022/23 is 2.8 days per FTE. This is slightly above 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 4, we delivered RIPA training, virtually over teams covering an overview of corporate roles and responsibilities and current inspection issues. A total of 15 people attended the online session.

3.4.2 In Quarter 4, PACE training was delivered twice over a 2-day course. 19 employees attended and completed the training.

3.4.3 People Safe delivered online training to 6 employees on the use of the MySOS Lone worker device. This included familiarisation with the device functionality, alarm receiving centre response, portal administration and general use.

3.4.4 The annual mandatory e-learning training programme was relaunched with a new provider 'SkillGate'. Courses went live

from March 2023 for employees to complete in line with their appraisal.

3.4.5 The following is a summary of the learning and development events that were held in Quarter 4:

Event/Course	No of Participants	Number of sessions held
RIPA	15	1
PACE	19	2
Standards for Tattoo and Body Piercing Premises	5	1
MySOS Lone Worker training	6	1
Commercial Skills Training	12	1
Total	57	6

3.5 Equalities Monitoring Indicators

3.5.1 The table below shows a summary of employee equalities data at the end of Quarter 4 (31 March 2023).

	Comparison to local population data	EHC Staff and Percentage
Disability		
Leadership Team with a disability	13.6% CENSUS 2021	10% (1 employee)
Employees with a disability	13.6% CENSUS 2021	4.5% (14 employees)
Ethnicity		
Leadership Team members from BAME groups	6.8% CENSUS 2021	10% (1 employee)

Employees from BAME groups	6.8% CENSUS 2021	14% (42 employees)
Gender		
Leadership Team members who are female	51.6% CENSUS 2021	40% (4 employees)
Employees who are female	51.6% CENSUS 2021	73% (219 employees)
Sexual Orientation (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual)		
Leadership Team	2.1% CENSUS 2021	20% (2 employees)
Employees	2.1% CENSUS 2021	3% (9 employees)
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

The 2021 Census data which is now available has been added to the Equalities data table in section 3.5. The ethnicity figure for BAME has increased from 4.5% to 6.8% in East Hertfordshire. The most significant increase is the Disabled comparison, where it has increased from 5% to 13.6%. The 2011 Census asked if the household had someone with a disability whereas the 2021 Census asked individuals to choose from a number of categories: the two Disabled categories under the Equality ACT were 'Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot' (4.9%) and 'Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little' (8.8%) these figures have been added together to provide the 13.6% total (it is worth noting that where activities are limited a lot it may mean the person is unable to work). The Gender and Sexual orientation figures which had been updated from ONS and NOMIS in 2018 and 2019 (so were not based on the 2011 census) have basically stayed consistent. Before the equalities report is produced staff will be reminded to check their equality data is up to date.

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

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Agenda Item 9

East Herts Council Report Template

HR Committee

Date of Meeting:

Report by: Head of HR and OD

Report title: Learning and Development Review 2022/23

Ward(s) affected: None

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

- (a) For the committee to consider the Learning and Development Review for 2022/2023 and provide any comments.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The committee is asked to consider the learning and development undertaken in 2022/23 and provide comments to the Head of HR and OD.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The 2022/23 learning and development programme focussed on delivering a range of learning and development opportunities designed to meet corporate and individual needs in the most cost effective way.
- 2.2 The development needs were identified corporately, through individual PDR's and corporate projects.
- 2.3 Development opportunities were delivered by a hybrid of virtual facilitated events, virtual mentoring, virtual

coaching, webinars, e-learning and face to face meetings.

3.0 Report

3.1 Training budgets at the Council have been historically split into four main areas:

- Central/Corporate training budget
- Service training and development budget
- Professional training budget
- Health and Safety

	Budget 2022/23
Central/Corporate	£20,000
Service Training & Development	£22,480
Professional Training	£20,000
Health & Safety	£3,000
Total L & D Budget	£65,480

3.2 The 2022/23 Learning and Development programme was delivered by external facilitators, internal presenters, webinars and e-learning. These events are funded from the corporate training budget.

Employees are informed of training opportunities via email, individuals are also approached directly when they have requested specific training in their PDR or there is training specific to their roles.

In 2022/23 405 delegates attended or participated in some form of face to face corporate or health and safety training (detail of the Health and Safety Training is included in the Health and Safety Report).

The table below shows the breakdown of the 28 events:

Event/Course	No of participants	Type/ Number of sessions held
Data Breach Training	50	2
Resilience Workshops	161	8
Resilience Training for managers	20	2
ATS Hiring Manager Training	51	3
People Safe- Portal Management	33	5
Mod Gov Training	13	1
First Aid at work Requalification	6	1
Retirement Course	20	1
RIPA	15	1
PACE	19	2
Standards for Tattoo and Body Piercing	5	1
Commercial Skills Training	12	1
Total	405	28

A revised 2022/23 mandatory training programme launched in March 2023 and delivered through Skillgate, the Council's new e-learning platform. All employees,

agency staff and new starters were asked to complete the e-learning courses. In total 1382 'completed' training episodes were recorded from March 2023.

Course	Participants
The Importance of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	New starters and all employees as part of the annual mandatory programme
Data Protection: Compliance following GDPR	New starters and all employees as part of the annual mandatory programme
Office Etiquette and Email Management	New starters and all employees as part of the mandatory programme. To be re-registered every 3 years.
Fire Safety	New starters and all employees as part of the annual mandatory programme
Understanding the Safeguarding of Children, Young	New starters and all employees as part of the

people, and Adults at risk.	annual mandatory programme
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The HR Officer works with the Leadership Team, Senior Officers and East Herts Together to develop the e-learning programme to ensure the programme continues to grow and is fit for purpose. The e-learning platform is funded from the central training budget.

3.3 Service Training and Development

The total service training and development budget for 2022/2023 was £22,480, which was divided amongst the services for additional training and development. This budget is predominantly used for service specific training, one day conferences, seminars, training and team building events.

The budget breaks down to £71 per employee based on the employee head count on 1 April 2022 (315). The training and development budgets were managed centrally by the HR & OD Service. This enables the training needs to be recorded and analysed to ensure all training needs and budgets costs are being met in the most appropriate way with sufficient spread for employees and the council.

3.4 Professional Training

The professional training budget was set at £20,000 for 2022/23 and was underspent. All employees funded for professional qualifications sign training agreements in line with the revised Organisational Development Policy, which allows the council to reclaim a percentage of funding if an employee leaves the Council within two

years. The training agreements are held centrally in Human Resources.

The professional training budget for 2023/24 remains at £20,000.

3.5 Apprentices

The Council continued to sponsor one apprenticeship and three trainees in 2022/23 from the Apprenticeship Levy:

- 1 x Customer Service Level 2
- 1 X Associate Project Manager- Level 4
- 1 x Accountancy – Level 3 & 5
- 1 x Chartered Town Planner Degree – Level 7

The HR & OD Service will continue to work with managers and training providers to develop the Council's Apprenticeship Programme and make good use of our levy provision.

4.0 An overview of Learning and Development 2022/23

4.1 The learning and development needs for this year are being collated from the PDR's (the period has been extended until June to allow completion following the system being refreshed) and the Head of HR will work with members of the Leadership Team to ensure the learning meets the needs of the council to deliver its priorities.

4.2 The HR Officer and Head of HR will continue to support corporate projects such as sustainability, safeguarding, and East Herts Together by designing and delivering

training and presentations to help embed the projects throughout the Council, ensuring the best use of project budgets and resources.

4.3 The courses available on the e-learning platform will continue to be developed ensuring they are up to date and further courses will be designed and developed for Officers and Members to help implement policies and projects. This includes a course on Display Screen Equipment and Climate Change.

4.4 HR continues to work with all our training providers to review the way learning is delivered in line with our blended working to ensure employees have a variety of development opportunities available to them.

Training will be delivered on line, virtually and face to face as we continue to develop and engage with staff. The range of delivery will give officers more options to access different training events and opportunities.

4.5 East Herts is committed to developing its staff and has adopted a grow your own approach to management and leadership. We have developed a new aspirant leaders and managers programme called First step. In addition, we are developing a line manager programme called Blueprint with a range of modules being developed to ensure effective and consistent management of both people and resources. We also have a new Service Manager workshop called The Next Step, this is designated to help service managers develop the skills they need to work across partnerships and prepare them for promotional opportunities.

4.6 In 2023/24 the organisational development intra-net

pages will be reviewed to provide further information on the opportunities available to all employees.

4.7 The HR Officer will continue to review and revise the Corporate Induction programme to ensure it reflects the council and the services provided. Consideration of video content from key areas is being made to allow new starters to access some core elements earlier.

4.8 The Head of HR & OD will continue explore options to share and develop learning with the Town and Parish Council's and other organisations where appropriate.

5.0 Risks

5.1 None

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 None

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

Yes, to ensure the development opportunities are accessible to all and staff receive training on equalities.

Environmental Sustainability

Yes, the learning and development provision supports the sustainability project

Financial

Yes, the budget data has been provided by the Finance Team

Health and Safety

Yes as set out in this report and the report has been produced by HR with includes the H&S Officer

Human Resources

Yes as set out in this report and the report has been produced by HR

Human Rights

No

Legal

Yes, the learning and development provision supports legal updates and compliance.

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 None

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East Herts Council Report Template

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 June 2023

Report by: Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Annual Turnover Report 2022/2023

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee:

- (a) **To consider the Annual Turnover Report 2022/2023 including the actions (in section 11.0) planned for 2023/24 and provide any comments to the Head of HR and OD.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 Members are invited to consider the Annual Turnover Report 2022/2023.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The council recognises that having a certain level of employee turnover is healthy. It can help maintain high levels of motivation and ensure fresh blood is injected to generate new ideas and working practices which will, in turn, help the council to grow and develop.
- 2.2 The council monitors and reports on turnover on a quarterly basis in the HR Quarterly Statistics report which is also considered at Leadership Team and HR Committee.

2.3 The Annual Turnover report provides a more in-depth analysis of turnover data for the year. This report considers the period April 2022 to March 2023. It explores the reasons employees are leaving and whether there are any improvements the council could make.

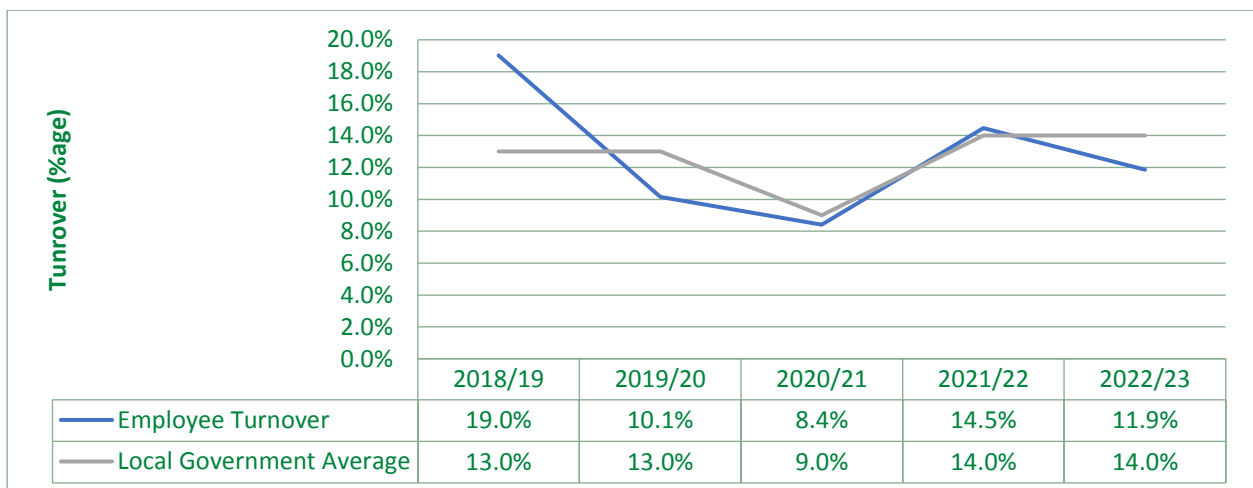
2.4 The report includes benchmarking data against previous years and from other local authorities across England.

3.0 Summary

3.1 There were a total of 37 leavers in 2022/23: Thirty-Two of those were voluntary leavers and five were involuntary leavers; four whose fixed term contract had come to an end and one was made redundant.

3.2 Figure 1 below shows the council's turnover rate (for all leavers) over the last 5 years compared with the local government average. Global Turnover (both voluntary and involuntary) in the council in 2022/23 was 11.9% which is lower than the last local government East of England average (14% in 2021/22*).

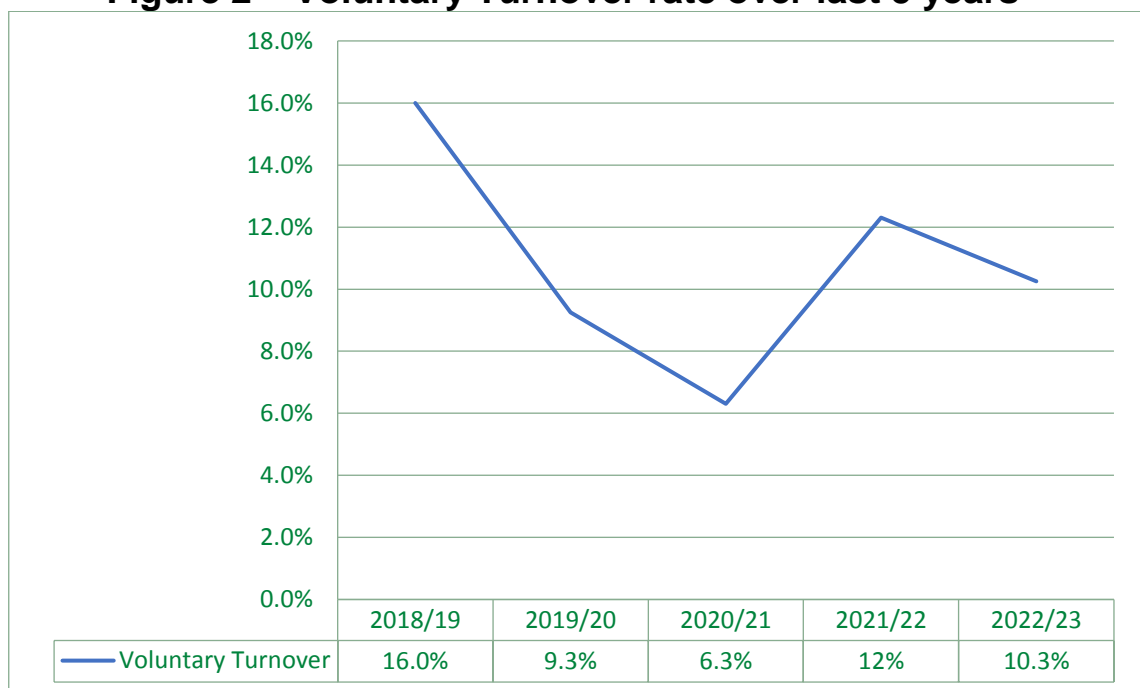
Figure 1 – Annual Turnover trends



* The Local Government Average is the mean for all English authorities and is taken from the 'LG Inform Benchmarking - Workforce Metrics. The most recent available is 2021/22' which was 14% this has also been used for 22/23, the 2019/20 year is also carried forward from 19/20 as no figure was gathered due to the pandemic.

3.3 Figure 2 below shows the council’s voluntary turnover rate (for all voluntary leavers) over the last 5 years. It is important to note this separately from Global turnover (which includes both voluntary and involuntary leavers). The council’s voluntary turnover rate has reduced to 10.3% in 2022/23 after an increase last year (2021/22 = 12%) which resulted from a very low rate of turnover during the early pandemic which was followed nationally by people making lifestyle changes e.g. retirement, career changes.

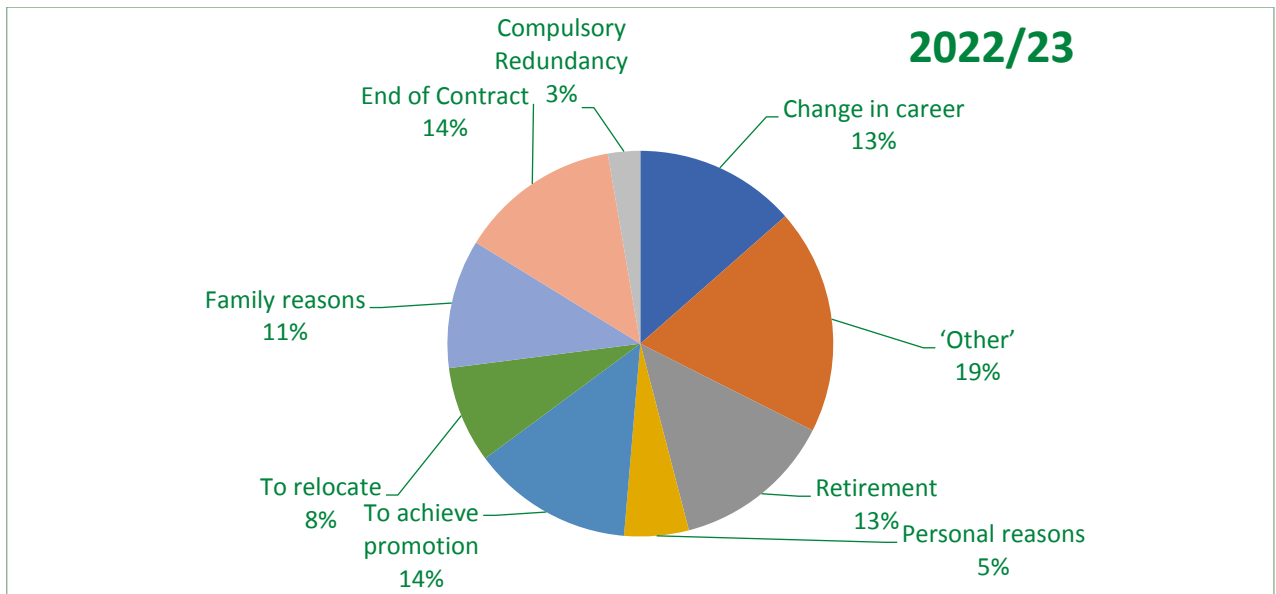
Figure 2 – Voluntary Turnover rate over last 5 years



4.0 Reasons for Leaving

4.1 The reasons employees gave for leaving the council in 2022/23 can be found in Figure 3 overleaf.

Figure 3 – Reasons for leaving



4.2 The most common reason for leaving in 2022/23 was Other (19%, 7 employees) which includes 2 employees who did not give a reason, 1 who was unhappy with the role, 1 who had work related issues, 1 due to lack of career progression, 1 who had issues with their line manager and 1 who left for the private sector.

4.3 The second most common reason for employees leaving in 2022/23 was end of contract and to achieve promotion (both are 14%, with 5 employees in each). The third most common is retirement (13%) which is very much a personal decision made by an employee and is largely outside the influence of the council. Employees are auto-enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme which is a much-valued scheme. The council has an older workforce and therefore retirement is likely to continue to be a common reason for leaving. The council has a flexible retirement policy which gives employees the potential option of reducing their hours whilst drawing their pension.

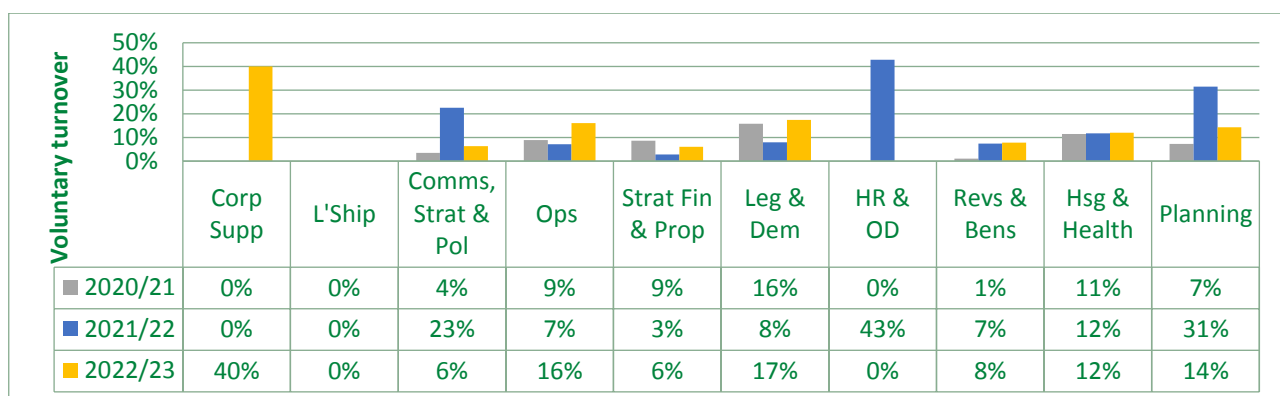
5.0 Stability Rate

- 5.1 The council reports its stability rate to understand whether it is retaining employees in their first year of service.
- 5.2 The stability rate is calculated by dividing the number of leavers with 1 or more years' service by the total number of voluntary leavers (multiplied by 100 to express as a percentage).
- 5.3 In 2022/23 the council's stability rate was 91% which is just above the target of 90%. This means that 9% of voluntary leavers (3 employees) had less than 1 years' service. 1 employee left for the private sector, 1 left for personal reasons and the other left for a change in career.

6.0 Voluntary turnover in each service area

- 6.1 The voluntary turnover rate in each service area for 2022/23, including comparisons with the previous 2 years, can be found in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 – Turnover in each service



Average headcount in 2022/23: Corp Supp – 2.5; L'Ship – 10; Comms, Strat & Pol – 32; Ops – 25; Strat Fin & Prop – 33; Leg & Dem – 23, HR & OD – 7.5; Revs & Bens – 90; Hsg & Health – 58.5; Planning – 35.

- 6.2 Turnover in 2022/23 has increased in 5 out of the 10 services since the previous year (Corporate Support, Operations, Strategic Finance and Property, Legal and Democratic Services and Revenues and Benefits)

6.3 Corporate Support had the highest turnover rate of 40% (based on 1 employee, who left to change career). Legal and Democratic Services had the second highest turnover rate of 17% (based on 4 employees, two left for family responsibilities, one to achieve promotion and one to change career).

7.0 Exit Questionnaire analysis

7.1 All voluntary leavers are asked to complete an exit questionnaire to help the council identify any improvements it could make e.g. to its policies and practices. The questionnaires are returned to HR however leavers are asked whether their feedback can be shared with their manager.

7.2 More than two thirds of voluntary leavers (69%, 22 out of 32 leavers) completed an exit questionnaire (this is a significant increase on last year where 55% completed a questionnaire). Two involuntary leavers also completed an exit questionnaire meaning 24 leavers in total.

7.3 The key highlights from the exit questionnaires are as follows:

- 100% (24 employees) would recommend others to join the council.
- 96% (23 employees) said that they would rate the council 7 or higher out of 10 as an employer (1 being poor and 10 being excellent) (only 1 employee rated the council less than 7 out of 10 and gave a 6) 25% (6 employees) rated the council at 10 (excellent);
- 96% (23 employees) said they 'mostly' or 'completely'

enjoyed their time at the council;

- 96% (23 employees) said they 'completely' or 'mostly' felt their duties were clearly defined;
- 100% (24 employees) said their relationship with their colleagues were either 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 96% (23 employees) said their relationships with their manager was either 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 92% (22 employees) said that pay was 'good' or 'very good'.
- 92% (22 employees) said they agreed 'completely' or 'partially' that their pay and benefits were reasonable for the work and responsibility undertaken.
- 88% (21 employees) said that flexible working options at the council were either 'very good' or 'good' (1 employee, 4% did not answer the question).
- 96% (23 employees) agreed 'completely' (58%), 'mostly' (25%) or 'partially' (13%) that they had received an effective induction;
- 96% (23 employees) agreed 'completely' (38%), 'mostly' (54%) or 'partially' (4%) that they had received adequate training/coaching;
- 50% (12 employees) said that prospects for promotion/advancement were either 'excellent' or 'good'. 42% (10 employees) felt they were poor in the main due to size of the council and some specialist teams being small/limited in terms of levels at the council and in the sector. (2 employees, 8% did not answer the question).

7.4 These results are an improvement compared to last year and it is especially positive to see 100% of respondents would recommend East Herts to others. This is also reflected in 96% of respondents rating the council as an employer at 7 or above, with 25% rating it 10 ('excellent'). The council has begun a transformation programme to make savings and restructuring is taking place including deleting some vacant posts as will be seen in the next section. It is understandable that prospects for promotion/ advancement has decreased (last year 75% of respondents said it was good), this is always a challenge for a smaller employer like East Herts with some specialist teams. Comments on this area reflect the limited pathways available because staff tend to stay and due to specialist areas often having a low ceiling. As can be seen in the actions for next year the management development for aspiring managers/leaders and line managers and service managers may help increase this rating but it maybe advancement/promotion is achieved in the sector rather than at East Herts due to size of the council (which is reducing through the transformation programme).

8.0 Vacancy rate

- 8.1 The council monitors its vacancy rate as this can have an impact on employee turnover e.g. employees may feel under additional pressure to cover the work of any vacant posts.
- 8.2 The vacancy rate in 2022/23 was 11.9% which is higher than in 2021/22 (8.5%) but lower than the local government average (the mean for all English authorities was 17% in 2021/22). The rate has increased because as at 31 March 23 a number of new posts had been agreed in Planning, including 4 new posts for Gilston.

8.3 As at 31 March 2023, there were 37 vacant posts across the council. Four (4) posts were on hold (e.g. pending job or structure review), advertising/recruitment has commenced for 31 of the 33 vacancies, the remaining 2 are being reviewed before advertising. From the 31 posts advertised 11 posts have now been filled i.e. an offer has been made and accepted, the candidates are being pre-employment checked or have agreed a start date following checks or have started.

The 31 posts include 22 vacancies in Planning which include new posts agreed in the restructure, from this 22, seven (7) have now been filled which includes 4 internal job moves (a further new planning vacancy was filled prior to the 31/3).

In terms of the other 9 vacancies four (4) have now been filled and the other 5 are being readvertised or searched for and they are in the following areas: 2 Solicitors in Legal and Democratic Services, one Technical Officer in Environmental Health, one HLF Officer in Operations (Parks) and one Senior Control Officer in Revenues and Benefits.

8.4 In addition to the 37 vacant posts, 10 further vacant posts that had been on hold have now been deleted as a saving for 23/24 so have not been included as vacancies. These consisted of four (4) posts in Finance and Property, four (4) posts in Housing and Health (which includes savings for the corporate support hub) and two (2) posts in Revenues and Benefits.

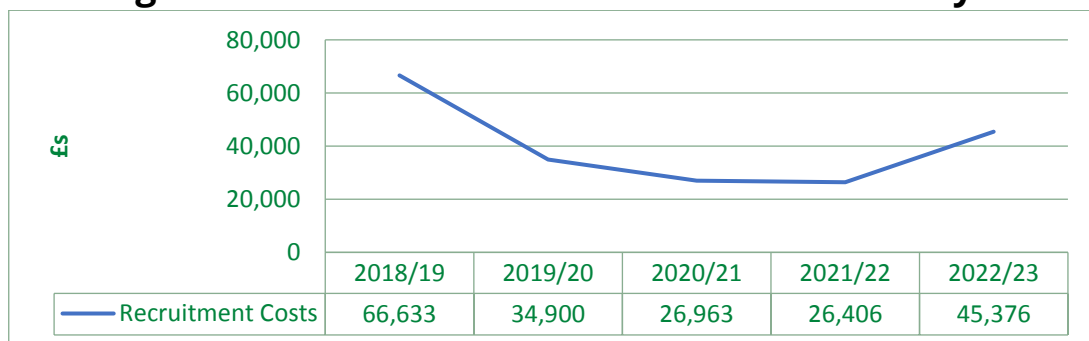
8.5 Of the 4 posts on hold, 1 is in HR, 1 in Strategic Finance and Property, 1 in Communications, Strategy and Policy, and 1 in Corporate Support. The posts are being held due to reviews of the service structure/potential savings and are being covered by agency staff or fixed term temporary staff where required.

8.6 The council has focussed on upskilling employees through introducing career graded posts (most posts in Planning are career graded) and funding professional study as well (apprenticeship recruitment has been paused whilst transformation progresses as some redundancies are planned). Career graded posts allow the recruitment of candidates with more transferable skills which can then be developed.

9.0 Recruitment Costs

9.1 Recruitment costs have risen substantially in 2022/23 (£45,367 compared to £26,406 in 2021/22). Recruitment costs include external advertising costs, agency and search fees. Figure 5 below shows the councils recruitment costs over the last 5 years.

Figure 5 Recruitment annual costs over last 5 years



9.2 In 2022/23 there were 58 advertisements and 4 readvertisements, 62 campaigns in total. The increase in the annual cost is partly due increased recruitment compared to 2021/22 (49 campaigns) and also due to a significant spend on recruitment campaigns for Planning in 22/23 (£28,044) which continues to be hard to recruit area both locally and nationally. Market supplements have been introduced for some hard to fill planning roles (which has become common practice in sector) to increase attraction and retention as

opposed to welcome payments. Due to the difficulty to recruit, the council has had to invest in more significant advertising in trade press, video campaigns and use agency searches where advertising has been unsuccessful. This has increased recruitment costs in Planning as stated but also in Housing (£7,294) and Legal (£5,360).

9.3 The cost per hire in 2022/23 is £782 based on 58 vacancies during the period. This remains lower than the UK average cost per hire of £1500 (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Resourcing and Talent Planning Report 2022). Figure 6 below shows East Herts average cost per hire compared to the CIPD UK average.

Figure 6 Average cost per hire for East Herts over last 5 years compared CIPD average



9.3 Other key findings from the 2022 CIPD report are that 77% of organisations experienced difficulties attracting candidates, up from 49% in 2021. Recruiting for senior and skilled roles was most challenging (58%) although 26% had difficulties attracting low-skilled candidates. 60% report that talent is more difficult to retain compared with a year ago and over a third (37%) undertook initiatives to improve retention which is up from 29% in 2021.

- 9.4 The council has aimed to keep recruitment costs as low as possible, previously an arrangement was made with 'Indeed' for 60 adverts which had a cost per advert of £67, this did not prove as successful as previous multi-site packages.

A package was agreed with Web Recruit the council's new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) of £245 per job (or £275 with copywriting support) for multi-site online advertising. The multi-site package advertises roles across range of leading generalist job boards (Totaljobs, Jobsite, Monster, CV Library, Fish4Jobs, Indeed and Find a Job(.Gov)).

This is supplemented by use of LinkedIn with the council page promoting jobs and some staff also using their own LinkedIn to promote vacancies. In addition, where deemed appropriate additional advertising has been used both online and in the trade/sector press which tend to be more expensive. As stated it has become more difficult to attract candidates as supply is not meeting demand. For example the Planning Campaign included advertisement on The Planner and Planning Jobs and East Herts social media channels. Planning opportunities were also on the front cover and inside page of Public Sector today for their planning article which circulates nationally to 25,000 professionals directly within the Local Government and Public Sector. The Planning vacancies were also included within the South East Times which circulates to a separate 33,500.

10.0 Actions taken in 2022/23 to improve recruitment and retention

10.1 Applicant Tracking System (ATS) from Web Recruit implemented

- 10.1.1 As planned the new ATS from Web Recruit was implemented in 2022/23. The implementation which was delayed due to some IT issues was achieved in August 2022. Managers were provided with training and the system has provided a number of benefits to aid recruitment both for East Herts and candidates.
- 10.1.2 In terms of benefits for East Herts these are as follows:
- Candidates now submit applications directly into the system rather than by email to HR meaning that managers can access applications as they are submitted and there is no collation by HR required. Web recruit will also help candidates to use the system.
 - Shortlisting is done online and once completed interview/selection dates can be added with slots that shortlisted candidates can the book themselves into.
 - Letters to notify candidates are sent through the system by email meaning that all candidates are acknowledged and notified at each stage.
 - Equality data is separated for HR use only and reports can be generated from the system rather than being manually collated and processed.
 - Web recruit provide a competitive multi-jobsite package as outlined above and provide copy writing support, similar packages have cost the council much more in the past i.e. £650 per package. The system is provided at no cost and instead is provided based on minimum advertising annual spend.
 - The copy writing support for adverts helps ensure adverts are attractive and optimise the ability to be found online.
 - HR and managers can view incomplete applications and contact such applicants where required.
 - HR have looked to implement name blind recruitment but this is not working effectively and web recruit

hope to have a working solution soon which EHC will then implement.

- The on-boarding element has also not proved to suitable for EHC so this is still done outside the system by HR and provides a positive experience for candidates rather than getting them to do more of it themselves (which can cause candidates to drop out).

10.1.3 In terms of benefits for Candidates these are as follows:

- The application and process are now fully online. Candidates now submit a CV plus a reduced application form to apply, which makes applying easier but still allows shortlisting against the Person Specification. The application form ensures additional information not a CV is gathered e.g. reasons for leaving and gaps in employment etc. to ensure safer recruitment. The applicant help section on the recruitment section has been updated to provide guidance (see below).
- Applicants can save their application along the way before submitting.
- Applicants are emailed to acknowledge their application and emailed at each stage rather than previous method of only being contacted when shortlisted.
- Shortlisted applicants can book slots themselves.

10.2 East Herts Website - Jobs and Careers (Recruitment) section further developed

10.2.1 A new applicant help section has been developed to support the new online application process. Web recruit also support candidates.

10.2.2 A new Planning section has been created with a video to encourage more applications and promote East Herts and the Planning service.

10.2.3 The 'Working for Us' section has been developed further to make clear benefits of working at East Herts (including our wellbeing programme and flexible working) as well as the East Herts Values.

10.3 Promotion of the council's health and wellbeing programme

10.3.1 The council has continued to promote its employee health and wellbeing programme. The programme has included NHS Health checks, Flu jab voucher campaign, and a eight module resilience programme. A full list of events can be found in the Annual Health and Wellbeing Report 2022/23. Positive feedback has been received from employees on the wellbeing programme being offered.

10.4 Staff Recognition Scheme

10.4.1 The council's Staff Recognition Scheme was redeveloped to move away from Employee of Month to a quarterly set of Awards and an Annual Award ceremony. The scheme was launched in June 2022 and links more closely to our core behaviours and values to reward employees throughout the year for excellent work or exceptional modelling of the council's values and behaviours. The scheme is being Judged by East Herts together to increase both engagement and recognition throughout the year. Details of the scheme will be added to the 'work with us' section so it can support recruitment as well as retention.

10.5 Market Supplements and Welcome Payments

10.5.1 The council has following an unsuccessful use of welcome payments or golden hellos in Planning which is a hard to recruit area introduced Market Supplements to aid both recruitment and retention from February 2023.

11.0 Actions planned for 2022/23 to improve recruitment and retention

11.1 The work with us section will be reviewed and updated. This will include promotion of the new staff recognition scheme, a review of the four case studies to ensure they are up date and refreshed. The benefits section will also be reviewed and updated.

11.2 The ATS will be developed to include name blind recruitment when Web recruit provide a suitable solution.

11.3 On-boarding will continue to be led by HR to ensure this is supportive to candidates, progressed quickly and reduces the risk of candidates dropping out.

11.4 The use of welcome payments/golden hellos and market supplements is allowed by the Pay Policy Statement for hard to recruit posts where recruitment has failed this will continue to be reviewed for use where necessary.

11.5 An audit of the recruitment process was undertaken by the Lean Six Sigma (LSS) Team in April 2023 and made the following recommendations to improve recruitment both in terms of time taken and the candidate/new starter experience:

Short to Medium

- Further investigate closing to interview date (current average is 20.5 working days)
- Establish a standard set of deadlines for the recruitment process

The process does not currently have a set of standard deadlines, once applications are in the process is led by the recruiting manager. The average of 20.5days found by LSS from closing date to interview/selection date risks candidates dropping out especially if they applying elsewhere. The suggestion is to have a deadline for shortlisting (e.g. 1 week) and deadline for interviewing (e.g. 1 week) which reduces this time and keeps more candidates. HR will develop these standards and then consult managers, it is also suggested that interview dates are included in the advert where possible.

- Review induction process – develop online induction modules to complement face to face corporate induction. The HR Officer is reviewing this process and video content will be considered and developed to provide new starters with more as they start rather than waiting for the core induction day which can then be used to support further.

- Review authority to recruit process

This has been done to ensure there is one clear route on the intranet.

- Address account / system set up issues with IT
IT will be contacted to confirm a standard time to set up accounts and the notice required, unfortunately some new starters have not had live accounts on day one which makes both induction and settling in difficult.

Medium to Long

- Record, in the ATS, learning from withdrawn applications and offers turned down

This will be explored with Web recruit and will be added if possible.

- If possible, embed ATS end to end recruitment system

As stated the on boarding element is not currently suitable it does not provide the flexibility or approval process required regarding contracts so the current person led system is being continued at present. There is also a risk that a more candidate led system would cause delay and drop off, East Herts does not have huge recruitment numbers and the personal touch is more suited. The audit did not find concern with the time currently taken to onboard.

12.0 Options

N/A

13.0 Risks

Recruitment and retention relate to corporate risk of Staff capacity and skills to deliver services meaning it is an important area to ensure is managed and developed. The reductions in turnover demonstrate the risk is being managed but it remains a challenging area especially as the council has a number of hard to fill posts which have led to the use of market supplements.

14.0 Implications/Consultations

N/A

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

The annual equalities report will be provided to the next meeting where

equality data will be analysed including for current employees, candidates/new starters and leavers with appropriate actions set out. The name blind recruitment feature of the ATS unfortunately did not work correctly during implementation and instead of just removing names it also removed key data such as qualifications from the CV which is why it has not yet been implemented. Web recruit are currently testing a new solution which if successful will be implemented by EHC.

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

As covered in the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

15.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

None

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East Herts Council Report Template

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 21 June 2023

Report by: Head of HR and Organisational Development

Report title: Employee Health and Wellbeing report 2022/23

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee:

- (a) To consider the annual Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2022/23 including the actions (in section 8.0) planned for 2023/24 and provide any comments to the Head of HR and OD.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 HR Committee Members are invited to consider the Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2022/23.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Employee absence can be costly for an organisation and therefore it is important that the council accurately measures and monitors absence.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 The Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2022/23 considers sickness absence levels across the council and compares them with previous years and benchmarking

data. It also considers what the council can do to support employee health and wellbeing.

- 3.2 The council measures sickness absence in two ways: the number of full time equivalent (FTE) days absence per FTE employee and the percentage time lost due to absence.
- 3.3 The number of FTE days absence per FTE employee is calculated by dividing the number of FTE days sickness absence by the total number of FTE employees in the council.
- 3.4 Percentage time lost due to absence is calculated by dividing the total number of FTE days sickness absence by the total number of available working days.
- 3.5 This report breaks down absences into short and long term.
- 3.6 Comparisons have been made with local government averages which are taken from the LG Inform Benchmarking Metrics report 2021/22 (the latest report available at the time of writing this report). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 'Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey April 2022' has also been used to make comparisons with other organisations.

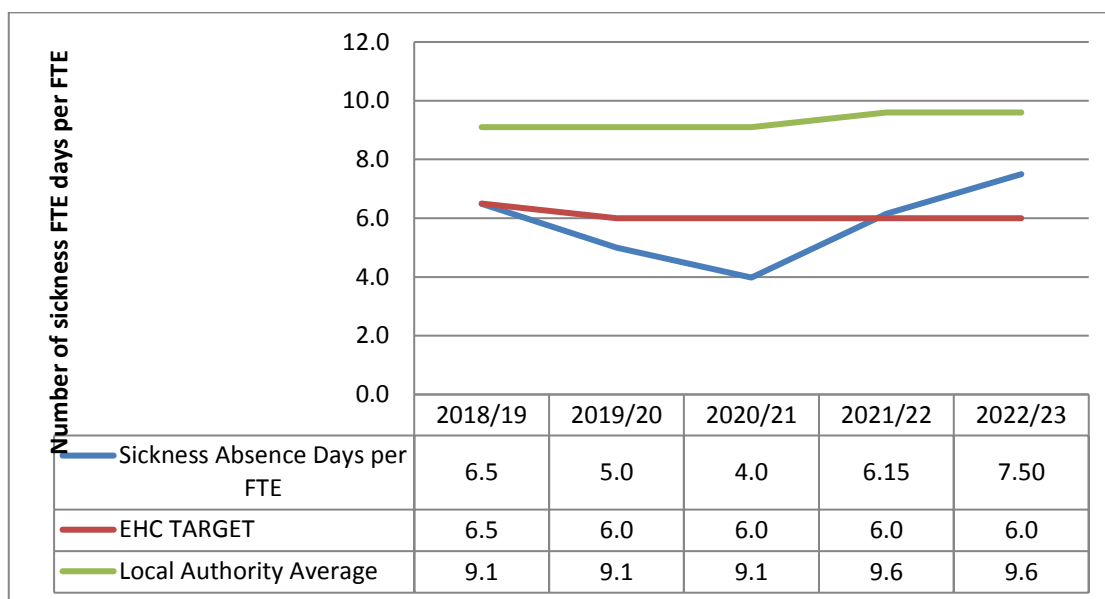
4.0 Sickness Absence Levels

4.1 ALL Absences

- 4.1.1 In 2022/23, the number of sickness absence FTE days per FTE employee was 7.5 days which is above the council's target of 6 days and higher than in 2021/22 (6.15 days). It

is however lower than the local government average in 2021/22 (9.6 days). Please see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Sickness absence FTE days per FTE (ALL absences)



The council's absence target was reduced from 6.5 days to 6 days in April 2019. The local authority average is the mean of all English local authorities taken from the 'LG Inform Benchmarking Metrics report'. The 2021/22 report is the latest report available at the time of writing so this data was used for 21/22 and 22/23. Due to COVID no data was recorded in 19/20 and 20/21 so we have carried over the 18/19 data for these years.

4.1.2 The total number of days taken as sickness absence in 2022/23 was 1989.48 FTE days. 62% (1224.14 FTE days) of these were due to short term absence and 38% (765.34 FTE days) were due to long term absence. The total percentage time lost in 2022/23 due to all absences was 4.21%. This is the same as the local government average (4.2%).

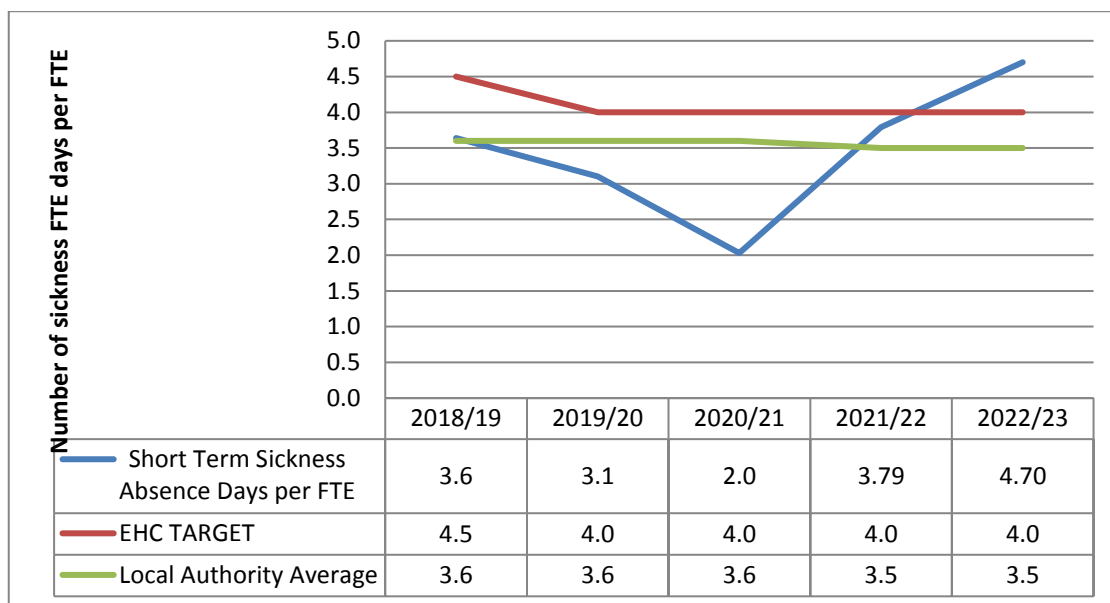
4.2 Short Term absence

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

4.2.2 In 2022/23, the number of short term sickness absence FTE days per FTE employee was 4.7 days which is above the council's target of 4 days and is higher than in 2021/22 (3.79

days). It is also higher than the local government average (3.5 days in 2021/22). Please see Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Short Term Sickness absence FTE days per FTE

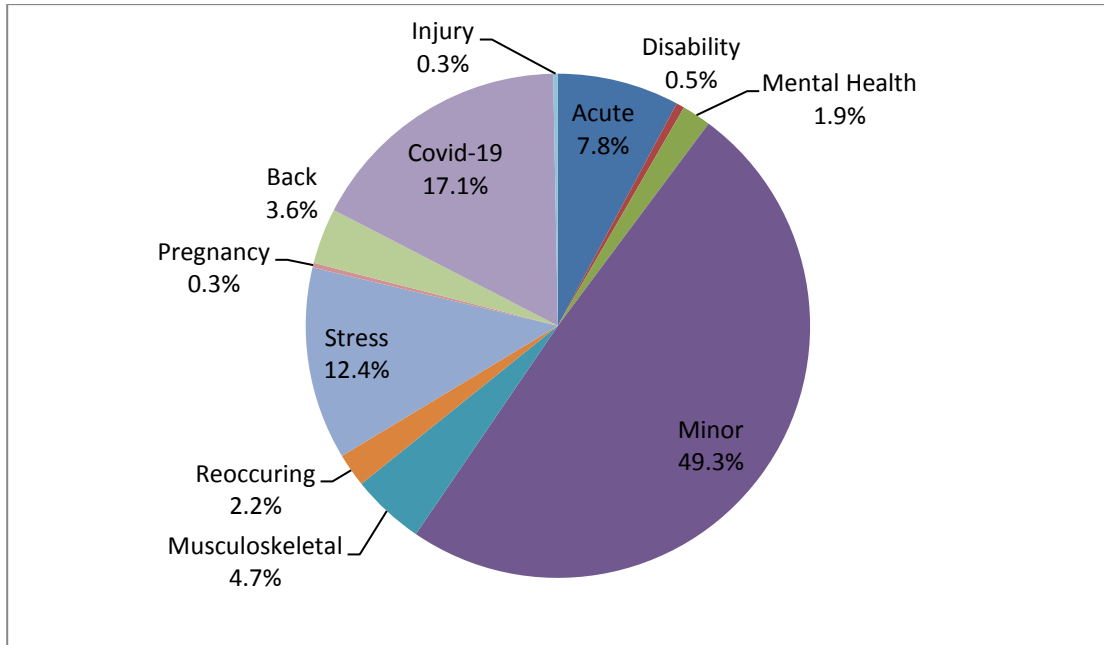


The council's short term absence target was reduced from 4.5 days to 4 days in April 2019. The local authority average is the mean of all English local authorities taken from the 'LG Inform Benchmarking Metrics report'. The 2021/22 report is the latest report available at the time of writing so this data was used for 21/22 and 22/23. Due to COVID no data was recorded in 19/20 and 20/21 so we have carried over the 18/19 data for these years.

4.2.3 The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness in 2022/23 was 2.59% which is higher than the local government average (1.7% in 2021/22).

4.2.4 Figure 3 overleaf shows the causes of short term absence in 2022/23.

Figure 3 – Causes of Short Term absence in 2022/23



KEY:

- *Minor illnesses (e.g., colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines minor operations)*
- *Musculoskeletal injuries (e.g., neck strains and repetitive strain injury, but excluding back pain)*
- *Recurring medical conditions (e.g., asthma, angina and allergies)*
- *Mental ill health (e.g., clinical depression and anxiety)*
- *Acute medical conditions (e.g., stroke, heart attack and cancer)*

4.2.5 The most common cause of short term absence in 2022/23 was minor illnesses, such as colds/flu, headaches/migraines, stomach upsets, and minor operations, accounting for 49.3% (222 employees) of all short term absences. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 'Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey April 2022' 84% of organisations responding to their survey reported that minor illnesses were in their top three causes of short term absence.

4.2.6 The second most common cause of short term absence was Covid-19, which accounted for 17.1% of all short term absences (64 employees). According to the CIPD Survey 67% of organisations responding to their survey reported that Covid-19 (including confirmed cases, self-isolation, quarantine and shielding) was in their top three causes of short term absence.

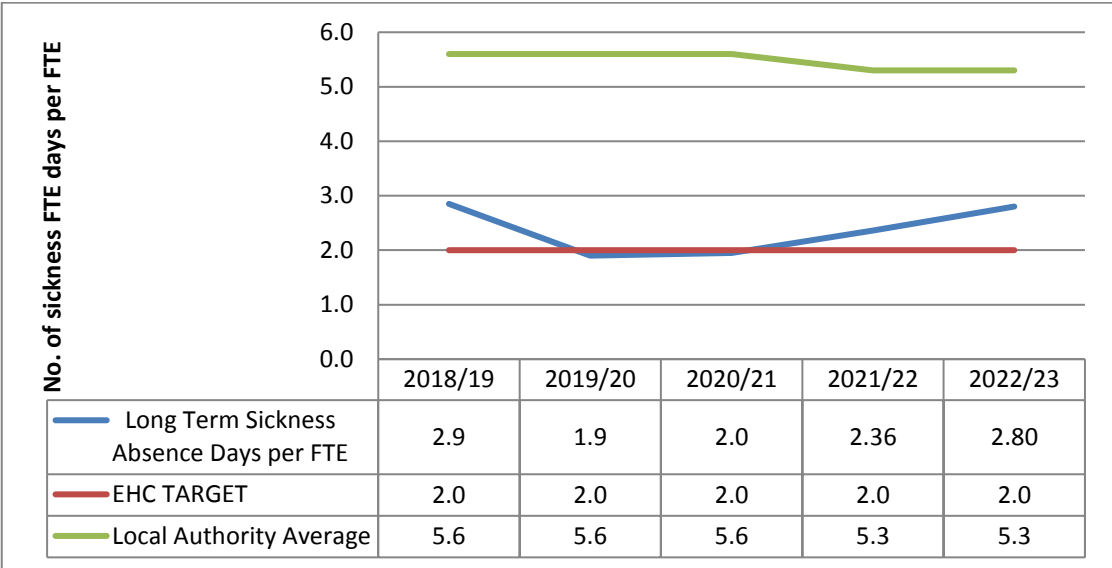
4.2.7 Stress was the third most common cause of short term absence accounting for 12.4% of all short term absences (20 employees). The CIPD Survey reported that 30% of organisations said that stress was in their top three causes of short term absence.

4.3 Long Term Absence

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

4.3.2 In 2022/23, the number of long term sickness absence FTE days per FTE employee was 2.8 days which is slightly above the council’s target of 2 days and an increase on 2021/22. It does however remain lower than the local government average (5.3 days in 2021/22). Please see Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 – Long Term Sickness absence FTE days per FTE



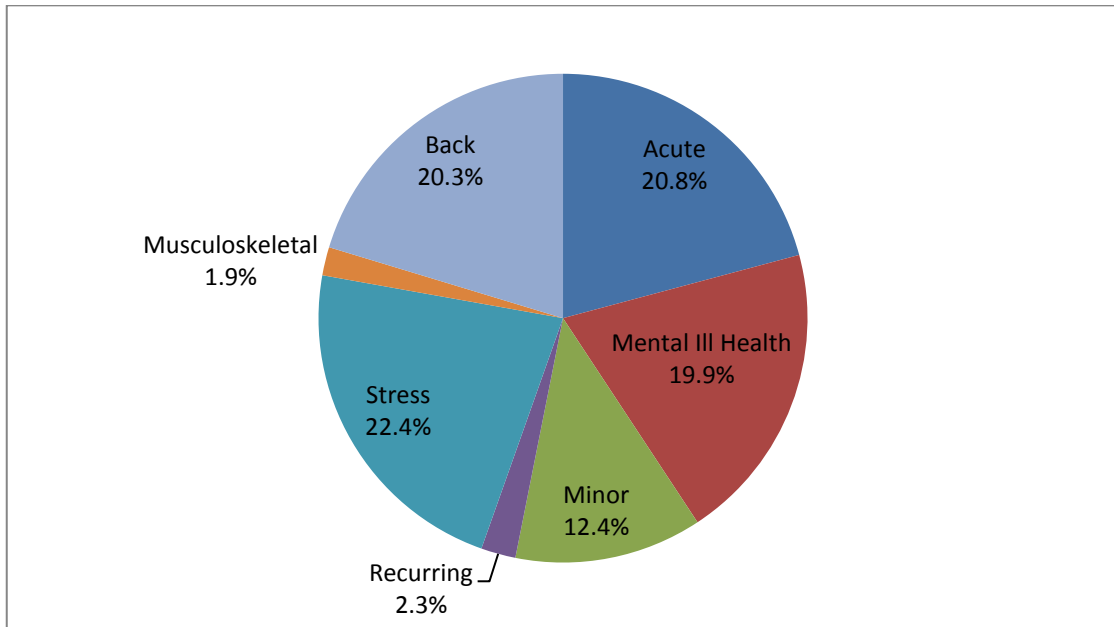
The local authority average is the mean of all English local authorities taken from the ‘LG Inform Benchmarking Metrics report’. The 2021/22 report is the latest report available at the time of writing so this data was used for 21/22 and 22/23. Due to COVID no data was recorded in 19/20 and 20/21 so we have carried over the 18/19 data for these years.

4.3.3 The percentage of time lost due to long term sickness in

2022/23 was 1.62% which is lower than the local government average (2.5% in 2022/23).

4.3.4 Figure 5 below shows the causes of long term absence in 2022/23.

Figure 5 - Causes of Long Term absence in 2022/23



KEY:

- *Minor illnesses (e.g., colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines minor operations)*
- *Musculoskeletal injuries (e.g., neck strains and repetitive strain injury, but excluding back pain)*
- *Recurring medical conditions (e.g., asthma, angina and allergies)*
- *Mental ill health (e.g., clinical depression and anxiety)*
- *Acute medical conditions (e.g., stroke, heart attack and cancer)*

4.3.5 The most common cause of long term absence was for stress, which accounted for 22.4% of all long term absence (13 employees). All employees have been supported by Line Management, HR and Occupational Health. According to the CIPD Survey, 38% of organisations reported that stress was in their top three causes of long term absence.

4.3.6 The second most common cause of long term absence was

for acute reasons (e.g. stroke, heart attack and cancer), which accounted for 20.8% of all long term absence (10 employees). All employees have been supported by Line Management, HR and Occupational Health. According to the CIPD Survey, 37% of organisations reported that acute reasons were in their top three causes of long term absence.

4.3.7 The third most common cause of long term absence was back problems, which accounted for 20.3% of all long term absence (9 employees). According to the CIPD Survey, 46% of organisations reported that musculoskeletal injuries (e.g. neck strains and repetitive strain injury, including back pain) was in their top three causes of long term absence.

5.0 How is the council addressing employee absence

5.1 Absences due to minor illnesses are mostly unavoidable. Managers hold return-to-work meetings with employees after every absence, provide support, monitor absences against the council's triggers and take the appropriate action in line with absence policy and procedures.

5.2 Managers are supporting employees with acute and recurring medical conditions by e.g. allowing them time off to attend medical appointments/treatment, allowing flexible working where possible and referring them to occupational health where appropriate.

5.3 It is important that managers recognise the signs of stress at an early stage so that action can be taken to support employees. Employees experiencing stress are referred to the council's occupational health service where appropriate and are supported through a stress risk assessment. Managers use the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) stress risk assessment tool (with HR support) which looks at the

key causes of stress (e.g. demands of the job, control over their work, support from their manager and colleagues, relationships at work, the role, and organisational change) and identifies actions to help reduce the stress. Employees can also seek confidential support from the council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The Leadership Team has requested HR to analyse further the absences related to stress and mental health due to high volumes in both long term and short term cases to see if there are any patterns/trends we can learn from, e.g. key causes of stress, (work or personal), actions to support return to work that are being used most effectively, or groups (e.g. equality characteristics) that need particular focus (this will be followed up and reported to LT).

- 5.4 Absences due to Covid-19 were carefully monitored by HR and a special Covid-19 reason code was set up on the HR system to enable this. We continue to advise employees to work from home if they get a positive Covid test (and are well enough to work) to avoid the potential spread of the virus to other employees.
- 5.5 Short term absences due to mental health have decreased from 9.4% of all short term absences in 2021/22 to 1.9% in 2022/23. However long term absences due to mental health have increased from 12.4% of all long term absences in 2021/22 to 19.9% in 2022/23.
- 5.6 Short term absences due to stress have increased from 11.8% of all short term absences in 2021/22 to 12.4% in 2022/23. However long term absences have decreased from 24.1% of all long term absences in 2021/22 to 22.4% in 2022/23.
- 5.7 The council has continued to take action to support employee mental health in 2022/23, please see sections 6

and 7 for details.

- 5.8 Managers and HR are supporting all employees with health issues through e.g. home visits, referrals to Occupational Health, undertaking stress risk assessments and implementing action plans, making adjustments to their work/workplace to assist them in returning to work at the appropriate time, and offering flexible working.

6.0 Ongoing support for employee health and wellbeing

The council has a lot in place to support the health and wellbeing of its employees, including:

6.1 Employee wellbeing activities and campaigns

- 6.1.1 The council offers a variety of activities and training to support employees' physical and mental health and wellbeing. The HR team also promotes various national campaigns such as Mental Health awareness Day/week with support from the Communications team.

6.2 Wellbeing Hub

- 6.2.1 The council has a wellbeing hub on its intranet which provides a one stop place where employees can access wellbeing support. It is where employees are signposted to sources of support e.g. how to contact a Mental Health First Aider, access to support from the Samaritans, how to contact the employee assistance programme.

6.3 Wellbeing Centre on the MyRewards website

6.3.1 Through the council's contract with MyRewards, employees have access to the Wellbeing Centre on their website, further signposting will be added when MyRewards ceases. Support includes free education, support and tools e.g. helping improve their quality of sleep, healthy recipes, online exercise programmes and advice on how to improve their financial wellbeing.

6.4 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

6.4.1 The council has continued to offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The service is 24/7, easy to access, confidential and free of charge. Employees have unlimited access to information, support and guidance on a wide range of topics including work/career, relationship/family, money management/debt and health/wellbeing.

6.5 Mental Health Support from Able Futures

6.5.1 The council actively promotes the services available from Able Futures which delivers the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions.

6.5.2 Employees (and family members provided they are in employment) who wish to access the service can receive 9 months of mental health support from a qualified professional called a Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant (VRC). The service is 100% confidential and employees can self-refer which means that they don't need to go through their manager or HR to access it.

6.5.3 A VRC will support the employee through providing

information and advice on a range of issues; coaching and teaching on how to manage mental health difficulties; as well as help in accessing services. Able Futures is not a counselling, treatment or diagnostic service.

6.5.4 The support available via Able Futures is designed to help with a range of mental health issues which result from both inside and outside the workplace, including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Financial Management
- Bereavement

6.6 HR Officers continue to support managers in consistently and proactively managing sickness absence.

6.6.1 HR Officers meet regularly with managers to ensure they are consistently and proactively managing sickness absence in their teams.

7.0 Actions taken in 2022/23 to improve employee health and wellbeing

In addition to the ongoing support already mentioned in Sections 5 and 6 above, the council has achieved the following in 2022/23 to improve the health and wellbeing of its employees:

7.1 Wellbeing activities and campaigns

7.1.1 A variety of campaigns were supported and events

held each month to support employee mental, physical and social wellbeing which included:

- Diabetes Week (June) – lunchtime drop in sessions
- Biketober (October) – green travel promoted to staff including raising awareness of shower facilities at Wallfields
- World Mental Health Day (October) – support organisations and wellbeing intranet hub promoted to staff
- Dementia Friends (October) – promoted Dementia Friends training sessions for staff
- Cost of living (November) – online support webinars
- Christmas (December) – staff Christmas gathering in the council chamber
- International Women’s Day (March) - staff event in council chamber
- Great British Spring Clean (April) – staff litter pick

7.2 Reviewed the impact of returning to work after the pandemic and the introduction of blended working on employee wellbeing via a Wellbeing survey and put actions in place to support employees;

7.2.1 A Wellbeing Survey was developed by HR and sent to all employees in June 2022 to check on employee wellbeing following the return to work post-pandemic and the move to blended working. Blended working had been in place for approximately 6 months when the survey was run.

7.2.2 The response rate was 51%. This is a significant drop from the 2020 survey response rate which was 89%. This is perhaps unsurprising as the first survey was sent out when the UK was still in a COVID lockdown

and the council was only a few months into home working so employees were more likely to want to give their opinions than now when blended working is established and all COVID restrictions have been lifted.

7.2.3 Overall, responses from employees regarding their wellbeing were positive. Some of the key headlines are listed below:

- 85% of employees gave a rating of Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement 'I feel the council supports my well-being'.
- 86% of employees gave a rating of 6 or higher out of 10 for their current working arrangements (50 indicating that their working arrangement is extremely positive and 1 indicating that it is extremely negative).
- The top three most significant challenges reported were: demanding workload (41%), limited IT (19%) and anxiety about their health and well-being and/or that of their loved ones (12%).
- 94% of employees reported positively regarding the suitability of their workstation to perform their role effectively- i.e. gave a rating of at 3 or above out of 5 (5 = very suitable, 0 = not very suitable).
- Technology (email, hosted desktop, the intranet, MyView, Zoom/Teams, Micollab) was generally working well for the majority of employees. Teams and the hosted desktop were rated the lowest with 30% and 20% respectively of responses being scored less than 2 out of 5. (Please note this was before the full roll out of laptops).

- 98% (144 employees) of blended workers that completed the survey reported positively on the suitability of their work environment (e.g distractions/noise from other people in their household) whilst working from home - i.e. gave a rating of 3 or above (5 = very suitable, 0 = not very suitable at all)
- 93% (150 employees) felt that their team were continuing to communicate well.
- 92% (149 employees) felt that the council was keeping them informed about the current overall position.
- 95% (154 employees) felt that they were able to maintain their usual working patterns and hours
- 36% (59 employees) had participated in wellbeing offers organised by the council such as flu jabs, yoga, lunchtime walks, taster sessions such as pilates and reflexology and NHS health checks.

7.2.4 The results of the staff survey highlighted some key themes to be addressed which include:

- Demanding workload
- Flexibility of the blended working scheme
- IT/Technology issues
- Lack of take-up for wellbeing offers
- Communication within teams and more generally under the blended working scheme

7.2.5 The findings report was taken to Leadership Team for their consideration and actions were taken forward accordingly.

7.3 Delivered the Employee Resilience Programme

7.3.1 The employee resilience programme was delivered over 8 months (8 modules) and recordings were made available for staff who could not attend. In addition to the 8 modules for staff there were also two face to face workshops held for Managers:

1. The Art of Being Brilliant: Your Wellbeing Launchpad

Based on the science of positive psychology, this session is evidence-based but with the big words surgically removed and replaced with common sense, doable principles and great fun. The challenge is quite straight-forward; it's about raising your 'new normal' to world class.

2. Rising Stronger: From Mental Health to Mental WEALTH

Rising Stronger is about showing up to work as your best self. Lose the doubt, let go of any negativity and come back fully charged. This session is about unmuting yourself in real life.

3. The Why-Factor: (Re)Discovering Your Purpose

Finding your purpose is like motivational rocket fuel. The Why-Factor will jog some memories by going back to basics and daring to ask a fundamental question... why do you do what you do? Beware. Contains life-changing content.

4. Self-Care: It's All About YOU!

With your work routine shot to pieces it's vital to stay

physically and mentally healthy. Self-care is about looking after #1. If you're getting the basics right, everything else is a lot easier to cope with.

5. Mindfulness: It's All About NOW!

Taking a little time to pay attention to the present moment, on purpose and without judgement' gives us an immediate calming effect, by re-oxygenating our blood and brain. But the real magic happens over time. With repeated practice, mindfulness helps to quieten the stress centres of our brain so we become less reactive to stressful situations and more able to deal with everyday challenges with calm rationality.

6. Brilliant Strengths: Getting in the Zone

Research suggests that playing to your strengths is the smallest change that can have the biggest impact on employee engagement. This session is designed to be a journey of strength-self-discovery. In our signature fun and interactive way, we will re-ignite inherent strengths - and uncover new ones. The result is revitalised and re-energised individuals who are able to operate as a high-performance team.

7. The Wow-Factor: How to Create Raving Fans

We've all heard of paranoia; the whispering behind your back. But what about the opposite - pronoia - when people are saying wonderful things about you behind your back? Customer pronoia is a magical thing. Raving fans are the key to organisational growth. The starting point is to create staff with the WOW-FACTOR. This session provides the 'how?'

8. Bouncebackability: Rolling With Life's Punches

Change has always happened, but recently it's got a whole lot faster and when life is rattling along at this speed, we need to be more psychologically resilient and adaptive than ever. Whilst a lucky few seem hardwired to bounce back and grow in the face of adversity and setbacks, it doesn't come automatically to most of us. The brilliant news is that BOUNCEBACKABILITY is a learned behaviour. We can all cultivate personal skills and resources which help us not just cope better with stress and adversity, but embrace change and use challenges as opportunities to grow.

7.4 Review of Blended Working Arrangements

7.4.1 A Survey was developed by the HR and OD Manager and sent to all employees in December 2022 to review the move to blended working since November 2021. Blended working had been in place for approximately 12 months when the survey was run. A report with the findings was presented to LT in late March 2023.

7.4.2 The response rate was 52%. Meaning that 164 employees out of 315 responded. A 40% response rate or above is seen a statistically reliable.

7.4.3 The key findings from wellbeing point of view were as follows:

- 125 employees (76%) provided feedback on the positives of blended working, highlighting improved work life balance, reduced travel costs, improved

productivity when working at home and reduced travel time as some of the key benefits

- 65% of staff do not find anything challenging about the current 50/50 working arrangements?
- 126 staff responded to the question regarding how best to maintain a 50/50 working arrangements. 31% of respondents like and want to keep the current arrangements. However, 33% of respondents stated that they want more flexibility around the days/hours that they are in the office or home, whilst others stated that working arrangements should be tailored to team requirements.
- **Wellbeing** – 150 staff responded, with 199 positive comments (compared to 41 negative comments) about the benefits of working at home. Staff stated that a key positive impact to their well-being was reduced travel time, allowing them better work life balance and time for activities. Many staff also said that working from home helped them to concentrate better and that they were more productive. Feeling isolated and difficulties with communication were the negatives for some staff. Staff, in general, did not feel that the organisation could do anything to improve wellbeing at home.
- Communication – Employees were asked to rate how well they felt they were communicating, with each other, with customers and Councillors, and with their manager when working from home. The responses show that communication is not a key issue or concern and most staff believe it is excellent or at least adequate when working from home although an improved telephone system is required.

7.4.4 The report was considered by LT and covered more detail than the key findings highlighted. The report made three core recommendations which were accepted and set out below and will be progressed by Leadership Team through the Head of HR of OD re policy and IT re the telephone system:

- Consider a more flexible approach to blended working to meet service and team requirements i.e. do not have set days in the office and allow Managers to arrange office/home working as required.
- Develop Blended Working Policy, to include review of flexi time scheme, etc.
- Improved telephone system built into laptops and with headsets.

8.0 Actions planned in 2023/24 to improve employee health and wellbeing, to:

- Develop Blended Work Policy to ensure expectations are clear and that flexibility works effectively for both employees and services and communication is well maintained. Develop the Flexi-time scheme to ensure it works effectively with blended working and gives consideration to core contact hours.
- Continue to support national wellbeing campaigns with the support of the Communications team to promote and offer wellbeing activities to employees.
- Refresh Mental Health First Aiders programme by seeking new volunteers and arranging training for new volunteers/refresher training for existing volunteers.
- Review the intranet Wellbeing content and update and

develop accordingly.

- Promote again the 8-module resilience programme for Art of the Possible (see 7.3.1) available on video to all staff as support for their wellbeing/mental health.
- Roll out Flu Jabs to staff from September as with previous years.
- Roll out management training including on the Sickness Absence Management policy.
- Review the council's Occupational Health Provider to find a more proactive provider in helping advise on complex cases and supporting employees back to work.
- Arrange 'Managing Change' training for managers as part of the Blueprint programme to support the delivery of the transformation programme.

9.0 Reason(s)

N/A

10.0 Options

N/A

11.0 Risks

The risks are that if wellbeing is not supported or managed that staff absences increase, staff resilience is weakened which affects the corporate risk: Staff capacity and skills to deliver services.

12.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

Wellbeing support is aimed at supporting employee's health both physical and mental health. Mental health is potentially a disability depending on its impact and therefore it is important to make reasonable adjustments and provide support.

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

As covered by the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

13.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

None

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