



MEETING : HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2026
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 (Chair)

Councillors P Boylan, M Butcher, M Connolly, A Holt, M Swainston and D Willcocks

Substitutes

Conservative Group: Councillors R Buckmaster and D Hollebbon

Green Group: Councillors J Dunlop and G Hill

Labour Group: Councillor D Jacobs

Liberal Democrat Group: Councillor S Marlow

(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member to Democratic Services 7 hours before the meeting, i.e. by midday on the day of the meeting)

CONTACT OFFICER:

MICHELE AVES

COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

01279 502177

michele.aves@eastherts.gov.uk

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

Public Attendance

East Herts Council welcomes public attendance at its meetings and meetings will continue to be live streamed and webcasted. For further information, please email democraticservices@eastherts.gov.uk or call the Council on 01279 655261 and ask to speak to Democratic Services.

The Council operates a paperless policy in respect of agendas at committee meetings and the Council will no longer be providing spare copies of Agendas for the Public at Committee Meetings. The mod.gov app is available to download for free from app stores for electronic devices. You can use the mod.gov app to access, annotate and keep all committee paperwork on your mobile device.

Visit <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/35542/Political-Structure> for details.

Audio/Visual Recording of meetings

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever, non-disruptive, methods you think are suitable, which may include social media of any kind, such as tweeting, blogging or Facebook. However, oral reporting or commentary is prohibited. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press should contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chairman of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted. Anyone filming a meeting should focus only on those actively participating and be sensitive to the rights of minors, vulnerable adults and those members of the public who have not consented to being filmed.

AGENDA

1. Appointment of Vice - Chair for 2026/27

2. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

3. Minutes - 4 February 2026 (Pages 6 - 12)

To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2026.

4. Local Joint Panel - Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 (Pages 13 - 17)

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Panel held on 19 May 2026.

5. Chair's Announcements

6. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Member's Declaration of Interest.

7. Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2025/26 (Pages 18 - 31)

8. Learning and Development Report 2025/26 (Pages 32 - 40)

9. Annual Turnover Report 2025/26 (Pages 41 - 54)

10. Update on Quarter 4 Accident Reports and Annual Corporate Health and Safety Report for 2025/26 (Pages 55 - 65)

11. Human Resources Quarter 4 Statistics (Pages 66 - 84)

12. Redundancy Alignment (Pages 85 - 108)

13. Proposed Changes to the Recruitment & Induction Policy & General Leave Policy (Pages 109 - 166)

14. 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.

15. Exclusion of the Press and Public (if required)

If Part II business is notified and the procedures set out in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 have been complied with, the Chairman will move: - That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of item XX on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph XX of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Agenda Item 3

HR

HR

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2026, AT 7.00
PM

PRESENT: Councillor Rachel Carter (Chair)
Councillors M Connolly, A Holt, M Swainston
and D Willcocks

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Michele Aves | - Committee Support Officer |
| Sara Saunders | - Director for Place |
| Laura Smith | - Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner |

310 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

311 MINUTES - 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

It was moved by Councillor Willcocks and seconded by Councillor Connolly that the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 24 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillors Deffley and Holt abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 24

September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

312 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and reminded participants to use the microphones when speaking.

The webcast of the meeting can be viewed at [HR Committee - 4 February 2026 - YouTube](#)

313 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

314 HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTER 2 STATISTICS

The Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner introduced the report which gave Human Resources statistics for Quarter 2 of 2025, highlighting the key points, to include:

- A Council employee headcount of 304 – 274.34 FTE.
- 10 new starters across several service areas - with ongoing challenges remaining in Environmental Health.
- 54 vacancies – with critical roles supported by agency/interim cover.
- 16 leavers - With projected turnover slightly above target.
- A focus on statutory training.
- Neurodiversity workshop delivered, e-learning emphasised, and new anti-harassment training launched.
- 2 reportable accidents, with no RIDDOR incidents.

The Chair thanked the Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner for the report.

Members expressed a repeat desire for comparative data – to include trends and benchmarking against other councils, and a further breakdown of vacancies.

Members heard that there had been a high turnover of staff within the Human Resources Department and received apologies regarding the omittance of such data/breakdowns within the quarterly reports. They were given assurances that this data would be included going forward.

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

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources Management report for Quarter 2 (July - September 2025) be considered and any comments provided to the Human Resources Adviser regarding the content or formatting of the report.

315 HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTER 3 STATISTICS

The Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner introduced the report which gave Human Resources statistics for Quarter 3 of 2025, highlighting the key points, to include:

- A Council employee headcount of 299 – 269.91 FTE.
- Staff sickness absence – 721.91 FTE lost – this being made up of 238.69 days short-term, affecting 75 employees, and 474.22 days long term, affecting 17 employees.
- 7 new starters.
- 55 vacancies – with hard to fill roles remaining in Planning and Environmental Health.
- 9 leavers – with projected annual turnover above target.
- A focus on mandatory training compliance, with a review of training content underway.
- Domestic abuse and Prevent training delivered.
- 4 non-reportable accidents, with no RIDDOR

incidents.

The Chair thanked the Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner for the report.

Members noted and showed appreciation for the improved breakdown of the vacancies data within the report (in contrast to the Quarter 2 papers). Clarity was sought regarding e-learning modules for Members, and a request was made for both staff and Member e-learning completion rates data. Members also expressed concerns regarding the ongoing issues with car park related safety responsibilities and the possible vandalism to the roof of Bishops Stortford Town Council.

Members heard that the e-learning platform was being reviewed, and that following comments from the Member Development Group, officers had been made aware of the need for Councillors to receive improved communications and guidance.

Members were told that the issues surrounding car park safety and the possible vandalism to Bishops Stortford Town Council would be picked up by the Director of Place, with progress/ further information reported back to the Committee. They heard that that there had been a positive change in the reporting of incidents, with plans for more regular health and safety updates due to the car park challenges.

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

RESOLVED – that the Human Resources Management report for Quarter 3 (October-December 2025) be considered and any comments provided to the Human Resources and Organisational Development Adviser regarding the content or formatting of the report.

316 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2025

The Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner introduced the item which set out the outcome of the annual Gender Pay Gap report, detailing progress on last year's action plan and outlining new actions for 2026. She said that the mean gender pay gap had decreased by 4 points, with the median gender gap increasing by 3 points.

Members heard that there was a strong gender balance at senior levels within the council, and that the gap was mainly driven by the higher proportion of women in lower paid roles (i.e., clerical and/or part time posts) and the outsourcing of male dominated council services. Members were told that the council was confident that the gap was not due to unequal pay – with the Hay job evaluation used.

Members were advised that the action plan for 2026 included the continued promotion of equality focused initiatives and the delivery of mandatory equality, diversity and anti-bullying and harassment training. They also heard that the new applicant tracking system was improving recruitment data, and that the council remained committed to reducing the gender pay gap.

The Chair thanked the Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner and her colleagues for the report.

Members praised the high take up of the equality, diversity and anti-bullying and harassment training, but noted that a quarter of staff were yet to complete this. A request was therefore made for further information on how these completion gaps were spread out.

Members also observed that the annual report had concluded a disparity within the lower pay scales for the past three years, and a desire for more meaningful analysis was expressed – to include such data of

comparative councils.

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

RESOLVED – that (A) the Gender Pay Gap Report 2025 be noted; and

B) that the action plan for 2026/27 be approved.

317 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

The Director of Place introduced the report which set out the updated Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27. She said that prior to the paper going before Council an update to include the additional responsibilities payment awarded to the Deputy Chief Executive would be made – this reflecting the senior management restructure which was undertaken in 2025.

The Chair thanked the Director of Place for the report.

Members sought clarity on the other posts which received additional responsibilities payments and heard that these were the statutory posts of the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer.

Members agreed that it would be helpful for National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales to be included within the report – to include examples of posts which fall into each pay spine.

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

RESOLVED – that the Pay Policy Statement

2026/27 be recommend for approval by council.

318 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - (IF REQUIRED)

There was no Part II business.

319 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 7.32 pm

| |
|----------------|
| Chairman |
| Date |

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON TUESDAY 19 MAY 2026, AT
12.00 PM

PRESENT: Employer's Side

Councillors A Daar and J Dumont

Staff Side (UNISON)

Jackie Bruce (Chair), L Mansaray and
H Marsh

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Michele Aves | - Committee Support Officer |
| Marie Funicello | - Human Resources Adviser |
| Laura Smith | - Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner |

1 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR FOR 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Daar and seconded by Councillor Dumont that Jackie Bruce be appointed Chair of the Local Joint Panel for the 2026/27 civic year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Jackie Bruce be appointed Chair of the Local Joint Panel for the 2026/27 civic year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE-CHAIR FOR 2026/27

It was proposed by Hilary Marsh and seconded by Lynne

Mansaray that Councillor Daar be appointed Vice-Chair of the Local Joint Panel for the 2026/27 civic year. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Daar be appointed Vice-Chair of the Local Joint Panel for the 2026/27 civic year.

3 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Jones and Paul Thomas-Jones.

4 MINUTES - 20 MAY 2025

It was moved by Hilary Marsh and seconded by Councillor Daar, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 May 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and reminded participants to use their microphones when speaking so that they could be heard. She confirmed that a short training session would take place at the conclusion of the meeting.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was a declaration of interest from Councillor Daar, who is the East Herts representative for the Armed Forces Covenant Board.

7 REPORTS BY SECRETARY TO THE EMPLOYER'S SIDE

7a REDUNDANCY ALIGNMENT

The Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner introduced the report, which set out proposed changes to the Redundancy Policy and the redundancy payment multiplier.

The Panel was advised that the proposals had been shared with the Trade Union, recognising that the Council's current redundancy terms, particularly the payment multiplier, were less generous than those offered by neighbouring Hertfordshire authorities. It was noted that this disparity had become increasingly apparent as councils benchmarked their employment policies in preparation for potential future structural changes.

Following a benchmarking exercise across all Hertfordshire authorities, it was recommended that East Herts increased its redundancy multiplier from 2 to 2.2. The Panel was informed that any additional staffing costs arising from this change would be met from the Council's personnel reserve. However, it was emphasised, that there were currently no planned redundancies at East Herts Council.

The Chair thanked officers for their work on the report, and this appreciation was echoed by the Panel.

Members highlighted the importance of acknowledging that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was anticipated, while also emphasising that there were no current plans for redundancies within the Council.

Members also requested that, in future, tracked changes be included in policy documents presented to the Panel. Officers agreed to implement this request.

It was moved by Councillor Dumont and seconded by Hilary Marsh that the recommendations, as detailed, be recommended to the Human Resources Committee for approval. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken,

this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that the Human Resources Committee approve the change to the redundancy multiplier from 2 to 2.2 as outlined in the report.

7b PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION POLICY AND GENERAL LEAVE POLICY

The Human Resources Advisor introduced a report proposing updates to the Recruitment and Induction Policy and the General Leave Policy. These updates aim to strengthen the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and support progression towards achieving Silver Employment Recognition Status.

The Panel was advised that key amendments to the Recruitment and Induction Policy include:

- The introduction of a guaranteed interview scheme for eligible applicants from the armed forces community
- Updates to job titles following the Tier Review
- Full integration of the Tribepad applicant tracking system

In relation to the General Leave Policy, the Panel noted that revisions include:

- The incorporation of the new statutory Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave
- An extension of paid leave eligibility to Cadet Force Adult Volunteers

The Chair thanked officers for their work in preparing the report, and the Panel echoed its appreciation for the comprehensive updates to both policies.

The Panel also acknowledged that East Herts had the third highest proportion of armed forces employees within the County, recognising the significance of this and the

Council’s ongoing commitment to supporting the armed forces community.

It was moved by Councillor Daar and seconded by Lynne Mansaray that the recommendations, as detailed, be recommended to the Human Resources Committee for approval. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Local Joint Panel to review and recommend that the Human Resources Committee approve the revised Recruitment and Induction Policy - (Appendix 1), and;

B) that the Local Joint Panel to review and recommend that the Human Resources Committee approve the revised General Leave Policy - (Appendix 2)

8 REPORTS BY SECRETARY TO THE STAFF SIDE

There were no reports from the Staff Side.

9 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (IF REQUIRED)

There was no Part II business.

The meeting closed at 12.14 pm

| |
|----------------|
| Chairman |
| Date |

Agenda Item 7

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: Wednesday 3 June 2026

Report by: Shared Senior Business Partner

Report title: Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2025/26

Ward(s) affected: None

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR COMMITTEE

- a) **To consider the annual Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2025/26 including the actions (in section 8.0) planned for 2026/27.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The HR Committee are invited to consider the Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2025/26.

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 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The Employee Health and Wellbeing Report 2025/26 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 Infinistats Human Capital Metrics report 2024/25 (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 2025' (also the latest report available) has also been used to make comparisons with other organisations.

4.0 Risks

- 4.1 The risks of not supporting and managing staff wellbeing is an increase of staff absences and a decline in staff resilience. Both together ultimately creates the corporate risk: Staff capacity and skills to deliver services.

5.0 Implications/Consultations

None

6.0 Community Safety

None

7.0 Data Protection

None

8.0 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.

9.0 Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

No

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

As covered in the report.

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

10.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

10.1 Annual Health and Wellbeing Report 25/26

Contact Officer

Laura Smith

Shared HR Senior Business Partner

Laura.smith@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

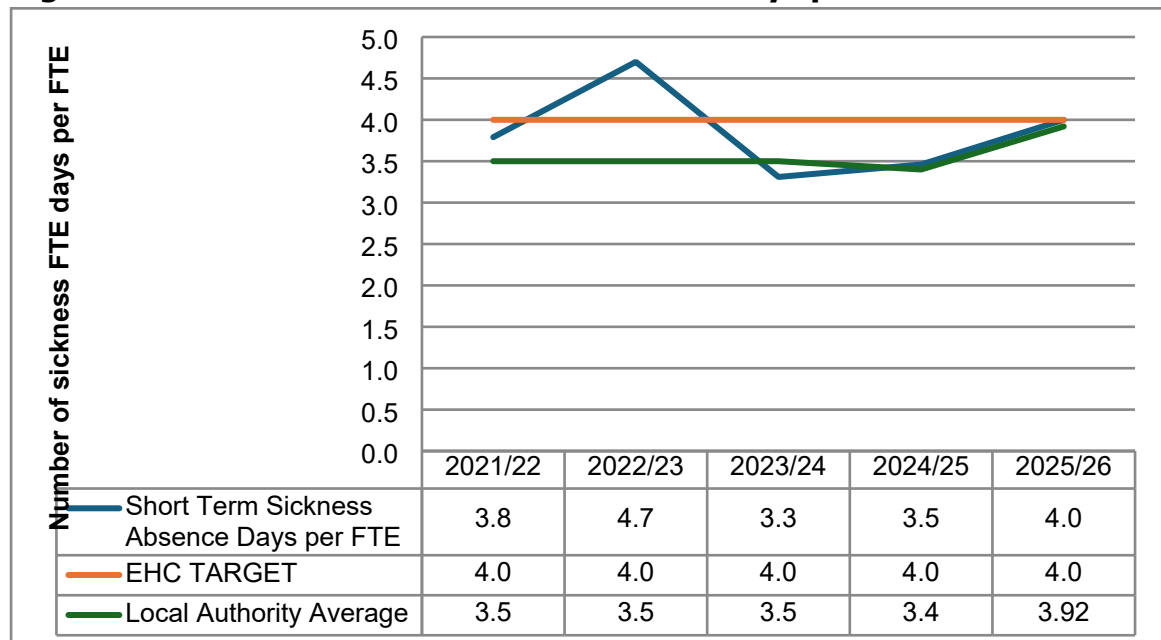
Claire Kirby
Human Resources Adviser
Claire.kirby@eastherts.gov.uk

Annual Health and Wellbeing Report 25/26

1.0 Short Term Absence

- 1.1 Absences of less than four weeks are considered to be short term sickness absence.
- 1.2 In 2025/26, the number of short term sickness absence FTE days per FTE employee was 4 days which is the same as the council's target of 4 days. It is slightly higher than the East of England local government average (3.92 days in 2024/25). Please see Figure 1 below.

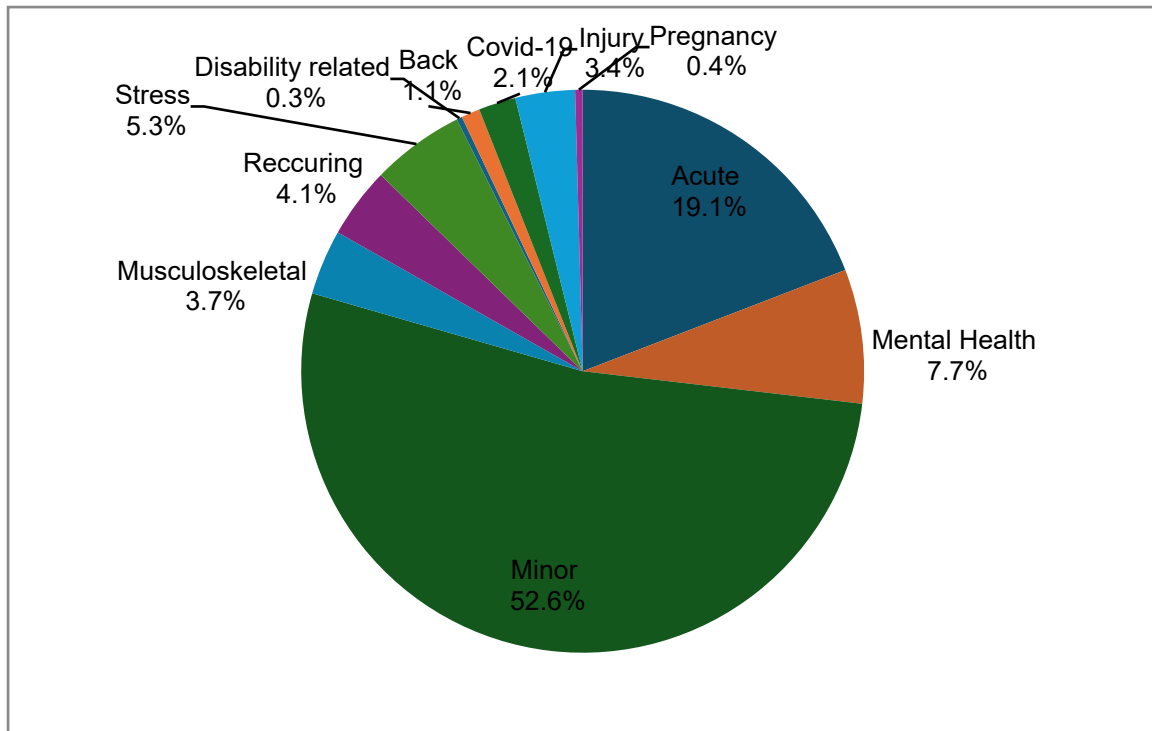
Figure 1 – Short Term Sickness absence FTE days per FTE



The local authority average is the mean of the East of England local authorities who are subscribed to the Infinistats benchmarking system and is taken from the 'Human Capital Metrics report'. The 2024/25 report is the latest report available at the time of writing.

- 1.3 The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness in 2025/26 was 3.77%.
- 1.4 Figure 2 below shows the causes of short term absence in 2025/26.

Figure 2 – Causes of Short Term absence in 2025/26



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)

1.5 The most common cause of short term absence in 2025/26 was minor illnesses, such as colds/flu, headaches/migraines, stomach upsets, and minor operations, accounting for 52.6% (146 employees) of all short term absences. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 'Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey April 2025' 78% of organisations responding to their survey reported that minor illnesses were in their top three causes of short term absence.

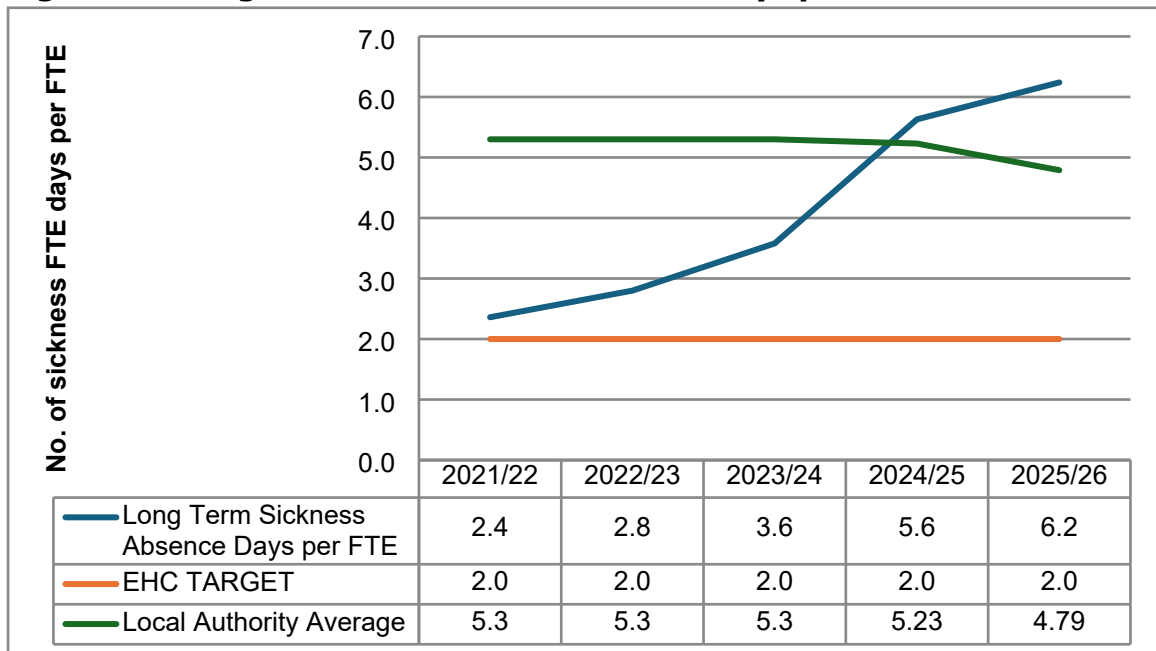
1.6 The second most common cause of short term absence was acute medical conditions (e.g., surgery, long term health conditions, accidents) which accounted for 19.1% of all short term absences (20 employees).

1.7 Mental health was the third most common cause of short term absence accounting for 7.7 of all short term absences (9 employees). The CIPD Survey reported that 29% of organisations said that mental health was in their top three causes of short term absence.

2.0 Long Term Absence

- 2.1 Absences in excess of 4 weeks/28 consecutive calendar days are considered to be long term sickness absence.
- 2.2 In 2025/26, the number of long term sickness absence FTE days per FTE employee was 6.2 days which is significantly above the council's target of 2 days and an increase on 2024/25 (5.6 days). It is also higher than the East of England local government average (4.79 days in 2024/25). It is recommended that the target of 2 days per employee for long term absence is increased to 4 days as 2 days is unrealistic and also not aligned to local benchmarking data. Please see Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 – Long Term Sickness absence FTE days per FTE



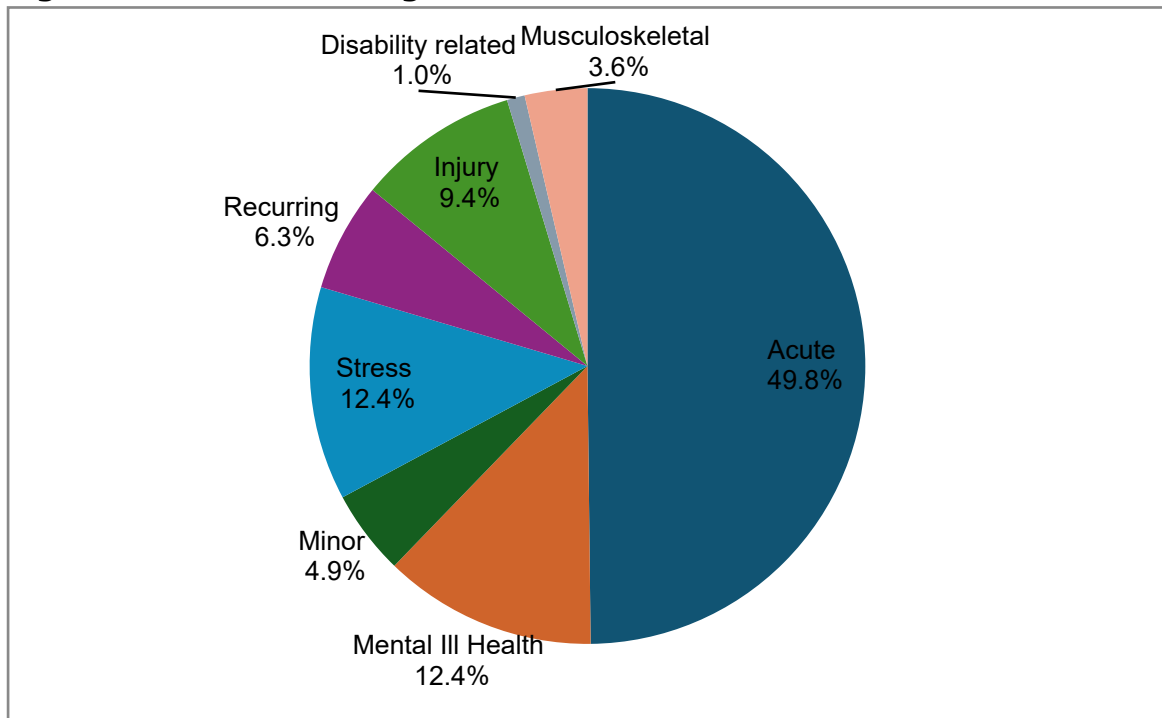
The local authority average is the mean of the East of England local authorities who are subscribed to the Infinistats benchmarking system and is taken from the 'Human Capital Metrics report'. The 2024/25 report is the latest report available at the time of writing.

- 2.3 The percentage of time lost due to long term sickness in 2025/26 was 8.39%. This is a significant increase from last year (4.48% in 2024/25).
- 2.4 There was an increase in sickness absences for acute reasons such as cancer which understandably led to lengthy sickness absences.

2.5 It is also worth noting that 44% of employees at the council are in the 50-64 age group and serious illnesses tend to become more frequent in later life.

2.6 Figure 4 below shows the causes of long term absence in 2025/26.

Figure 4 – Causes of Long Term absence in 2025/26



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)

2.7 The most common cause of long term absence was for acute reasons (e.g. stroke, heart attack and cancer), which accounted for 49.8% of all long term absence (14 employees). All employees have been supported by Line Management, HR and Occupational Health. According to the CIPD Survey, 24% of organisations reported that acute reasons were in their top three causes of long term absence.

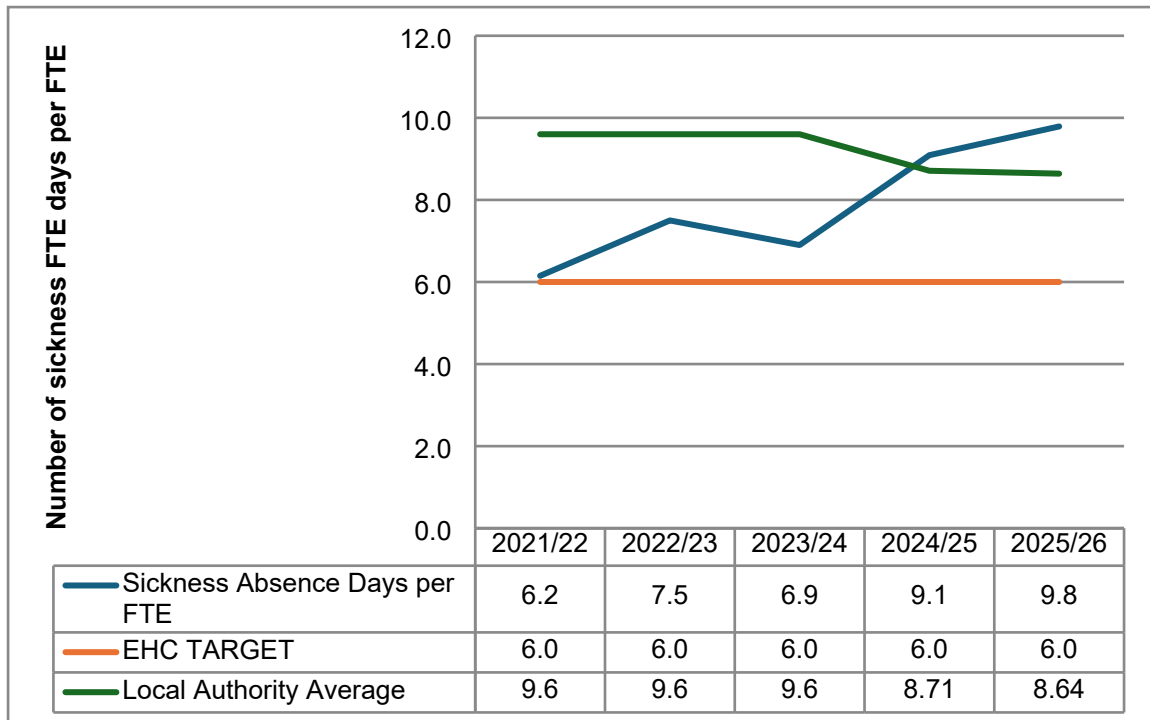
2.8 Mental ill health and stress were jointly the second most common causes of long-term absence, each accounting for 12.4% of cases (5 employees). All employees have been supported by Line

Management, HR and Occupational Health. According to the CIPD Survey, public sector organisations and larger private sector organisations (250+ employees) are particularly likely to include mental ill health among their top causes of long-term absence (51% and 50% respectively). More public sector employers also report that stress is among their top causes of long-term absence (41%).

3.0 Total absence

- 3.1 In 2025/26, the number of sickness absence FTE days per FTE employee was 9.8 days which is above the council's target of 6 days but is similar to last year's figure of 9.1 days. It is also slightly higher than the East of England local government average (8.64 days). The CIPD report that average absence levels have increased to 9.4 days per employee per year, compared with 7.8 days in 2023 and 5.8 days in 2022. the average in the public sector as being 10.6 days. Please see Figure 5 below.

Figure 5 – Sickness absence FTE days per FTE (ALL absences)



The local authority average is the mean of the East of England local authorities who are subscribed to the Infinistats benchmarking system and is taken from the 'Human Capital Metrics report'. The 2024/25 report is the latest report available at the time of writing.

3.2 The total number of days taken as sickness absence in 2025/26 was 2766.03 FTE days. 31% (857.11 FTE days) of these were due to short term absence and 69% (1908.92 FTE days) were due to long term absence. The total percentage time lost in 2025/26 due to all absences was 12.16% which is an increase from 2024/25 (7.43%).

4.0 How is the council addressing employee absence

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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).

- 4.4 Although we are 6 years post Pandemic, absences due to Covid-19 are still 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.
- 4.5 Short term absences due to mental health have decreased from 11.1% of all short term absences in 2024/25 to 7.7% in 2025/26. Long term absences due to mental health have decreased from 16.3% of all long term absences in 2024/25 to 12.4% in 2025/26.
- 4.6 Short term absences due to stress have decreased from 6.4% of all short term absences in 2024/25 to 5.3% in 2025/26. Long term absences have increased from 10.5% of all long term absences in 2024/25 to 12.4% in 2025/26.
- 4.7 The council has continued to take action to support employee mental health in 2025/26, please see sections 6 and 7 for details.
- 4.8 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.

5.0 Ongoing support for employee health and wellbeing

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

5.1 Employee wellbeing activities and campaigns

- 5.1.1 The council aims to provide a variety of activities and training to support employees' physical and mental health and wellbeing. The HR and Communications teams also promote various national campaigns such as Mental Health awareness Day/week.

5.2 Employee support

5.2.1 The council has a support section on its intranet where employees are signposted to sources of wellbeing support e.g. how to contact a Mental Health First Aider, access to support from UNISON and how to contact the employee assistance programme etc.

5.3 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

5.3.1 The council has continued to offer an Employee Assistance Programme (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.

5.4 HR Support

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

6.0 Actions taken in 2025/26 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 2025/26 to improve the health and wellbeing of its employees:

6.1 Wellbeing activities and campaigns

6.1.1 A variety of campaigns were supported and events held each month to support employee mental, physical and social wellbeing such as International Women's Day (hybrid virtual/face to face staff event), employee awards, bring and share Eid event in the kitchen hub, January 'beat the blues' coffee morning, weekly 'Knit and Knatter' sessions, and monthly 'payday' drinks organised on the Friday closest to payday in Hertford.

7.0. Mental Health First Aiders

7.1 Due to staff turnover over the past few years our original group of 9 trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) reduced down to just one. However, following a recent recruitment drive we now have 9 staff volunteers who are all enrolled on the *Mental Health First Aid & Mental Health Advocacy in the Workplace* Level 2 Certificate in Mental Health First Aid. This is a government funded course offering a recognised accredited certificate. In this course candidates will learn about

different types of mental ill health and how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses. The course is self-managed and takes between 6-12 weeks with support from online mentors and tutors.

- 7.2 To support the council's commitment to mental health the Health and Safety Adviser was permitted to utilise the old Environmental Health lab and create a safe space, named by colleagues as 'The Snug'. The snug is a designated safe space with soft furnishings providing a space for mental health first aiders to provide support for colleagues experiencing crisis or distress. There is also a networked computer and telephone which employees can access to reach out to any external support provisions. The room is not a bookable meeting space as the emphasis is on creating a calm and neutral environment.

7.6 East Herts Unity

- 7.6.1 'East Herts Unity' (EHU) was set up in 2025/26 which is a staff run group established to support staff mental health and wellbeing, and to promote diversity, equality, inclusion and representation across the organisation. The group aims to bring colleagues together, ensure all voices are heard, and help every employee feel welcomed and represented at East Herts Council. EHU staff volunteers have already hosted two internal community events designed to encourage interaction, learning and connection among colleagues.

7.7 Occupational Health

- 7.7.1 Due to our previous provider ceasing business in December 2025 we have sourced a new temporary Occupational Health provider (Innovate Healthcare) for 6 months via the ESPO procurement framework. We are already finding the new service provision to be more proactive, with a strong focus on supporting employees back to work. We are in the process of undertaking a joint procurement process with Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) for a permanent Occupational Health provider and intend to award the contract at the end of April 2026.

8.0 Actions planned in 2026/27 to improve employee health and wellbeing, to:

- Develop a combined blended working, flexi time, overtime and TOIL policy. Ensure expectations of blended working are clear and that flexibility works effectively for both employees and services and communication is well maintained. Ensure the flexi-time scheme 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.
- An access audit commissioned by the Health & Safety Officer identified a need to consider neurodiversity both in the physical office space as well how we display and present information. We are also investigating whether we can source an e-learning module on neurodiversity.
- Continue with the joint procurement with SBC (already underway) of a new permanent Occupational Health Provider who will be more proactive in providing advice on complex cases and supporting employees back to work.

Agenda Item 8

East Herts Council Report

HR COMMITTEE MEETING

Date of meeting: Wednesday 3 June 2026

Report by: Shared Senior HR Business Partner

Report title: Learning and Development Report 2025/26

Ward(s) affected:

None

Summary

The Council invested £60,120 in Learning & Development during 2025/26, supporting corporate, service, professional and health & safety training. Mandatory e-learning remained strong with 1,372 completions, while 236 staff took part in additional development such as resilience, conflict management and procurement training. The new SEEDL platform expanded access to learning, with 97 active users by Q4. Professional training continued with a £20,000 budget, and apprenticeships were supported across Levels 3, 4 and 7 despite national funding changes. The refreshed PDR process will drive learning needs for 2026/27, alongside plans to enhance e-learning content, modernise induction, expand apprenticeships and strengthen wellbeing and inclusion through East Herts Unity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR COMMITTEE

- a) For the HR Committee to consider the Learning and Development Report for 2025/2026 and provide any comments.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The HR Committee to consider the learning and development undertaken in 2025/26 and provide comments to the Senior Shared HR Business Partner.

2.0 Background

2.1 The 2025/26 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 training.

3.0 Risks

3.1 None

4.0 Implications/Consultations

4.1 None

Community Safety

None

Data Protection

None

Equalities

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

Environmental Sustainability

None

Financial

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

Health and Safety

Yes, as set out in this report.

Human Resources

Yes, as set out in this report.

Human Rights

None

Legal

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

Specific Wards

None

Contact Member

Councillor Joseph Dumont, Executive Member for Corporate Services

joseph.dumont@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Director for Place, Sara Saunders

Contact Tel. No. 01992 531656

sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Shared Senior HR Business Partner, Laura Smith

Laura.smith@eastherts.gov.uk

Learning and Development Report 2025/26

1.0 Training budgets at the Council have been historically split into four fundamental areas:

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

| | Budget 2025/26 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Central/Corporate | £14,640 |
| Service Training & Development | £ 22,480 |
| Professional Training | £20,000 |
| Health & Safety | £3,000 |
| Total L & D Budget | £60,120 |

1.1 Employees are informed of training opportunities via email/intranet updates via teams. Conversations between staff and managers are also welcomed during the PDR process to discuss individual training desires and needs specific to their roles.

1.2 To support the L&D function for 2026/27 the HR team refreshed the PDR forms and PDR process in March 2026 to better align with our Values and Behaviours and to create a more consistent, meaningful development conversation for everyone at East Herts Council. The previous multi-form approach has now been simplified into one single PDR form, making the process clearer,

more efficient, and easier to complete.

- 1.3 The mandatory training programme continues to be delivered through the online platform Skillgate. Employees receive annual reminders when renewal is due and when they are no longer compliant. All employees, agency staff and new starters are asked to complete the mandatory e-learning courses. In total 1372 'completed' training episodes were recorded in 2025/26.

| Course | Participants |
|---|---------------------|
| The Importance of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion | 237 |
| Data Protection: Compliance following GDPR | 255 |
| Office Etiquette and Email Management (<i>To be re-registered every 3 years.</i>) | 66 |
| Fire Safety | 266 |
| Understanding the Safeguarding of Children, Young people, and Adults at risk. | 277 |
| Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace | 271 |
| Total | 1372 |

- 1.4 The below table details additional non- mandatory training completed in 2025/26.

| Course | Participants |
|--|---------------------|
| Difficult Conversations | 7 |
| Managing Conflict – Performance Booster | 10 |
| Data Collection and Analysis to Justify Management Decisions | 4 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Effective Delegation – Performance Booster | 4 |
| Resilience Workshop | 25 |
| Introduction to Procurement | 10 |
| Procurement – Managing the Tendering Process | 4 |
| De-escalation and Personal Safety Training | 33 |
| Neurodiversity in the Workplace | 17 |
| Procurement – In-Tend Training | 3 |
| Evacuation Chair – Train the Trainer | 6 |
| Domestic Abuse Session | 38 |
| Prevent Training | 47 |
| Planning for Retirement | 23 |
| MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) | 5 |
| Total | 236 |

1.5 September 2025 the online training platform SEEDL was introduced offering free training courses for all East Herts residents and employees and council staff. In January 2026, the communications team began internal promotions of SEEDL, and this was also promoted by the HR team as part of the East Herts All Staff Briefing in January 2026. There were 97 active users recorded on SEEDL during Q4, 50 of whom were East Herts employees. Between January and March 2026, 20 courses were completed.

1.6 The HR and H&S team work with other service areas such as Data Protection to develop the e-learning programmes to ensure the programmes continue to grow and are fit for purpose. The e-learning platform is funded from the central training budget.

2.0 Professional Training

2.1 The professional training budget was set at £20,000 for 2024/25 and has remained the same for 2025/26. All employees funded for professional qualifications sign training agreements in line with the 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. We continue to ensure there is a fair process in funding professional development in 2025/26.

3.0 Apprentices

3.1 In January 2026 the Government significantly changed the funding for Level 7 Apprenticeships (master's degree level) in England to prioritise younger learners. This meant that from 1 January 2026 Level 7 Apprenticeships would only be available for apprentices aged 16-21 at the start of their Apprenticeship. Anyone who commenced Level 7 before 1 January 2026 will be fully funded through to completion.

3.2 The Council continued to sponsor apprenticeships in 2025/26 from the Apprenticeship Levy:

- 1 x Payroll administrator – Level 3
- 3 x Chartered Town Planner Degree – Level 7
- 2 x Revenues and Welfare Benefits Practitioner – Level 4

3.3 The HR & OD Service will continue to collaborate with managers and training providers to develop the Council's Apprenticeship Programme. The Leadership Team are committed to make better

use of our levy provision and professional training budget as a critical part of workforce planning.

4.0 Learning and Development initiatives and priorities 2026/27

- 4.1 The initial learning and development needs for this year will be collated from the PDR cycle after the 29 May 2026 deadline. The HR team will collaborate with members of the Leadership Team to ensure the learning meets the needs of the council to deliver its priorities.
- 4.2 Using completed PDR's, the HR team will identify needs analysis scope a learning and development training cycle. We will ensure our employees are supported and will identify where there are skill shortages as part of our succession planning.
- 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.
- 4.4 The HR team 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 online, 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 The HR team will be reviewing and refreshing the Corporate Induction programme in 2026 to ensure it reflects the council and the services provided. The possibility of video content from key areas is being considered to allow new starters to access some core elements earlier.

- 4.6 Further exploration into Apprenticeships for harder to fill roles, also exploring options to use apprenticeships for those members of staff already in post to gain further / higher qualifications via apprenticeship schemes.
- 4.7 Employees from the Democratic & Member Services and Licensing Team successfully joined the SDP 2026 Programme. The programme forms part of the District Council's Network development offer and is designed to support employee growth, skills development, and cross-organisational collaboration. It brings together delegates from across the Council to strengthen leadership capability, encourage knowledge sharing and build a strong professional network. Through participation, delegates are supported to enhance their skills, broaden their organisational understanding, and contribute more effectively to service delivery and continuous improvement across the Council. Plans are being considered to roll this out further across East Herts.
- 4.8 East Herts Unity (EHU) has been established to support staff mental health and wellbeing, and to promote diversity, equality, inclusion, and representation across the organisation. The group aims to bring colleagues together, ensure all voices are heard, and help every employee feel welcomed and represented at East Herts Council. EHU staff volunteers hosted two internal community events designed to encourage interaction, learning and connection among colleagues. Further events are to be planned in 2026/27 with support from the HR team.

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: Wednesday 3 June 2026

Report by: Senior Shared HR Business Partner

Report title: Annual Turnover Report 2025/26

Ward(s) affected:

None

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR COMMITTEE

- a) **For the Human Resources Committee to consider the Annual Turnover Report 2025/26 including the actions (in section 11.0) planned for 2026/27 and provide any comments to the Senior Shared HR Business Partner**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The Human Resources Committee are invited to consider the Annual Turnover Report 2025/26.

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 increase innovation 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 considered by the Leadership Team and at 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 2025 to March 2026. 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 Risk(s)

- 3.1 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.

4.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

None

Data Protection

None

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.

Environmental Sustainability

None

Financial

None

Health and Safety

None

Human Resources

As covered in the report

Human Rights

None

Legal

None

Specific Wards

No

5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

5.1 Annual Turnover Report 25/26

Contact Member

Executive Member for Corporate Services

Joseph Dumont

Joseph.dumont@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Director for Place,

Sara Saunders

sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

HR & OD Adviser

Laura Pennington

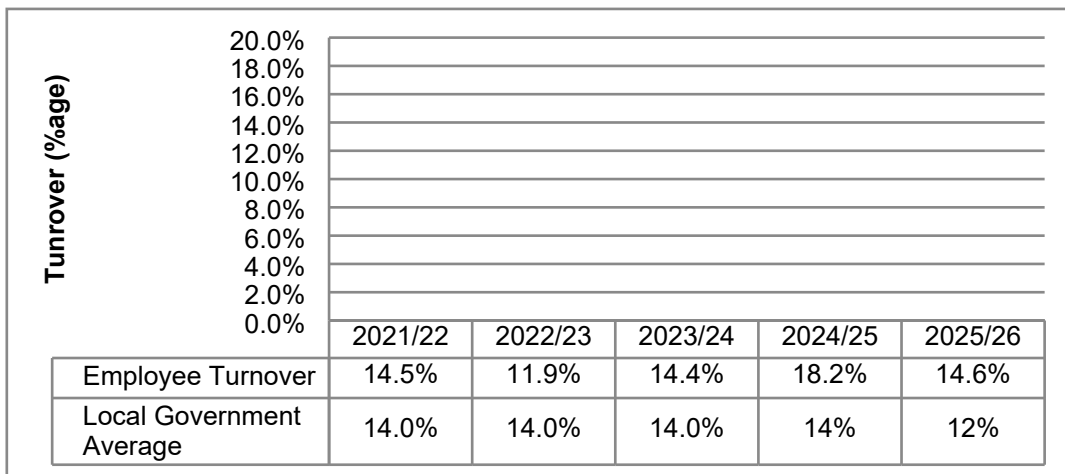
laura.pennington@eastherts.gov.uk

Annual Turnover Report 25/26

1.0 Summary

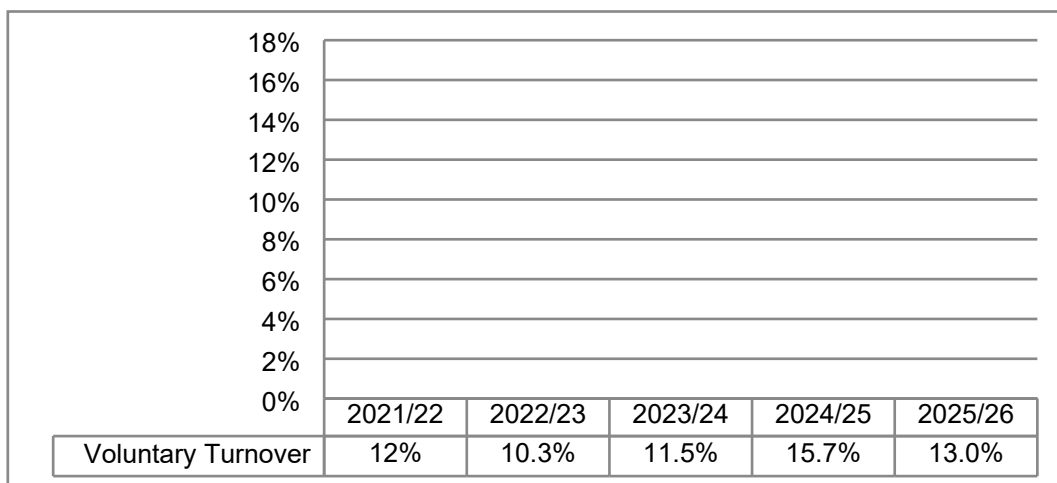
- 1.1 There was a total of 44 leavers in 2025/26: 38 of those were voluntary leavers and 6 were involuntary leavers.
- 1.2 **Figure 1** below illustrates the council’s overall turnover rate (including both voluntary and involuntary leavers) over the past five years, alongside the local government average. In 2025/26, the council’s global turnover rate was 14.6%, which is higher than the most recent East of England local government average of 12% (2024/25*).

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'.

Figure 2 – Voluntary Turnover rate over last 5 years



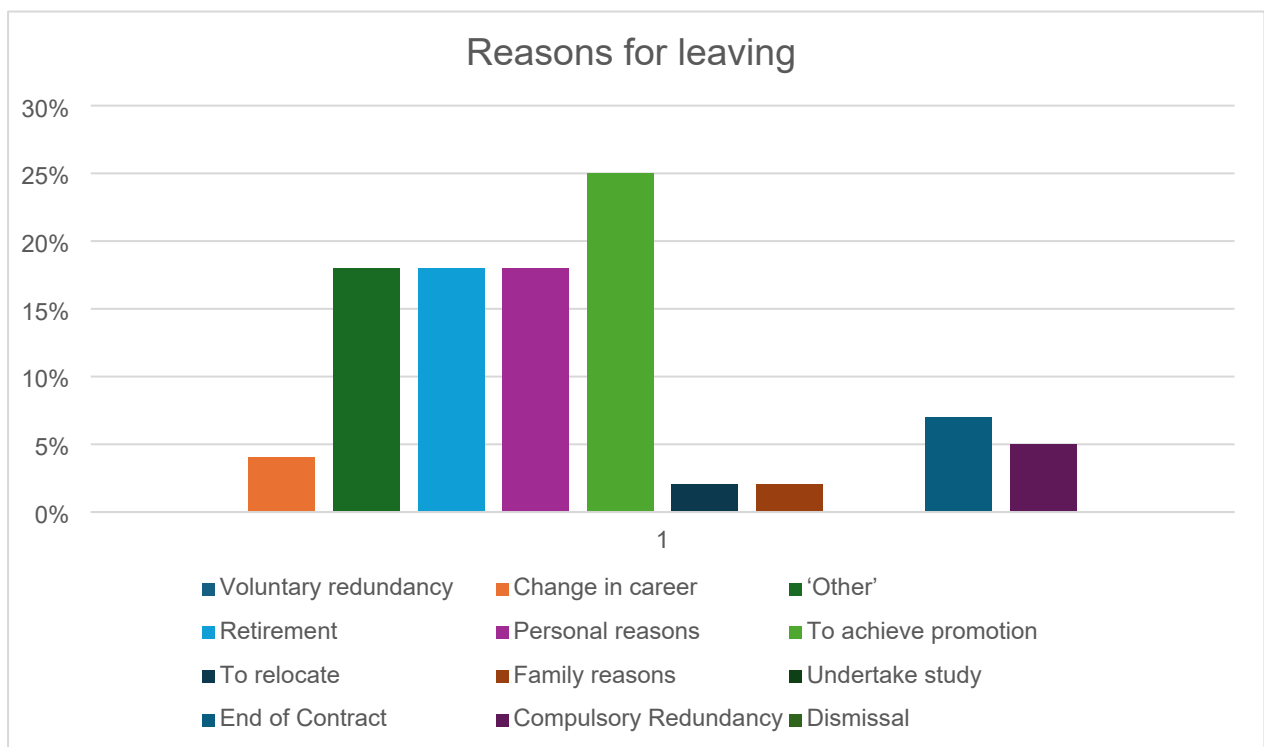
- 1.3 **Figure 2** below shows the council’s voluntary turnover rate (covering all voluntary leavers) over the past five years. This measure is presented

separately from global turnover, which includes both voluntary and involuntary leavers. In 2025/26, the voluntary turnover rate reduced to 13.0%, down from 15.7% in 2024/25. However, this remains higher than the rates recorded between 2021/22 and 2023/24. This increase was mainly due to people making lifestyle changes e.g. retirement, career changes.

2.0 Reasons for Leaving

2.1 The reasons employees gave for leaving the council in 2025/26 can be found in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3 – Reason for leaving April 2025 to March 2026



2.2 The most common reason for leaving in 2025/26 was to achieve promotion (25%).

2.3 The joint second most common reasons for employees leaving in 2025/26 were 'Other' 'Personal Reasons and 'Retirement', each accounting for 18% of leavers. The 'Other' category includes ill-health retirement, death in service and work-related challenges. The council has an ageing workforce and, as a result, retirement is expected to remain a common reason for employees leaving. To support the retention of skills, enable effective knowledge transfer, and aid succession planning, the council offers a flexible retirement policy.

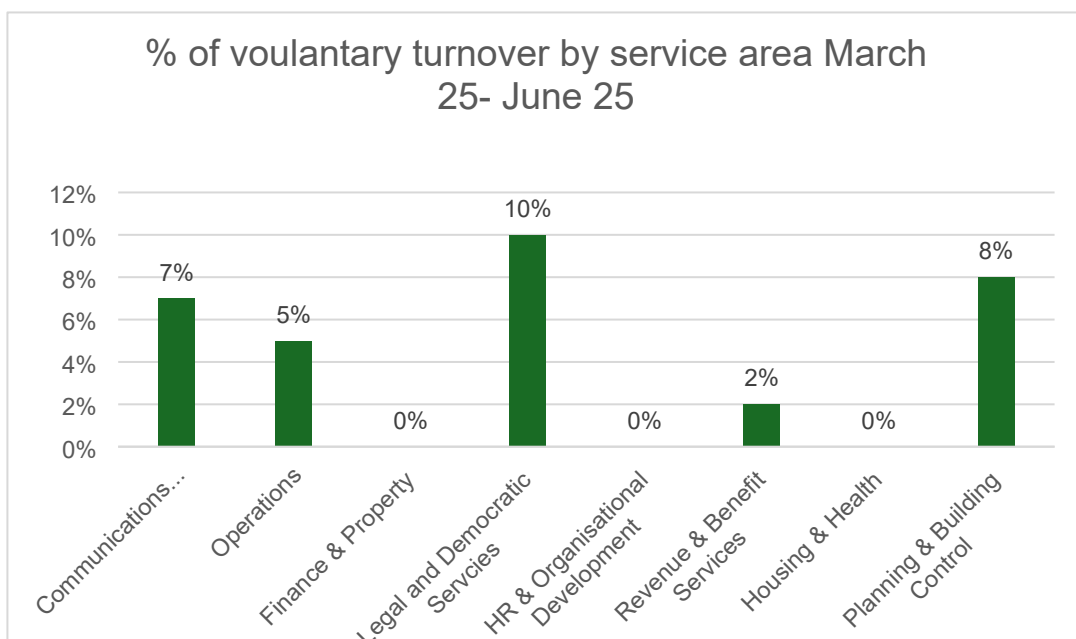
3.0 First-Year Turnover Rate

- 3.1 The council reports on its year turnover the early turnover rate reflects employees who leave the council within their first year. This measure provides insight into early retention, recruitment effectiveness, onboarding, and role fit.
- 3.2 The first-year turnover rate is calculated by dividing the number of employees who leave the council within their first 12 months of employment by the total number of employees who started during the reporting period, multiplied by 100 to express this as a percentage.
- 3.3 In 2025/26 the council's (early) turnover rate was 15%. This means that 13% of voluntary leavers (5 employees) had less than 1 years' service left for personal reason (4 employees) and to achieve promotion (1 employee)

4.0 Voluntary turnover in each service area

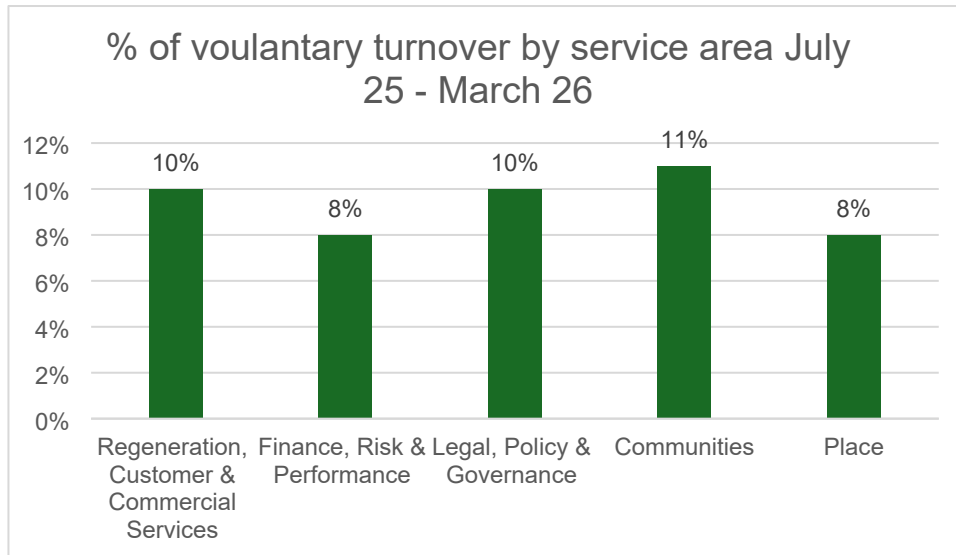
- 4.1 The voluntary turnover rate for each service area in 2025/26 is shown in **Figures 4 and 5** below. Due to a restructure of all service areas in 2025, it is not possible to make comparisons with previous years. In addition, staff were not fully assigned to the new directorates for data recording purposes until August 2025. To demonstrate voluntary turnover across the 2025/26 period, the average headcount for the period has therefore been used, based on the directorates in which employees were located at the time they left.

Figure 4 – Turnover in each service



Average headcount in March 25– June 25: Communications strategy & policy 42, Operations 39, Finance & property 29, Legal and democratic services 21, HR & organisational development 9, Revenue & benefit services 84, Housing & health 50, Planning and building control 40.

Figure 5 - Turnover in each service



Average headcount in July 25 – March 26: Regeneration customer and commercial services 60 Finance Risk and performance 96, Legal Policy and Governance 20, Communities 44 and Place 74.

4.2 In the old structure legal and democratic services had the highest turnover rate of 10% (based on 2 employees) and in the new structure communities had the highest turnover rate of 11% (based on 5 employees).

5 Exit Questionnaire analysis

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 More than half of voluntary leavers (52%, 20 out of 38 leavers) completed an exit questionnaire.
- 5.3 The key highlights from the exit questionnaires are as follows:
 - 85% (17 employees) would recommend others to join the council.
 - 90% (18 employees) said that they would rate the council 7 or higher out of 10 as an employer (1 being poor and 10 being excellent).

- 95% (19 employees) said they 'mostly' or 'completely' enjoyed their time at the council.
- 100% (20 employees) said their relationship with their colleagues were either 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 85% (17 employees) said their relationships with their manager was either 'excellent' or 'good'.
- 84% (16 employees) said that flexible working options at the council were either 'very good' or 'good' (1 employee, 5% did not answer the question).
- 80% (16 employees) agreed 'completely' or 'mostly' that they had received an effective induction.
- 85% (17 employees) agreed 'completely' or 'mostly' that they had received adequate training/coaching.
- 50% (10 employees) said that prospects for promotion/advancement were either 'excellent' or 'good'. However, 45% (9 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 (1 employee, 5% did not answer the question).

6 Vacancy rate

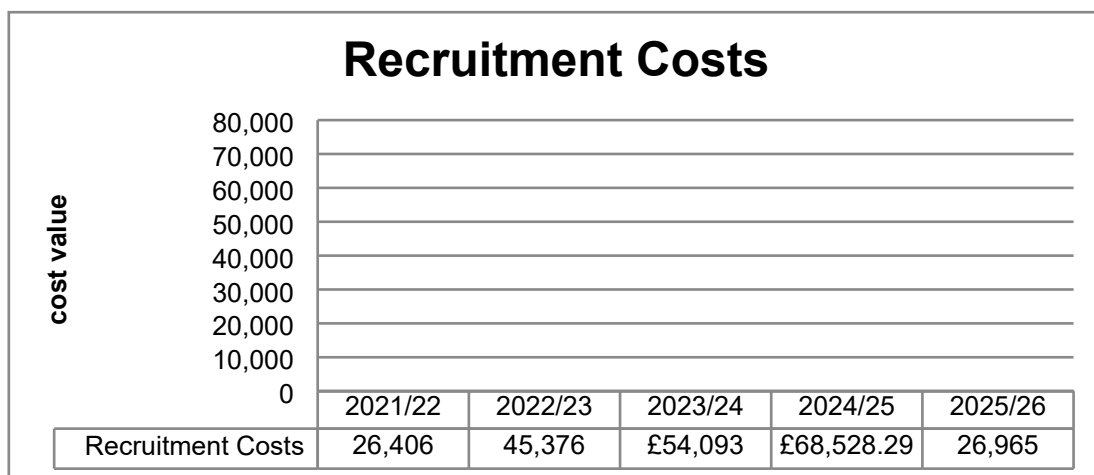
- 6.1 The council monitors its vacancy rate as this can have an impact on employee turnover e.g. employees may feel under additional pressure to cover the work of any vacant posts.
- 6.2 The vacancy rate in 2025/26 was 19% which is higher than the local government average (the mean for all English authorities was 8% in 2024/25).
- 6.3 As of the 31 March 2026, there were 63 vacant posts across the council. Of these, 4 posts are being held for budget savings, 14 posts are reported as: funding had been temporarily redirected (for example, to increase hours for other team members or to meet short-term service pressures), and 4 posts are being held pending a service review. At the same time, 20 posts are currently in the recruitment process (including job proposal approval, advertising, shortlisting and interviewing). A further 18 posts have been successfully recruited to, where candidates have accepted offers but have not yet started. The remaining 3 posts are externally funded, grant-based roles.
- 6.4 The council has focussed on upskilling employees through introducing career graded posts (most posts in Planning are career graded) and

funding professional study. Career graded posts allow the recruitment of candidates with more transferable skills which can then be developed.

7.0 Recruitment Costs

7.1 Recruitment costs have decreased in 2025/26 (£26,965 compared to £68,528 in 2023/24). Recruitment costs include external advertising costs, job boards 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

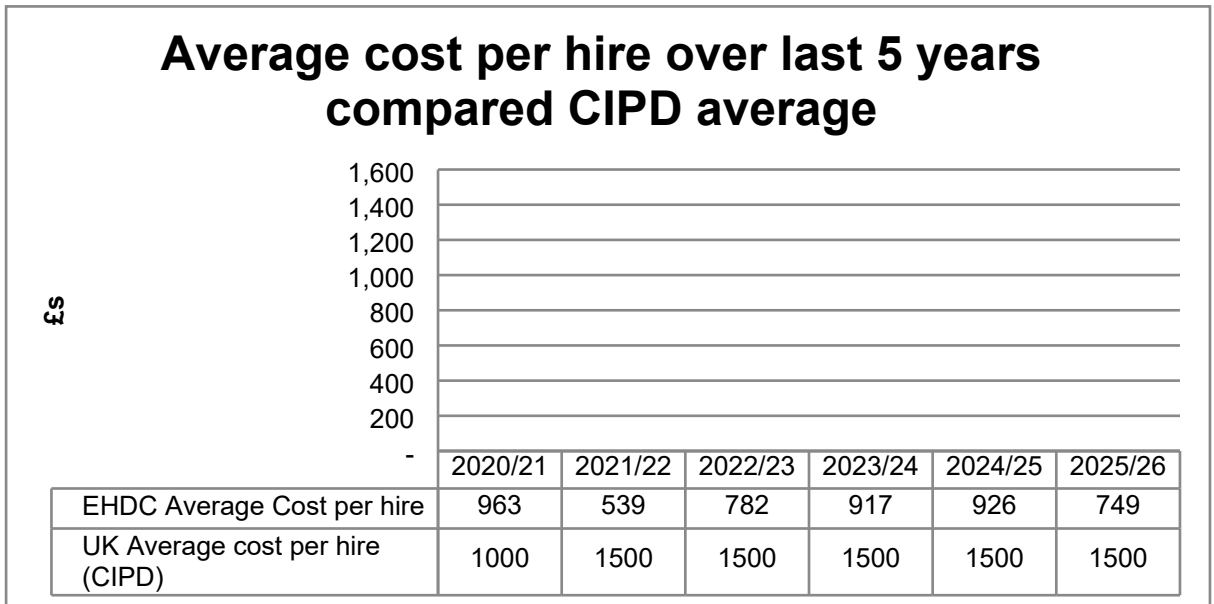


7.2 In 2025/26 there were 34 advertisement campaigns in total. The decrease in the annual cost is partly due to decreased recruitment compared to 2024/25 (74 campaigns).

7.3 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.

7.4 The cost per hire in 2025/26 is £749 based on 34 vacancies during the period. This remains lower than the UK average cost per hire of £1,500 (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Resourcing and Talent Planning Report 2024). **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



7.5 Other key findings from the 2024 CIPD report (this is the latest report available) are that 64% of organisations experienced difficulties attracting candidates. Recruiting for senior and skilled roles was most challenging, particularly in the public sector (52%), although 19% also had difficulties attracting low-skilled candidates.

Many organisations are experiencing increasing retention challenges (56%), so are introducing entry-level or career-returner programmes to access and grow the skills they need. 51% currently offer apprenticeships, 44% graduate programmes, 35% intern schemes, 34% post-A-level entry routes and 34% career returner programmes.

7.6 The council has aimed to keep recruitment costs as low as possible, we have an arrangement with LinkedIn ‘Recruiter’ which enable us to target/promote five jobs at one time.

7.7 A package was agreed with Web Recruit the council’s old Applicant Tracking System (ATS) of £355 per job for multi-site online advertising. The multi-site package advertises roles across range of leading generalist job boards (Total Jobs, CV Library, Indeed and Reed).

7.8 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. We also ensure that we negotiate with the suppliers for the best possible rates.

8.0 Actions taken in 2025/26 to improve recruitment and retention

- 8.1 A new applicant tracking system- Tribepad was launched in 2025 to support the recruitment process across East Herts. The system continues to support the recruitment life cycle for both managers and candidates. The system is regularly reviewed by the HR team to seek improvements for both manager and candidate experiences.
- 8.2 A new careers site was developed with an enhanced Planning section with multiple videos from staff and the leader of the council to encourage more applications and promote East Herts and the Planning service.
- 8.3 We currently advertise vacancies through Jobs Go Public, LinkedIn, Web Recruit (which includes job boards such as Indeed, CV Library, Total Jobs and Reed), and the East Herts Careers page for both internal and external candidates.

9.0 Promotion of the council's health and wellbeing programme

- 9.1 A variety of campaigns were supported and events held each month to support employee mental, physical and social wellbeing such as International Women's Day (virtual staff event), promotion of dementia action week, employee awards, bring and share Eid event in the kitchen hub, and monthly 'payday' drinks organised on the Friday closest to payday in Hertford. We also had a lunchtime celebration of the end of Ramadan, Eid. This was attended by a large number of staff to hear about Ramadan and sample some delicious food. We aim to plan more events like this as we continue to value and celebrate all of our staff equally so that everyone feels they belong.
- 9.2 A variety of campaigns were supported and events held each month to support employee mental, physical and social wellbeing 4 of our Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) took part in a 13 week Mental Health in the Workplace Bootcamp, comprising of online and face to face training sessions, followed by a final assessment. The course covered a wide range of matters from workplace culture, understanding the role of a MHFA, and listening and support techniques. Our mental health first aiders have now increased to 7.

10.0 Employee Awards

The council's employee award scheme has changed from quarterly to biannually. The scheme is connected to our core behaviours and values and rewards employees for excellent work or exceptional modelling of the council's values and behaviours. Details of the scheme will be added to the 'work with us' section so it can support recruitment as well as retention. The two award ceremonies will be linked with a summer and Christmas event to encourage staff participation

11.0 Market Forces Supplement

The council introduced market forces supplements in hard to recruit areas such as Planning and Legal services. The aim is to aid both recruitment and retention. The supplement will continue to be reviewed annually taking in to account salary survey data and whether there is still a need for the supplement

12.0 East Herts Together

We have re-established the East Herts Together staffing group, which is supported by the Transformation Board. Through this initiative, we aim to listen to our staff's feedback and incorporate their views and opinions in shaping our approach to supporting them. Our objective is to ensure staff feel valued, heard, and appreciated. This group will help us develop plans based on the feedback from the staff engagement survey which closed on 30 April 2025

13.0 Actions planned for 2026/27 to improve recruitment and retention

- 13.1 User guides have been created to assist managers with the recruitment process when using the ATS system. We are hopeful that this enables a smoother experience and eliminates any potential system errors.
- 13.2 In March 2026 the HR team refreshed the PDR forms and PDR process to better align with our Values and Behaviours and to create a more consistent, meaningful development conversation for everyone at East Herts Council. The previous multi-form approach has now been simplified into one single PDR form, making the process clearer, more efficient, and easier to complete.
- 13.3 We believe that this will enhance staff engagement and better facilitate training needs analysis to allow for the delivery of training interventions throughout the year that positively develop staff which leads to improved organisational performance.

- 13.4 As part of our ongoing approach to support staff retention and the wider wellbeing initiatives, the HR team have recently introduced the “The Snug”. The snug is a safe space for employees to have a private conversation outside of their service area to talk through why they are thinking of leaving and where possible help them find a ‘path’ that will help them stay and get further support if needed.
- 13.5 We will be reviewing the possibility of apprenticeships to support with the recruitment of the harder to fill roles and also reviewing apprenticeships that may offer an “on the job” approach to those current employees to gain higher or relevant qualifications to support a “grow your own” approach.
- 13.6 We have now fully evidenced and completed our application for silver status under the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme, building on our existing bronze award. This enhanced commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community strengthens our employer brand, helping us to attract a broader talent pool and improve retention through our focus on inclusivity and support. The Applicant tracking system has been updated to include screening questions.
- 13.7 The external East Hertfordshire Careers page has been redesigned to showcase an updated employee rewards section, alongside enhanced information on the Disability Confident scheme and the Bronze Armed Forces Covenant recognition. We will also shortly be publishing newly recorded employee testimonials to further strengthen the “Working for Us” section.

East Herts Council Report

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: Wednesday 3 June 2026

Report by: Health & Safety Adviser

Report title: Update on Quarter 4 Accident Reports and Annual Corporate Health and Safety Report for 2025/26

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – This report presents accident data for the period January 2026 to March 2026 (Quarter 4) and provides the Leadership Team with an overview of the Council's health and safety activity for 2025/26.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) **For the HR Committee to consider the Annual Corporate Health and Safety Report for 2025/26 and provide any comments.**

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The HR Committee's responsibilities, as set out in paragraph 8.2.5 of the council's Constitution, include acting as the Council's steering group to advise it in relation to the discharge of its responsibilities for health and safety.
- 1.2 To help enable the Committee members to fulfil these responsibilities, the Council's Health and Safety Advisor will update the Committee members on a quarterly basis with key statistics include details about accidents, contract compliance and premises management.
- 1.3 Since the shared Human Resources Service with Broxbourne Borough Council was implemented, the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser began reporting to the Assistant Director for Environmental Health and Corporate Health and Safety.

- 1.4 Although responsibility for the corporate health and safety function has moved out of the Human Resources team, there remain strong links between the two functions. This includes employee health and wellbeing, occupational health and identifying and supporting reasonable adjustments where specific needs are identified.
- 1.5 For these reasons, the teams will continue to work closely together.

2.0 Review of Accidents for January 2026 to March 2026 (Quarter 4)

- 2.1 As members will be aware from previous reports, the number of accidents arising from the Council’s work activities remains low. This reflects the nature of the work undertaken and the processes and procedures in place to minimise risk.
- 2.2 There were no reportable accidents under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) during Quarter 4.
- 2.3 One non-reportable work-related accident was recorded during Quarter 4. This accident did not occur as a result of any operational or procedural failure as a result no changes were made to Council processes.
- 2.4 Table 1 below provides a breakdown of accidents reported to the Council’s Health and Safety Adviser during Quarter 4. For context, the table also includes data from the previous quarter.

Table 1: Comparison of reported accidents

| Category of Accident | Number of reported accidents | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| | Quarter 4 | Previous Quarter |
| Reportable | 0 | 0 |
| Non-Reportable | 1 | 5 |

3.0 Annual Overview for 2025/26

3.1 The remainder of this report provides members with an overview of the Council's occupational health and safety activity for 2025/26.

4.0 Accidents

4.1 It was agreed at Human Resource Committee that accident totals in regard to the sites managed by Sport and Leisure Management (SLM) are no longer included in the report on the basis that this is a report on the operational safety management of East Herts Council.

4.2 Reportable accidents

There were no accidents involving members of staff during 2025/26 that were classified as reportable under RIDDOR.

4.3 Non-reportable accidents

There were no serious non reportable accidents involving members of staff during 2025/26.

4.4 Serious non reportable accidents are those that require a detailed investigation or result from a failure in process, procedure or equipment. While serious, they do not meet the threshold for reporting under RIDDOR.

4.5 Accident trends

The Health and Safety Adviser has undertaken work to encourage colleagues to report incidents and near miss events. This supports the identification of patterns and themes and enables the Council to implement appropriate measures and controls to protect employee health and wellbeing.

4.6 Analysis of the number and types of accidents over the past two years has not identified any abnormal trends or recurring patterns.

5.0 Contract compliance and monitoring

- 5.1 There have been no material breaches of health and safety regulations across the Council's contracted services during the reporting period. This includes:
- a) Grounds maintenance, parks and open spaces
 - b) Shared waste management service
 - c) Leisure services, swimming pools and gymnasiums
 - d) Car park enforcement.
- 5.2 A material breach occurs when a contract manager identifies that health and safety legislation has been breached and considers the matter sufficiently serious to notify the contractor in writing.
- 5.3 While the Council may outsource services through legal contracts, it cannot outsource its statutory duties or liability. To meet its duty of care, each contract is overseen by a contract manager who is responsible for ensuring services are delivered safely and that appropriate health and safety procedures are in place.
- 5.4 The Health and Safety Adviser works closely with service contract managers to strengthen reporting arrangements and ensure relevant health and safety information is monitored, reported and acted upon where required. This includes reporting to the Safety Committee, Leadership Team and Human Resources Committee.
- 5.5 **Grounds Maintenance, Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas** - There were no reported incidents or accidents relating to parks, open spaces or play areas during the reporting period. In addition, the team delivered two successful and incident free events in 2025 to promote the Council's Green Flag open spaces.
- 5.6 **Shared Waste Management and Street Cleansing** - Following the successful award of the waste contract to Veolia and the introduction of new waste management arrangements across the district, the transition has been successfully embedded. No health and safety processes have been compromised.

- 5.7 **Leisure Services** – The Council’s leisure facilities at Grange Paddocks and Hartham are operated by Sport and Leisure Management (SLM). These facilities continue to operate safely, with no reported health and safety concerns or breaches.
- 5.8 Fanshawe, Ward Freman and Leventhorpe leisure facilities have now been handed back to the County Council and no longer fall within these reporting arrangements.
- 5.9 **Parking Services** - The Council’s Health and Safety Advisor has been working closely with the Parking Service Development Officer on a number of key safety matters, including:
- a) Improving health and safety reporting through the use of online tools to support inspections and response management.
 - b) Responding to a reported structural issue at Jackson Square multi storey car park. A dividing wall to a small storage room was found to be unstable. The site was attended immediately and, with support from Veolia’s street cleansing team, safety barriers were installed once spaces had been vacated. Property Services arranged for a contractor to attend, remove the wall and rebuild it to a higher safety standard. The contractor confirmed the original wall had no structural ties and degraded concrete infill. The wall is now fully secure.
 - c) Developing an operational fire safety strategy for the Council’s three multi storey car parks.

6.0 Capital projects

- 6.1 There are currently no capital projects in progress to report on.

7.0 Premises and Site Safety Management

- 7.1 Quarterly inspections have been carried out jointly with the Council’s Health and Safety Advisor, Property Team and UNISON. These inspections identified no serious health and safety issues requiring further investigation at the following Council operated sites:

- a) Wallfields
- b) Navigation House
- c) Buntingford Depot
- d) Hillcrest and Rectory Hall Homeless Hostels

7.2 The Council's Health and Safety Adviser provided a safety assessment for the Director of Regeneration, Customer and Commercial Services in relation to Water Lane Hall, Bishop's Stortford. The assessment covered the health and safety measures required to support continued use of the building. This included fire safety management, asbestos arrangements, electrical safety, accessibility, sanitary facilities, legionella testing and the provision of first aid. The assessment also identified the structural works needed to ensure the building was safe, insurable and viable for use.

7.3 The Council's Health and Safety Adviser has also been working with the Assistant Director for Property Services and the Housing Team to inspect and assess the suitability of premises for use as temporary accommodation. This work ensures that properties meet Equality Act requirements and the relevant safety standards for temporary housing.

8.0 Mental Health First Aid

8.1 The Council's Health and Safety Adviser has led the coordination of the relaunch of the Council's Mental Health programme. This has included recruiting colleagues who are currently undertaking the Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Advocacy in the Workplace Level 2 Certificate. This is a government funded, nationally recognised and accredited qualification.

8.2 To support the Council's commitment to mental health first aid, a dedicated safe space has been established. Using existing resources, the room is equipped with a networked computer and telephone and provides a private space for mental health first aiders to support colleagues who may be experiencing crisis.

9.0 Safety Committee

- 9.1 The Safety Committee provides oversight and assurance on the Council's health and safety arrangements. It supports the Council in meeting its legal duties by monitoring performance, reviewing incidents and trends, and helps to ensure appropriate controls are in place to protect employees, service users and others affected by the Council's activities. The Committee also provides a forum for learning, continuous improvement and the sharing of good practice across services.
- 9.2 Contract Managers and Council tenants are invited to attend the Safety Committee to provide feedback on the health and safety performance of the Council's contracted services. This helps ensure that risks associated with outsourced activities are effectively managed, that contractors are meeting contractual and legal requirements, and that any emerging issues are identified and addressed promptly.
- 9.3 The Council's Safety Committee met twice during this reporting period, on:
 - a) 7 May 2025
 - b) 5 November 2025
- 9.4 Minutes from these meetings have been shared with the Leadership Team and Human Resources Committee.
- 9.5 At the time of drafting this report, the next meeting of the Safety Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 22 April 2026. Minutes from this meeting will be shared following the meeting.

10.0 Occupational Health Provision

- 10.1 In December 2025 the Council's Occupational Health Service provider informed the Human Resources service that it would be ceasing operations early 2026. The Health and Safety Adviser had launched a procurement exercise through the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) procurement framework but due

to the size of the organisation it did not attract interest. Working with the Human Resources Adviser to find a solution Stevenage borough Council were approached as they were in the process of launching a procurement exercise, it was agreed to undertake a joint procurement exercise, operating under two separate contracts. The Health and Safety Adviser created a duplicate set of contract documents, and the Human Resources Adviser opened a dialogue with a provider working together to put an interim arrangement into place to ensure a seamless continuity of service.

The joint procurement has now closed, 4 expressions of interest were received and have been evaluated, and a provider has been selected with the intention of awarding the contract in April 2026.

11.0 First Aid Provision

The health and Safety Adviser is responsible for ensuring that arrangements for the provision of first aid are in place to ensure adequate cover during the working week especially critical now that hybrid working arrangements are operating. A vital element of this was to arrange for the Caretakers to undertake the training as the role covers the full week and evening meetings providing a critical and vital important resource for the Council.

Further training is being planned for June 2026 to recruit first aiders and bolster the number and replace first aiders that have left or retired.

12.0 Employee Assistance Scheme

- 12.1 The Council also operates an Employee Assistance Scheme, which provides confidential counselling, advice and support to any employee affected by an incident, accident or near miss event.

13.0 Learning and Development

- 13.1 During 2026/27 the Council's Health and Safety Adviser will be exploring opportunities for shared training with the Assistant Director for Resources at Broxbourne Borough Council.
- 13.2 This work will initially focus on first aid provision, to ensure there is an appropriate level of first aid cover throughout the working week.
- 13.3 Additional training under consideration includes:
 - a) Management health and safety responsibilities
 - b) Fire marshal training
 - c) Review and redesign of e-learning modules on Skillgate

14.0 Risks

- 14.1 At this time, there are no risks that the Council's Health and Safety Adviser wishes to bring to the attention of the members of Human Resources Committee.

15.0 Implications/Consultations

- 15.1 Community Safety
 - a) None arising directly from this report. However, 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.
- 15.2 Data Protection
 - a) None arising directly from this report.
- 15.3 Equalities
 - a) None arising directly from this report. 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 and comply with the Equalities Act.
- 15.4 Environmental Sustainability

a) None arising directly from this report.

15.5 Financial

a) None arising directly from this report.

15.6 Health and Safety

a) Yes. Health and Safety practice, reporting and monitoring is in place to comply with legal requirements, and the report has been reviewed by Leadership Team which includes the Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

15.7 Human Resources

a) None arising directly from this report.

15.8 Human Rights

a) None arising directly from this report.

15.9 Legal

a) None arising directly from this report.

15.10 Specific Wards

a) Not applicable.

16.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

16.1 Background Information:

a) None

16.2 Appendices

a) None

Contact Member

Councillor Joseph Dumont, Executive Member for Corporate Services

joseph.dumont@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Sara Saunders, Director for Place

Contact Tel. No. 01992 531656

sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Peter Dickinson, Health and Safety Advisor

peter.dickinson@eastherts.gov.uk

Agenda Item 11

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 3 June 2026

Report by: Senior Shared HR Business Partner

Report title: Human Resources Quarter 4 Statistics

Ward(s) affected: None

Summary

- For the HR Committee to consider the Human Resources Management Report for Quarter 4 which covers January - March 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

A. To consider the Human Resources Management report for Quarter 4 (January – March 2026) and provide any comments to the Human Resources and Organisational Development Adviser regarding the content or formatting of the report.

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 The HR Committee are invited to consider the Human Resources (HR) Management report for Quarter 4 (January – March 2026)

2.0 Background

2.1 Revised format following recommendations of Human Resources Committee held in February 2026.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 For the HR Committee to consider the quarterly statistics on:

Sickness Recruitment
Vacant Posts and Retention
Learning and Development
Health and Safety

4.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

None

Data Protection

None

Equalities

The data shows that East Herts Council employs a diverse workforce with some areas of overrepresentation.

Environmental Sustainability

None

Financial

None

Health and Safety

Health and Safety statistics and safety committee minutes provided.

Human Resources

None

Human Rights

None

Legal

None

Specific Wards

None

5.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

5.1 Human Resources Committee Report for Q4 2026

5.2 Minutes – Safety Committee

Contact Member

Councillor Joseph Dumont, Executive Members for Corporate Services.

joseph.dumont@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Sara Saunders, Director for Place, Tel: 01992 531656.

sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Marie Funicello, Human Resources and Organisational Development

Adviser. Tel: 01992 531633. marie.funicello@eastherts.gov.uk

HR Committee Report for Q4 2026

Note: As of 31 March 2026, East Herts Council employed 263.92 FTE and had a headcount of 293.

1.0 Sickness Absence

At the end of Quarter 4 (Q4), the total number of sickness days taken was 724.10 full time equivalent (FTE) days. Of these, 246.56 FTE days (34%) were due to short term sickness, and 477.54 FTE days (66%) were due to long term sickness. The percentage of time lost due to short term sickness is 4.4% and the percentage of time lost due to long term sickness is 8.5% which equates to a total percentage lost time of 12.9%.

In Q4, the number of FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 0.92 days.

Short term sickness

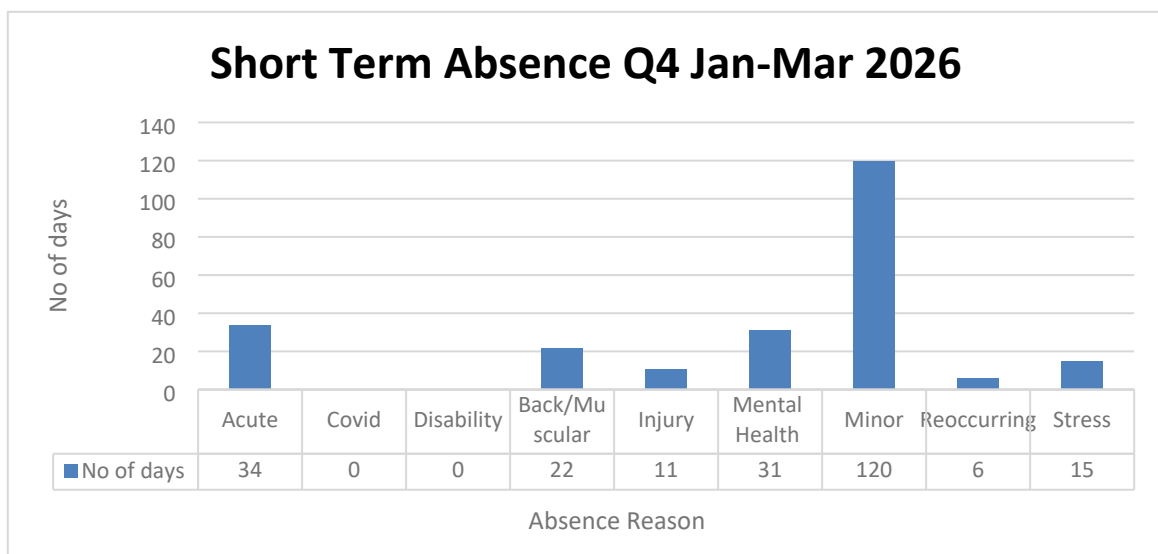
For this report, and in line with the Sickness Absence Policy metrics, short-term sickness absence is defined as any period of absence lasting less than four weeks.

In Q4, 89 employees had short-term sickness absence (an increase from 75 employees in Q3). This represents 30% of the total headcount. These absences totalled 246.56 FTE days.

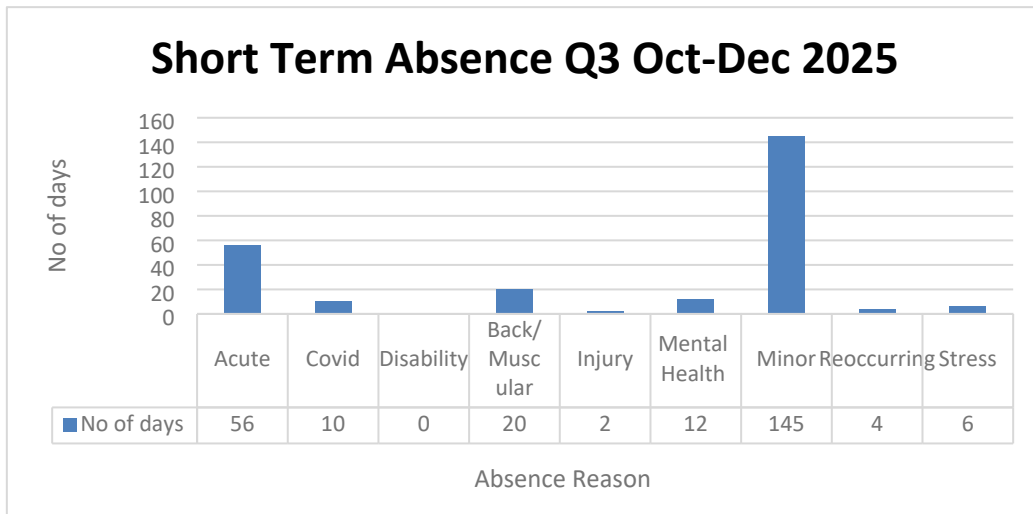
In Q4, the average number of short-term sickness absence days was 0.98 FTE days per FTE.

Short-term absences that meet the trigger points are managed under the Sickness Absence Policy.

The graph below highlights the number of days recorded by absence reason for Q4:



Comparison data for Q3:



Whilst there has been a decline in the recording of minor illness episodes across the workforce, instances of mental health-related absence and stress, alongside acute conditions, have increased. In response, a new repurposed space has been created to support Mental Health First Aiders (called the ‘Snug’), and the number of trained Mental Health First Aiders has now increased to seven.

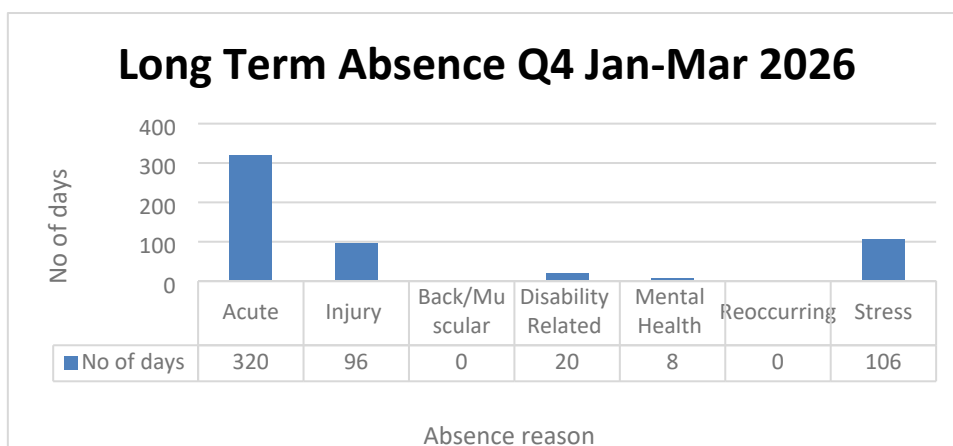
Long term sickness

For this report, and in line with the Sickness Absence Policy metrics, long-term sickness absence is defined as any period of absence in excess of 4 weeks / 28 consecutive calendar days.

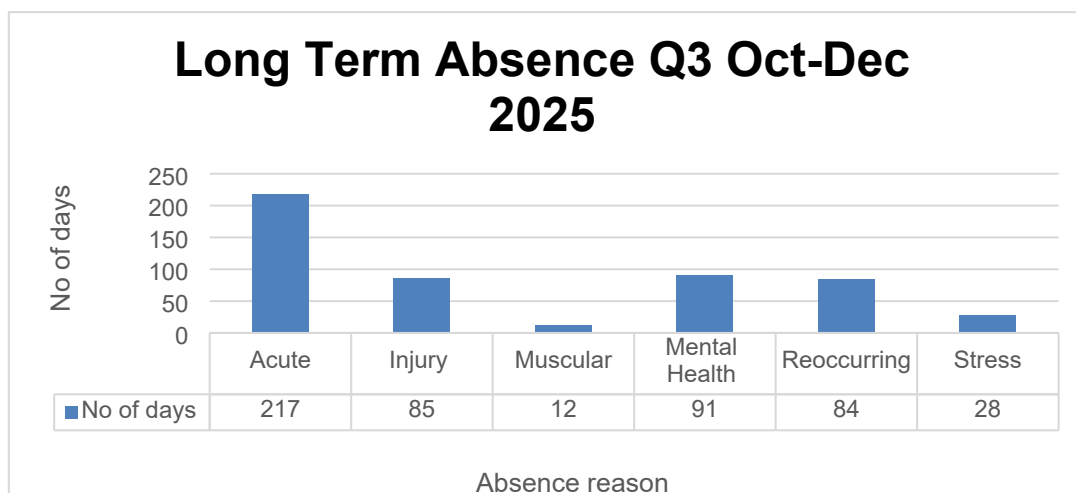
In Q4, 15 employees had long term absence (a decrease from 17 employees in Q3). This represents 5.11% of the total headcount. These absences totalled 477.54 FTE days.

In Q4, the number of long-term FTE days absent per FTE was an average of 0.6 days.

The graph below highlights the number of days recorded by absence reasons for Q4:



Comparison: Data for Q3



All long-term sickness absence is being actively managed, with HR staff supporting both the employee and manager to facilitate a return to work. This process is supported by our Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme, which provide guidance and recommendations to help us make appropriate workplace adjustments.

2.0 Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment

We currently advertise vacancies through Jobs Go Public, LinkedIn, Web Recruit (which includes job boards such as Indeed, CV Library, Total Jobs and Reed), and the East Herts Careers page for both internal and external candidates. In Quarter 4, we expanded our recruitment channels by creating a profile on Forces Families Jobs to engage with a wider audience within the armed forces community.

There has been success with 5 new starters in Q4:

- 1 in Place
- 1 in Legal. Policy & Governance
- 2 in Regeneration, Customer and Commercial
- 1 in Human Resources

However, East Herts continues to face challenges in recruiting for hard-to-fill roles, particularly within Planning and Environmental Health.

Vacant Posts

For clarity, a vacant post is defined as any role that remains on the financial establishment list with hours still attributed to it. In some cases, these remaining hours may be minimal and therefore do not constitute a recruitable position. In certain cases, these hours are being utilised to fund shared services such as HR and Procurement.

As of 31 March 2026, it is financially reported there are 63 vacant posts (56.69 FTE posts) unfilled for a variety of reasons. This represents 17.6% of overall posts on the establishment list.

The 63 vacancies have been categorised below:

| Category | Description | Number of Vacant Posts Q3 | Number of Vacant Posts Q4 |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Being held for budget savings | The post is intentionally not being filled so that the associated salary costs contribute to agreed budget savings. | 3 | 4 |
| Budget being used in a different way | Funding for the post is still in use but has been temporarily redirected (e.g., increased hours for another team member or short-term service needs). | 18 | 14 |
| Being held pending a service review | The post is not being recruited to because the service structure or staffing requirements are under review and future needs are yet to be confirmed. | 8 | 4 |
| In the process of being recruited to | Recruitment activity is underway (e.g. Job proposal, advertising, shortlisting, interviewing) but the post is not yet filled. | 21 | 20 |
| Recruitment successful | A candidate has been appointed and accepted the offer, but they have not yet started. | 5 | 18 |
| Externally Funded | Grant based | - | 3 |
| | Total | 55 | 63 |

The table highlights the positive outcomes of our enhanced recruitment efforts, showing an increase in **successful appointments from 5 roles in Q3 to 18 roles in Q4**. It also demonstrates that overall vacant post levels have remained balanced as opposite to increasing further this quarter. The net increase of eight posts is explained by the identification of three externally funded roles, which do not represent true vacancies as they are staffed, and a net reduction of five posts when accounting for 10 leavers and 5 starters.

To ensure East Hertfordshire District Council achieves effective delivery of statutory services, legally required or hard-to-recruit posts are sometimes covered on a short-term basis through agency or contractor support, or through acting-up arrangements, which also offer valuable staff development opportunities.

Retention – Turnover

There were 10 leavers in Q4 giving a turnover rate for the quarter of 3.4%. The turnover rate predicted for the annual period 2025/26 is 14.9%. This is higher than our target of 14% and the national average across all sectors of 15%.

Reasons for leaving in Q4 included: To achieve promotion, retirement, changes in career, disciplinary and for personal reasons.

The leavers were in the following teams:

- 3 in Place
- 1 in Communities
- 1 in Regeneration, Customer and Commercial
- 3 in Legal, Policy and Governance
- 2 in Finance, Risk and Performance

According to the latest Local Government Workforce Data (November 2025), 94% of councils in England reported recruitment and retention difficulties, as highlighted in the LGA Workforce Strategy Survey 2024.

Recruitment and retention related activity

We have now fully evidenced and completed our application for silver status under the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme, building on our existing bronze award. This enhanced commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community strengthens our employer brand, helping us to attract a broader talent pool and improve retention through our focus on inclusivity and support. The Applicant tracking system has been updated to include screening questions.

The external East Hertfordshire Careers page has been redesigned to showcase an updated employee rewards section, alongside enhanced information on the Disability Confident scheme and the Bronze Armed Forces Covenant recognition. We will also shortly be publishing newly recorded employee testimonials to further strengthen the “Working for Us” section.

Recruitment and retention related activity planned for Quarter 1 2026/27

- Finalise and publish the new employee testimonials.
- Create and publish best-practice guidance for recruiting managers, outlining the reasonable adjustments that can be offered at interview and how applications should be reviewed in line with our commitments under the Disability Confident Scheme and the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme, to ensure fair, inclusive selection and consistent best practice.

3.0 Learning and Development

The learning needs in our organisation is delivered by e-learning, one to one training or group-based learning remotely or in person.

HR is responsible for the corporate training budget, including professional training. We have created a training needs analysis which highlights Statutory learning, CPD requirements and skill/knowledge development which has been used to scope the annual training plan.

We continue to operate mandatory e-learning programmes listed below as well as other training events across the organisation:

- Data Protection
- Fire Safety
- Office Etiquette and Email Management
- Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- The Importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Understanding the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

In Q4,

Two employees from the Democratic & Member Services and Licensing Team have successfully joined the SDP 2026 Programme. The programme forms part of the District Council's Network development offer and is designed to support employee growth, skills development and cross-organisational collaboration. It brings together delegates from across the Council to strengthen leadership capability, encourage knowledge sharing and build a strong professional network. Through participation, delegates are supported to enhance their skills, broaden their organisational understanding and contribute more effectively to service delivery and continuous improvement across the Council.

A new staff group, East Herts Unity (EHU), has been established to support staff mental health and wellbeing, and to promote diversity, equality, inclusion and representation across the organisation. The group aims to bring colleagues together, ensure all voices are heard, and help every employee feel welcomed and represented at East Herts Council. EHU staff volunteers hosted two internal community events designed to encourage interaction, learning and connection among colleagues.

- January Blues was a "beat the blues" coffee morning that gave colleagues the opportunity to meet and chat with people they would not usually interact with across the office. The meeting aim was for staff to share their understanding of Equality, diversity and inclusion and how it can be applied and achieved in a workplace and everyday life.
- Eid celebration: This event enabled staff to share food and learn about the significance of Eid and how it is celebrated.

A further PREVENT training session was delivered on 21 January at BEAM, primarily for BEAM staff and volunteers, with EHDC colleagues who missed the November session encouraged to attend. 47 people participated, including 5 EHDC staff, with most attendees from external partner agencies. The session covered local risks, safeguarding responsibilities, and how to identify and report concerns linked to radicalisation, supporting staff confidence in recognising and responding to vulnerabilities.

A MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) briefing session was delivered by HCC on 2 February in the Council Chamber. The session was primarily aimed at partner agencies, with relevant EHDC colleagues invited to attend. Representatives from

Community Safety and Housing Options were present. Attendance totalled approximately 36 external partner agency representatives, with five EHDC staff members in attendance.

A total of 23 employees attended the 'Planning for Retirement' webinar delivered by Affinity Connect on 4 March 2026. The session ran via Microsoft Teams. Affinity Connect is a public-sector financial education provider, specialising in retirement and pension guidance.

There were 97 active users recorded on SEEDL during Q4, 50 of whom were from East Herts employees. Between January and March 2026, 20 courses were completed. SEEDL is an online learning platform offering free training courses for all East Herts residents and employees, including council staff.

In March 2026, members of the HR Team met with one of the Councillors to review the mandatory training requirements for members. The discussions focused on the completion of mandatory training by members and the online platform Skillgate. One of the main outcomes from this meeting was to create a user guide for the platform to aid members with navigating the system and being able to view their personal dashboard to identify any gaps in mandatory training.

Discussions also took place about the mandatory training modules, in particular the Safeguarding module. It was recognised that some of the members will ordinarily undertake Safeguarding Training within their workplace and there is a possibility of this training being duplicated. However, it was acknowledged that the Safeguarding module cannot be changed or removed for members due to the system reflecting all mandatory modules for East Herts employees. It was also acknowledged that Safeguarding training requirements may differ from East Herts to individual workplaces.

Consideration was given to the expiry dates of mandatory training which is currently yearly and consistent with all East Herts employees. It was explained that there are no plans to extend the expiry dates beyond one year at present, but this could be considered in the future.

Learning and Development planned for the next quarter:

- Continue to review and update the mandatory training modules
- Scheduled training provided by the new Occupation Health Provider for managers that need to refer an employee

4.0 Health and Safety

Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

Background Information

Accidents are classified into two categories:

Non-Reportable Accidents

These are minor accidents such as cuts, minor contact injuries e.g., walking into the corner of a desk etc, slips, trips. Staff are encouraged to report these and can use the online self-service portal My View or completing an accident report from the accident report pad. These are designated form BI510 accidents.

East Herts Council operates predominately back-office functions in a low-risk environment, the determination of low risk is based on the Health and Safety Executives definition, therefore, a high rate of accidents is not expected to occur.

Reportable Accidents

The **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013**, often known by the acronym **RIDDOR**, is a 2013 statutory instrument of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It regulates the statutory obligation to report deaths, injuries, diseases and "dangerous occurrences".

Types of incidents that are reportable under RIDDOR?

- accidents resulting in the death of any person.
- accidents resulting in an absence from work over 7 days (excluding the day of the accident) e.g., degloving injury.
- non-fatal accidents requiring hospital treatment to non-workers. E.g., anyone not employed by the council.
- dangerous occurrences e.g., collapse, overturning or failure of any load-creating part of lifting equipment, failure of any closed vessel or associated pipework forming part of pressure systems, collapse of scaffold this is not a definitive list.
- Reportable diseases under RIDDOR are listed in regulations 8 and 9 of the regulations. Types of occupational diseases include occupational dermatitis, hand-arm vibration syndrome, occupational cancer etc.

Any reportable accident, incident or near miss arising from construction work e.g., building sites, new builds, demolition work or developments fall under the purview of the Health and Safety Executive.

Incidents and Near Miss Events

An incident is a broader term for any event, planned or unplanned, positive, or negative, that may or may not result in harm, damage, or injury. In essence, an accident is a specific type of incident that leads to a negative outcome.

Examples of incidents include, but are not limited to the effects of abusive, threatening behaviours, receiving obscene, aggressive, or threatening phone calls, correspondence, effects on the health of an individual arising from illness, health exacerbated by environmental factors e.g. excessive heat, air quality, extremes of temperature.

Colleagues are encouraged to report incidents and near misses in order to identify patterns and themes that allow the organisation to implement measures and controls to protect employee health and wellbeing. A new table has been introduced to report the number of Incident and Near Miss events occurring.

The Council also has the Employee Assistance scheme that offers confidential counselling, advice and support for any person affected by an incident, accident or near miss event.

Further support will also be available through the re-launched Mental Health First Aid provision.

Work Related Accidents

| | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target 25/26 |
|---|----------|----------|--------------|
| H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (Not reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013) | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| H&S Employee Work Related Accidents (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Work Related Incidents, Near Misses

| | Q3 25/26 | Q4 25/26 | Target 25/26 |
|--|----------|----------|--------------|
| H&S Employee Work Related Incidents (Not reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013) | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| H&S Employee Work Related Incidents (Reportable to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| H&S Employee Work Related Near Miss Events | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Contract Management and Responsibility

The Council have outsourced a number of high-level services from waste collection and recycling, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and leisure services and equipment contractors for capital projects.

However, health and safety responsibilities cannot be passed from one party to another by a contract. If something goes wrong the Council can and will be held accountable by the HSE and the Courts.

The Council therefore ensures that contractors have appropriate health and safety policies in place, monitor contractor performance and safety standards. In order to ensure that services are delivered safely the officers with contract oversight:

- Convene meetings to review performance.
- Monitor complaints received and undertake investigations.
- Undertake onsite inspections and reviews.

Heads of Service with responsibility for these functions are responsible for ensuring that effective management controls are implemented.

Minutes of Safety Committee
Wednesday 14th January 2026
Meeting Room 1.11 / Microsoft Teams

Present: EHDC Peter Dickinson (PD), Jackie Bruce (JB), Geoff Hayden (GH), Dominique Kingsbury (DK), Claire Cornell (CC), Steve Sargent (SS), Emily Tickridge (ET)

Present:

Apologies: Paul Thomas-Jones (PTJ), John Earley (JE), Ian Sharratt (IS), Rowan Perrin (RP), Laura Lightfoot (LL), Jeanette Lowden (JL), Ben Wood (BW)

Introductions / Announcements:

None

1.0 Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 05th November 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

Action: No action required.

2.0 Matters Arising from the minutes.

Action Updates

Ventilation Ground Floor - West

(GH) will continue to monitor the CO2 readings and will arrange for the Caretakers to carry out checks at random periods to record readings. Other options are also being considered.

Kibes Lane Visit

S106 funding will not cover the costs for proposed improvements but will contribute to improving the appearance of the car park. Parking Services team will continue monitoring and inspection.

Gascoyne Way Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP)

(DK) requested a structural survey of Gascoyne Way (MSCP). (DK) was advised to prepare a business case and submit this to (BW), Director of Regeneration, Customer and Commercial Services.

(GH) advised Committee that a capital bid for work was submitted but was not approved. (GH) also advised that some of the issues such as water ingress are inevitable due to the design of the structure and there is no evidence of structural deterioration or defect.

A survey may need to be commissioned to check load bearing if there are plans to increase the number of EV charging points to account for the increased size and weight of vehicles and EV charging points.

Action: (DK) to prepare report for the Director of Regeneration, Customer and Commercial Services outlining the request for a structural survey.

Car Park Inspection Review

(GH) advised that repair budgets are now overspent and there are no further finances until the new financial year.

(DK) to raise critical issues or budget shortfalls at the monthly asset management meeting.

(PD) advised Committee that the car park inspection report forms are now being uploaded to a Teams channel, this will allow live updating and reduce the volume of emails allowing the Parking Team to monitor progress and actions.

3.0 Regulatory and Legislative Changes

(PD) reported that the Public Office (Accountability) Bill, widely known as the **Hillsborough Law**, is currently in the process of passing through the Commons.

The proposed UK legislation intended to enforce a legal duty of candour on public authorities and officials seeks to prevent cover-ups, ensure transparency during inquiries, and provide "parity of representation" for bereaved families and aims to prevent future injustices like the 1989 disaster.

The law represents a direct response to the long, 30-year fight for truth by the families of the 97 victims of the Hillsborough disaster, who faced systematic misinformation.

As of 19 January 2026, the government announced it would delay the Commons report stage and third reading of the bill again so that further amendments could be made to “get the right balance between transparency and national security.”

Action: No action required

4.0 High Oak

No update received.

Action: No action required.

5.0 Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

There were 4 minor accidents reported between 05th November 2025 and 13th January 2026 these were not related to any system or procedural failure, and no further action was required.

Action: None

5.0 Health and Safety Inspections and Contract Compliance

5.1 Shared Waste Service – Buntingford Depot

No report received

Action: No action required.

5.2 Parks, Open Spaces and Play Areas

(IS) and (RP) unable to attend. (ET) advised (PD) that two projects are being planned requiring advice.

Action: (RP) to provide details for (PD)

6.0 Parking Services

No health and safety concerns or issues reported.

Action:

None

7.0 Capital Project updates/EHC Contracts - Health & Safety Compliance and Management

Swimming Pools and Gyms – Sport and Leisure Management (SLM)

(ET) reported that there are no operational or safety related matters or concerns with Grange Paddocks and Hartham Pools and Gyms.

Action: None

BEAM Hertford

(SS) Advised the Committee that there were no safety issues to report and that all operational procedures, risk assessments and training plans were being reviewed and updated.

Action:

(SS / LL) to send (PD) all revised and updated Risk Assessments on completion.

Old River Lane, Bishop's Stortford & Charringtons House

(BW) advised Committee that a planning application has been submitted by CityHeart in respect to the development of the site.

Glendale – Grounds Maintenance

No health and safety issues or concerns reported.

Action: No action required.

8.0 Property – Premise's Maintenance and Repairs

(JE) No safety issues or concerns to report.

Action: No action required.

9.0 Facilities Management

(GH) Advised that there were no facilities related health and safety issues.

Action: No action required.

10.0 Insurance

(CC) reported 1 claim received in respect to a damage to a vehicle. Due to the current position of the claim no details can be disclosed.

(CC) advised Committee that any issues of vandalism can be claimed through the Councils insurance arrangements if the cost of repair is below £5000.00 and supported by a Police criminal reference number.

Action: Contact (CC) for advice and guidance if unsure if reported damage from vandalism can be claimed.

11.0 List of Issues

11.1 Employee side (UNISON)

No issues reported.

Action: No action required.

11.2. Management side

(PD) reminded Committee that EHC has a statutory duty to ensure that risk assessments are carried out for all tasks and activities being undertaken or when any new operational procedure or process are being introduced e.g. changes to building functionality, operational working practices and from these Safe Systems of Work (SSoW) are produced.

(PD) also advised the Committee that a review of the Safety Policy will be undertaken in conjunction with the support of UNISON.

Action: (PD/PT-J) Update Committee

12.0 Health and Safety Training

(PD) advised Committee that health and safety training modules on Skillgate are currently being reviewed and updated.

Action: Update Committee on progress.

13.0 AOB

None

Meeting ended: 12.00pm

Date of Next Meeting: 22 April 2026

Deadline for Agenda Items: 31 March 2026

Time: 10.00am

Location: Meeting Room 1.11

Microsoft Teams: **Meeting ID:** 344 830 829 473 7

Passcode: A2D5e8Jo

Please submit any amendments, corrections, clarifications by **28 February 2026**

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: Wednesday 3rd June 2026

Report by: Laura Smith, Senior Shared HR Business Partner

Report title: Redundancy Alignment

Ward(s) affected: None

Summary – East Herts District Council acknowledge that the current redundancy terms as stipulated in the council’s redundancy policy, specifically the redundancy payment multiplier are notably less favourable than those of many neighbouring local authorities across Hertfordshire. This report went before Local Joint Panel on 19th May 2026 and was recommended for approval by the HR Committee .

RECOMMENDATION FOR HR COMMITTEE

- a) **Recommend that the HR Committee approve the change to the redundancy multiplier from 2 to 2.2 as outlined in the report.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

1.1 That the redundancy multiplier is aligned with the majority of the neighbouring local authorities in Hertfordshire.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Council’s current redundancy terms, specifically the payment multiplier, is currently less favourable than those offered by many neighbouring local authorities across Hertfordshire. This disparity has become increasingly visible as councils benchmark their employment policies in preparation for future structural changes due to Local Government Re-organisation.

2.2 When calculating redundancy payments, actual weekly pay is used alongside a sliding scale of age (see Appendix 1). Other

authorities apply a multiplier to the actual weekly pay in the calculation.

2.3 With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, there is a realistic possibility that workforce reductions may be required as part of any transition to new operating models. In this context, it is timely and prudent to review the Council’s redundancy terms to ensure that they are fair, competitive and aligned with other Hertfordshire local authorities and to ensure that our employees would not be disadvantaged.

2.4 All authorities in Hertfordshire were contacted for benchmarking. The following table compares the Council’s position with those authorities who responded to the request.

| Authority | Multiplier used |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Stevenage | 2.5 |
| Broxbourne | 2.2 |
| Hertsmere | 2.2 |
| Dacorum | (Pre 2017) 2 (Post 2017) 1.7 |
| East Herts | 2 |
| St Albans | 2.2 |
| Three Rivers | 2.2 |
| Watford | 2.2 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 2.2 |
| North Herts DC | 2 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Hertfordshire County Council | Age |
| | <21 0.5 |
| | <40 1 |
| | >40 1.5 |

Based on the information shown above, it is recommended that East Herts increases its redundancy multiplier from 2 to 2.2, bringing it into align with the majority of Hertfordshire councils

NB- Broxbourne Council has recently increased their multiplier from 0 to 2.2.

2.5 East Herts and Broxbourne council staff will be transferred to the same new unitary council. Work has already begun to align policies.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 This proposed alignment will ensure that East Herts employees are treated fairly and receive the same compensation as the majority of other Hertfordshire council employees.

4.0 Options

4.1 Agree the proposed alignment from 2 to 2.2 **Recommended**

4.2 To remain as 2 **Not recommended**

5.0 Risks

5.1 Not aligning with other councils could leave East Herts at risk of staff being treated less favourably and

5.2 Employees could move to another council where the multiplier is more favourable

6.0 Implications/Consultations

None

Community Safety

None

Data Protection

None

Equalities

By making the outlined change to the East Hert's redundancy policy it will ensure that staff at East Herts are not treated any less favourably with regards to redundancy payments.

Environmental Sustainability

None

Financial

Yes - The change outlined to the redundancy policy has the potential to increase staffing costs at the Council. However, no redundancies are currently planned at East Herts. The Council has a put aside a reserve to fund any redundancies that occur in advance of vesting day (1/4/28). Any redundancies that occur after this date will be the responsibility of the newly formed unitary authority to where East Herts staff have transferred to. Therefore, the financial risk of this implementation is low.

Health and Safety

None

Human Resources

Yes – The Human Resources team will make updates to the current redundancy policy to reflect the agreed changes.

Human Rights

None

Legal

None

Specific Wards

None

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix 1 – Multiplier table

7.2 Appendix 2 – Redundancy Policy

Contact Member

Joseph Dumont

joe.dumont@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Sara Saunders

Director of Place

sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Laura Smith

Senior Shared HR Business Partner

Laura.smith@eastherts.gov.uk

Appendix 1

| Age | Service (Years) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | |
| 17* | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | 1 | 1½ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | 1 | 1½ | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | 1 | 1½ | 2 | 2½ | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | 1 | 1½ | 2 | 2½ | 3 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | 1 | 1½ | 2 | 2½ | 3 | 3½ | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | 1½ | 2 | 2½ | 3 | 3½ | 4 | 4½ | - | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | 2 | 2½ | 3 | 3½ | 4 | 4½ | 5 | 5½ | - | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | 2 | 3 | 3½ | 4 | 4½ | 5 | 5½ | 6 | 6½ | - | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4½ | 5 | 5½ | 6 | 6½ | 7 | 7½ | - | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5½ | 6 | 6½ | 7 | 7½ | 8 | 8½ | - | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6½ | 7 | 7½ | 8 | 8½ | 9 | 9½ | - | | | | | | | |
| 29 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 7½ | 8 | 8½ | 9 | 9½ | 10 | 10½ | - | | | | | | |
| 30 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8½ | 9 | 9½ | 10 | 10½ | 11 | 11½ | - | | | | | |
| 31 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9½ | 10 | 10½ | 11 | 11½ | 12 | 12½ | - | | | | |
| 32 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 10½ | 11 | 11½ | 12 | 12½ | 13 | 13½ | - | | | |
| 33 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 11½ | 12 | 12½ | 13 | 13½ | 14 | 14½ | - | | |
| 34 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 12½ | 13 | 13½ | 14 | 14½ | 15 | 15½ | - | |
| 35 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 13½ | 14 | 14½ | 15 | 15½ | 16 | 16½ | |
| 36 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 14½ | 15 | 15½ | 16 | 16½ | 17 | |
| 37 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 15½ | 16 | 16½ | 17 | 17½ | |
| 38 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 16½ | 17 | 17½ | 18 | |
| 39 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17½ | 18 | 18½ | |
| 40 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 18½ | 19 | |
| 41 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 19½ | |
| 42 | 2½ | 3½ | 4½ | 5½ | 6½ | 7½ | 8½ | 9½ | 10½ | 11½ | 12½ | 13½ | 14½ | 15½ | 16½ | 17½ | 18½ | 19½ | 20½ | |
| 43 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | |
| 44 | 3 | 4½ | 5½ | 6½ | 7½ | 8½ | 9½ | 10½ | 11½ | 12½ | 13½ | 14½ | 15½ | 16½ | 17½ | 18½ | 19½ | 20½ | 21½ | |
| 45 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | |
| 46 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 8½ | 9½ | 10½ | 11½ | 12½ | 13½ | 14½ | 15½ | 16½ | 17½ | 18½ | 19½ | 20½ | 21½ | 22½ | |
| 47 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | |
| 48 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 11½ | 12½ | 13½ | 14½ | 15½ | 16½ | 17½ | 18½ | 19½ | 20½ | 21½ | 22½ | 23½ | |
| 49 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | |
| 50 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 14½ | 15½ | 16½ | 17½ | 18½ | 19½ | 20½ | 21½ | 22½ | 23½ | 24½ | |
| 51 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | |
| 52 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 17½ | 18½ | 19½ | 20½ | 21½ | 22½ | 23½ | 24½ | 25½ | |
| 53 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | |
| 54 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 20½ | 21½ | 22½ | 23½ | 24½ | 25½ | 26½ | |
| 55 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | |
| 56 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 21 | 22½ | 23½ | 24½ | 25½ | 26½ | 27½ | |
| 57 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 21 | 22½ | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | |
| 58 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 21 | 22½ | 24 | 25½ | 26½ | 27½ | 28½ | |
| 59 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 21 | 22½ | 24 | 25½ | 27 | 28 | 29 | |
| 60 | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 21 | 22½ | 24 | 25½ | 27 | 28½ | 29½ | |
| 61+ | 3 | 4½ | 6 | 7½ | 9 | 10½ | 12 | 13½ | 15 | 16½ | 18 | 19½ | 21 | 22½ | 24 | 25½ | 27 | 28½ | 30 | |



East Herts Council

Redundancy Policy

Policy Statement

**Policy Statement 6 (Issue No 4)
July 2012 (updated April 2024)
¹May 2026**

¹ Minor updates made to reflect pay and terms and conditions changes agreed through collective bargaining in March 2019, this policy applies to situations which arise from 1 April 2019 onwards.

² Updated in April 2024 to reintroduce 10.9

³ Updated in May 2026 to reflect new redundancy multiplier 10.4 and remove “Head of Service” to Director.

Contents

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 1.0 | PURPOSE..... | 3 |
| 2.0 | PRINCIPLES..... | 3 |
| 3.0 | AN OVERVIEW..... | 4 |
| 4.0 | MEASURES TO REDUCE COMPULSORY REDUNDANCIES | 5 |
| 5.0 | EXPLORING OPTIONS | 6 |
| 6.0 | COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION | 6 |
| 7.0 | OBTAINING FORMAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS | 8 |
| 8.0 | VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY | 9 |
| 9.0 | APPOINTING EMPLOYEES TO THE NEW STRUCTURE AND SELECTION FOR REDUNDANCY | 10 |
| 10.0 | REDUNDANCY PAYMENT CALCULATION | 10 |
| 11.0 | APPEALS | 12 |
| 12.0 | SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE | 12 |
| 13.0 | NOTICE PERIODS | 13 |
| 14.0 | REDEPLOYMENT | 13 |
| 15.0 | COUNTER NOTICE..... | 13 |
| 16.0 | TRIAL PERIOD..... | 14 |
| 17.0 | TIME OFF TO LOOK FOR NEW WORK OR FOR TRAINING | 14 |
| 18.0 | POLICY REVIEW AND AMENDMENT | 15 |

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Council, in consultation with the Trade Unions, will seek to avoid and minimise the effect of staff changes by endeavouring to find suitable alternative employment using the Council's Redeployment Procedures. Wherever reduction in the number of employees will be achieved through natural wastage.
- 1.2 Where compulsory redundancy is unavoidable the Council will handle the redundancy process in a fair, consistent and sympathetic manner in accordance with the Council's policy, under the requirements of the law.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees of the Council (except Chief Officer level and above) and considers relevant employment legislation, ACAS guidance, and best practice.
- 1.4 The policy will not apply where an employee's services are terminated in the following situations:
- At the end of a pre-determined limited or fixed term contract where the employee has less than two years continuous employment.
 - Retirement.
 - Contravention of an enactment (e.g. where an employee who requires a work permit does not have one).

2.0 Principles

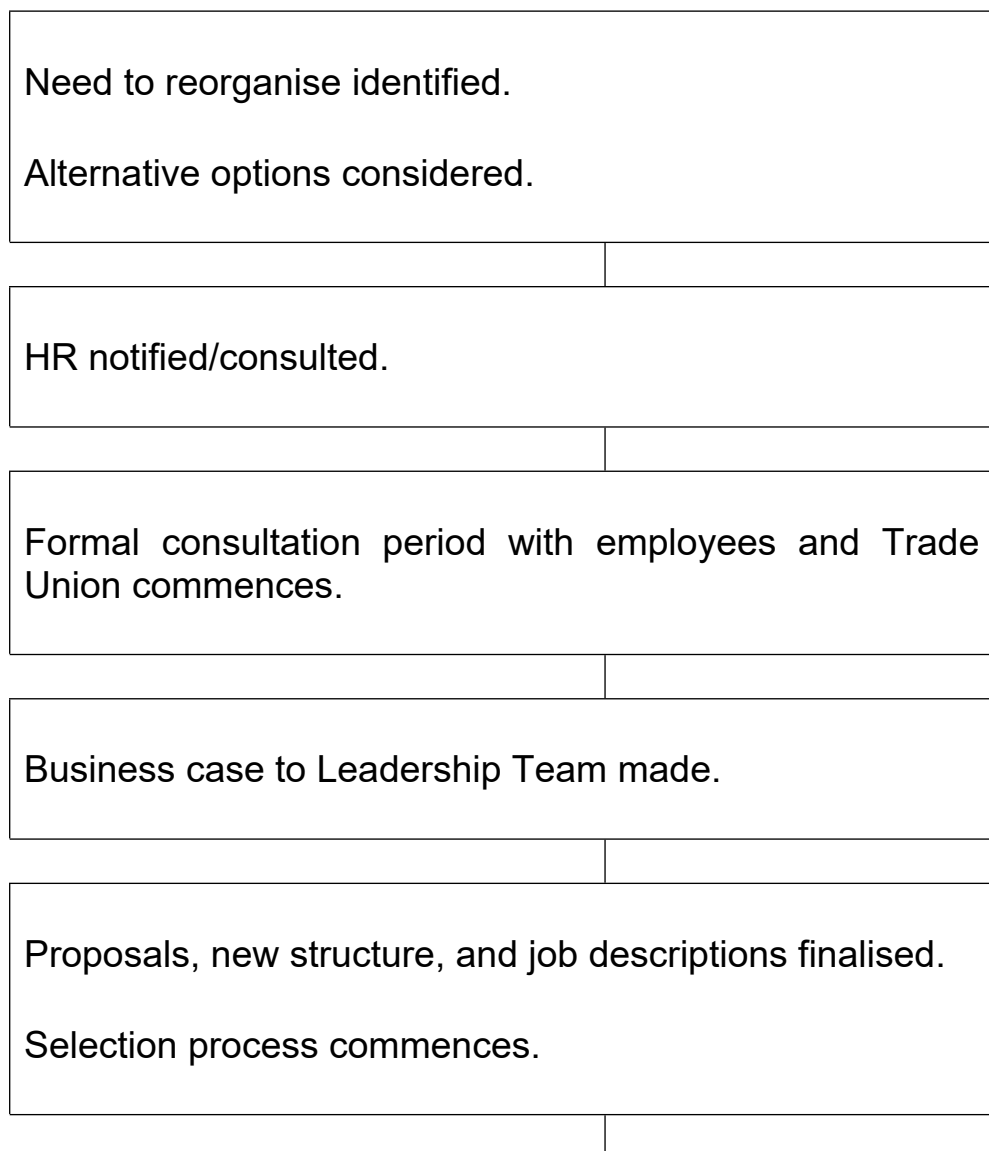
- 2.1 The following principles underpin how organisational change will be implemented. The Council will:
- 2.1.1 Strive to avoid redundancies where possible and will always consider alternative options to achieve its objectives.
- 2.1.2 Seek to retain employees in accordance with the Redeployment Policy.
- 2.1.3 Seek to develop our employees to the maximum of their potential and to retain their skills within the Council wherever possible.

2.1.4 Provide a framework for the process of organisational change within which the Council's changing requirements of the workforce can be managed fairly and equitably.

2.1.5 Communicate and consult with employees and Trade Unions, keeping them informed about the changes and the implications of the changes for the Council and its employees.

3.0 An Overview

3.1 The following flowchart shows the key stages of the redundancy process:



Appointments made / redundancy confirmed.

Right of Appeal.

New structure implemented / Go Live date.

3.2 A more detailed outline of the stages and likely timescale for a service restructuring are set out in the form of a management planning tool at Appendix A.

4.0 Measures to reduce compulsory redundancies.

4.1 A range of measures will be looked at to minimise the potential number of redundancies where there is the possibility of a reduction in the number of posts. Consideration will be given to the following alternative options:

- Redeployment or retraining of affected employees (in accordance with the Redeployment Policy)
- Restricting the use of outside agencies and the employment of contractors and temporary employees (where this does not adversely affect the efficient operation of Council services).
- Reduction/elimination of overtime working within the section.
- Review of working patterns, rotas, and shifts.
- Exploring other options such as early retirement, voluntary redundancy (in accordance with the Council's policies).
- Restrictions on recruitment to certain posts.
- The use of temporary employees on short term contracts where the future of a service or role is uncertain.

5.0 Exploring Options

- 5.1 Having established that a business/service need has changed or a restructure is required, managers need to consider the option/s open to them to meet the needs of their service and how they might be implemented. This will include an early consideration of measures to reduce compulsory redundancies.
- 5.2 Managers are asked to arrange a meeting with HR to discuss the proposed business case, new structure, and new job descriptions (where applicable). The manager should bring draft documents to this meeting.
- 5.3 HR will advise and support managers throughout the process.
- 5.4 If new job descriptions are required, these will need to be drafted by managers, with support and advice from HR. The new job descriptions will be evaluated in accordance with the Job Evaluation Policy and an indicative grade given.

6.0 Communication and Consultation

- 6.1 The Council is committed to on-going communication with employees and the Trade Union about organisational change and its processes.
- 6.2 The outcomes of change will also require communication on an individual basis. This will be facilitated by the line manager or Director.
- 6.3 Communication will commence as soon as is practical and updated on a regular basis.
- 6.4 Formal consultation will commence with employees and the Trade Union on the business proposals as soon as is practical and will include the 30 days statutory consultation period required by law.
- 6.5 Consultation will provide an opportunity for employees and the Trade Union representatives to express their views and

have these considered when alternatives are being considered as part of the decision-making process.

- 6.6 The statutory consultation period where between 20 – 99 employees are to be dismissed on the grounds of redundancy is at least 30 days. The 30-day consultation period must end before the first redundancy notice is issued. (NB for 100 employees or more the consultation period must be at least 90 days).
- 6.7 Whilst the statutory requirement to commence formal consultation at least 30 days before the first redundancy notice is issued only applies if 20 or more employees are to be made redundant, there is a statutory requirement on employers to act reasonably if fewer than 20 employees are to be made redundant. In such cases the Council will therefore endeavour to commence formal consultation at least 30 days before the first redundancy notice is issued.
- 6.8 Formal consultation starts with the Trade Union being invited to a meeting with the Head of Service and a HR representative and being given the following information in writing:
- The reason for the proposed redundancies.
 - The number of posts affected and the number of redundancies.
 - The total number of similar posts within the Authority.
 - The selection criteria for redundancy.
 - The proposed method of carrying out the dismissals having regard to the agreed procedure including the period over which the dismissals are to take effect.

Formal consultation with the Trade Union must cover:

- Avoiding the dismissals
 - Reducing the numbers of employees to be dismissed
 - Mitigating the consequences of the dismissals
 - Selection criteria and method (this will include any “ring-fence” arrangements).
- 6.9 Formal consultation with employees will start with employees being invited to a team meeting and/or followed with individual 121 meetings by the Director and/or line manager. A representative from HR will also be present.

The business proposals, reasons for change, proposed changes including new structure, draft job descriptions, process for selection and appointment will be discussed (if applicable).

- 6.10 Employees will have the right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague or a trade union representative during any of the 121 meetings throughout the consultation process.
- 6.11 Employees will be written to setting out the proposals and consultation process. The letter will confirm that they are at potential risk of redundancy and will detail the timescale of the process.
- 6.12 Payroll will be able to provide estimates of severance benefits for employees who have been told that they are at risk of redundancy.
- 6.13 Employees who are at risk of redundancy will be able to join the redeployment register early and take advantage of support available on a voluntary basis. If employees wish to explore these options, they should contact HR.
- 6.14 As part of the consultation process employees will be able to request voluntary redundancy in accordance with this Policy (see 8.0).
- 6.15 Employees who wish to explore alternative working options such as early or flexible retirement; flexible working such as reduced hours should discuss this with their line manager and/or Director as part of the consultation process (in accordance with the Council's policies).
- 6.16 Further consultation meetings with employees and Trade Union representatives will be held, as necessary.

7.0 Obtaining Formal Approval for Proposals

- 7.1 Following the end of the consultation process, a report should be submitted for approval in principle by the Leadership Team.

- 7.2 A copy of the report will be given to employees and the Trade Union at least 5 working days before the submission deadline for the report, so that they may comment on its proposals.
- 7.3 The report will include the comments and feedback received by employees and the Trade Union during the consultation process (if applicable).
- 7.4 Should the Trade Union wish to submit a written summary as an appendix to the report, this must be sent to the Director and a copy to HR before the submission report deadline.

8.0 Voluntary Redundancy

8.1 Part of the consultation process will include deciding if it is appropriate to ask employees if they want to volunteer for redundancy. When making this decision the points to consider are:-

- Is the manager seeking a reduction in the number of employees.
- Retention of skills to deliver services.
- Organisational priorities (and the skills that are needed to deliver these)
- Cost of redundancy versus redeployment.

8.2 Applications for Voluntary Redundancy can be made at the Formal consultation stage and/or formally when employees will be asked to respond to the provisional letter sent after the formal consultation ends.

8.3 Voluntary redundancy may be available:

- If the employee is part of a ring fence in an area where there is significant pressure for available posts such that individuals within that ring fence may be declared 'at risk' of redundancy; and
- If the employee's release presents no specific problems for continuity of services.
- If the employee's release presents no specific problems in relation to the need to retain an

appropriate balance of skills and experience in the new structure.

- In the context of all the above, your release is affordable for the Service and the Council.

8.4 Employees that are interested in exploring voluntary redundancy will be provided with an estimate of the redundancy payment that will be payable on receipt of a written request. Employees aged 55 or over, will also receive an estimate for any retirement benefits if they are a member of the local government pension scheme.

8.5 Applications for voluntary redundancy will only be approved if it is in the Council's interest. There will be no right of appeal against a decision not to grant an application for voluntary redundancy.

8.6 Employees whose voluntary redundancy has been accepted will be given notice as detailed in section 13.1.

8.5 Employees may submit a request for an early release date to their Director. If a leaving date is agreed before the end of the contractual notice period, no payment of lieu of notice will be made.

9.0 Appointing Employees to the New Structure and Selection for Redundancy

9.1 Guidelines on the appointment and selection process should be followed by Managers in conjunction with this Policy (Appendix B: Appointment & Selection Process).

9.2 In cases where selection is required a management selection process may be used (Appendix C: Management Selection Matrix).

10.0 Redundancy Payment Calculation

10.1 Employees must have 2 years continuous service with East Herts Council to qualify for a redundancy payment.

10.2 In calculating entitlement to, and the amount of, redundancy payment the Council must count all continuous

local government service (and with other specified bodies) up to a maximum of 20 years.

- 10.3 For employees that have two jobs with the Council. Where they are made redundant from both jobs simultaneously their redundancy entitlement will be based on local government service (as stated in 10.2). If they are made redundant from one job their redundancy entitlement will also be based on their local government service (as stated in 10.2). If they are subsequently made redundant from their second job their redundancy entitlement will be calculated on their local government service provided the hours in that role have not increased. If they have increased their hours since last being made redundant or taken on another role within the authority the redundancy entitlement for the extra hours/new role will be calculated on their length of service in that role, not on their local government service.
- 10.4 The Council uses the Government's Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) statutory redundancy pay calculator to determine the number of week's pay and then multiplies this by 2.2.
- 10.5 BIS use the following figures in their Statutory Redundancy Reckoner table:-
- 0.5 week's pay for each full year of service where age during year is less than 22.
 - 1 week's pay for each full year of service where age during year is 22 or above, but less than 41.
 - 1.5 weeks' pay for each full year of service where age during year is 41+.
 - The maximum number of years' service with one employer that can be used to calculate redundancy is 20.
 - The Government sets out a statutory entitlement for weekly pay. The limit changes annually in line with the retail prices index (up or down) as appropriate.
 - The Council uses actual weekly pay for the purposes of redundancy payment calculations.
- 10.6 A copy of the statutory redundancy reckoner table can be found on the [Direct Gov website](#)

- 10.7 Estimates of severance payments should be requested from HR.
- 10.8 Employees over age 55 can apply for immediate payment of accrued pension on dismissal for grounds of redundancy.
- 10.9 Employees who take redundancy will be ineligible to apply for or be appointed to any roles within East Herts District Council for a minimum of six months from the date of their departure. In extenuating circumstances, the Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive may waive this clause at the request of the Director.

11.0 Appeals

- 11.1 Employees will have the right to appeal in accordance with the Council's Appeal Policy on the following grounds:
- Their post is not redundant.
 - They believe they should have been slotted in/ring fenced for a post.
 - That the selection criteria during interview / management selection were unfairly applied
 - The post is not a suitable alternative.
- 11.2 Employees will not be confirmed in post and notices of dismissal will not be sent until all appeals on slotted in/ring fenced or selection criteria have been heard as they may impact other employees.
- 11.3 Appeals against redundancy will be heard during an employee's notice period.

12.0 Suitable Alternative

- 12.1 The term "suitable alternative" derives from redundancy law, which dictates that if an employee is made redundant from a job, but an employer offers suitable alternative employment, the employee is bound to accept it or leave and forgo any redundancy payment.
- 12.2 In considering whether employment is suitable, account will be taken of the employee's old job, earnings in the old and

proposed posts, status of the post and the employee's training, qualifications, and skills. It should be noted that some difference between the two posts would not necessarily make the proposed post unsuitable. However, the extent of the change is what is relevant, and that can only be judged in the circumstances.

13.0 Notice Periods

13.1 Employees who are made compulsorily redundant will be given a minimum of 12 weeks notice of termination of employment, regardless of their actual statutory or contractual entitlement to enable them to make full use of the Redeployment Procedure and identify alternative employment within the Council. (N.B. If the member of employees has a contractual entitlement to more than 12 weeks notice they will receive their contractual entitlement.)

13.2 Employees whose voluntary redundancy has been accepted will be given the same notice period as set out in 13.1.

14.0 Redeployment

14.1 Full details of the application of the Redeployment Procedure to employees under notice of redundancy are set out in the Redeployment Policy.

15.0 Counter Notice

15.1 If an employee finds employment with another employer during their notice period, they may wish to terminate their contract earlier than the date on which their notice will expire. To do this they have to give the Council written notice to terminate the contract early; this is known as "Counter Notice."

15.2 The Council will, in most cases, agree to such requests. There are, however, some specific employment law considerations that will need to be considered and managers who receive a written counter notice must contact HR for advice.

16.0 Trial Period

- 16.1 Employees under notice of redundancy have a statutory entitlement to a four-week trial period in a job offered as suitable alternative employment. The trial period allows both the employee and the employer to assess the suitability of the offer of alternative employment.
- 16.2 The statutory four-week trial period may be extended only for the purpose of training the employee to do the job, and the length of the trial period must be determined at the outset. The Trial Period can only be extended once it has been started by mutual consent.
- 16.3 Where the trial period is successful, the employee will not be entitled to receive a statutory redundancy payment, as there will have been no termination of employment and hence no redundancy. If, during or at the end of the initial agreed trial period, either the employer or the employee concludes that the job is not suitable for the employee, the position reverts to that of redundancy and the employee's employment will terminate (assuming no other suitable alternative job is available). The employee will need to demonstrate why they cannot with suitable training, undertake the role. The date of the redundancy for the purposes of calculating statutory redundancy pay in these circumstances is the date on which the employee's original job ended, and not the date of termination of employment after the trial period.
- 16.4 The trial period can last beyond the date of dismissal and, if a suitable vacancy is identified near the dismissal date, the trial period can start after the old contract has ended.

17.0 Time Off to Look for New Work or for Training

- 17.1 Managers must allow their employees a reasonable amount of time off to look for new employment or for training during the notice period. Requests for time off will have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis but some latitude should be extended to this group of employees during what is a difficult period. HR will advise.

17.2 The sort of activities for which requests for time off will receive favourable consideration will include:

- Completing an application form
- Attending career counselling
- Registering with employment agencies
- Conducting internet searches at work
- Attending interviews.

This is not an exhaustive list.

17.3 Employees that find new employment with Local Government (or an organisation on the modification order) within 4 weeks of their termination date will be required to return their redundancy pay.

18.0 Policy Review and Amendment

18.1 This Policy shall be reviewed after three years or sooner in line with legislation and best practice to reflect the best possible level of support and management.

Appendix A

Key Steps in Redundancy

The following table sets out the possible actions in implementing organisational change. Not all change initiatives will involve all the steps and larger restructurings will inevitably take longer to take through them. A major restructuring could easily take over 6 months to implement. Thinking through how your change initiative is likely to proceed will allow you to plot the likely timeline.

| Key Action | Associated Actions | Likely Timescale |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Need to restructure identified and alternative options developed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define business case for changes. • Identify objectives of new structure. • Identify savings and impact on employees. • Discuss proposals with HR. | 1 week to 1 month |
| Notify/consult HR | <p>This may have been started at the previous stage – but needs to go further. HR will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the extent of any redundancies and advise on any legal requirements. • Review draft job descriptions and person specifications. • Do indicative JE's to ensure that grades being sought reflect duties. • Outline consultation process. • Identify any potential problems with consultation (e.g. employees on maternity leave) and identify how they will be addressed. • Discuss options for selection criteria and processes – whilst these will be subject to consultation with employees and trade union during Formal consultation, it is important for management to be clear about their preferences and the reasons for those preferences early in the process. • If management selection is the preferred option confirm the availability and quality of management information on which to base decisions using the Management Selection Criteria template. | 2 weeks to 1 month |
| Commence Formal consultation with employees and TU. | <p>Commence formal consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a date for the first meeting – tie in with 1-2-1 meetings with affected employees and general employees meeting immediately following TU meeting. • Send “at risk” letters to employees potentially | 30 days minimum |

| Key Action | Associated Actions | Likely Timescale |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| | facing redundancy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send s188 letter to TUs. • Invite TU reps to further consultative meetings – number of meetings will vary depending on the nature and effects of the restructuring. • Work out likely timetable for the selection process and if redundancies seem any appeals. • Consider Voluntary redundancy requests. • Ensure that all suggestions from employees and TU are responded to with explanations. | |
| New structure finalised and approved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write report for Leadership Team identifying reasons for change, proposals, and costs. • Send copy of report to TU and employees 5 working days before the submission report deadline. • Leadership Team consider and approve. • New job descriptions evaluated in accordance with Policy. | 3 weeks |
| Finalise selection criteria and method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to employees and trade Union on the conclusion of the consultation process. Conforming new structure, job descriptions, grades, and selection process. • Consider Voluntary redundancy requests. • Follow appointment and selection process. • Ensure that all employees are aware of how the selection process will operate, what the timetable is and if they need to do anything to ensure that they are considered | 1 week |
| Implement new structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make selection decisions. • Decide how you will manage the crossover period. • Tell employees in writing. • Hold meetings with employees and advise them of the outcome in writing, including rights of appeal. • If appeals are received, advise HR and CE and comply with requirements for exchange of documentation before appeal hearing. • Once all appeals have been heard, confirm final decisions in writing, giving notice of termination to unsuccessful employees. • Determine what action is necessary to ensure that all employees are aware of their new roles in the new organisation. • Consider team building and training initiatives necessary to maximise the potential for successful change. | 1 to 2 months |

East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of meeting: 3rd June 2026

Report by: Marie Funicello, Human Resources and Organisational Development Adviser

Report title: Proposed Changes to the Recruitment & Induction Policy & General Leave Policy

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards)

Summary:

This report seeks approval for revisions to the Recruitment and Induction Policy and the General Leave Policy to reflect updated working practices and to support East Hertfordshire District Council's commitment to achieving silver status under the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. Additional administrative amendments have also been made to ensure relevant systems, practices, and job titles are accurately referenced.

Key changes include the introduction of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for eligible members of the Armed Forces community, updates to role titles following the Tier Review, and amendments to reflect the full implementation of the Tribepad Applicant Tracking System. The General Leave Policy has also been updated to refer to bereaved partner's paternity leave within the 'Family Friendly Policy' as a new statutory entitlement, and to explicitly include paid leave provisions to Cadet Force Adult Volunteers within the eligible roles list.

The proposed amendments support fair and inclusive employment practices, widen access to employment opportunities, and ensure the Council's policies remain legally compliant and effective.

The proposed amendments were recommended for approval by Human Resources Committee by the Local Joint Panel on the 19th May 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Human Resources Committee

a) For the Human Resources Committee to approve the revised Recruitment and Induction Policy - (Appendix 1),

b) For the Human Resources Committee to approve the revised General Leave Policy - (Appendix 2)

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The proposals are set out in the recommendations above. Two HR policies have been updated to meet the requirements for achieving silver status under the Armed Forces Covenant employer recognition scheme.
- 1.2 Both HR policies have been amended to reflect updated role titles and working practices associated with the Tribepad Recruitment (ATS) system.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In September 2025, East Hertfordshire District Council began a project to strengthen its support for the Armed Forces Covenant, building on the bronze award achieved in 2022 and progressing towards silver status under the Employer Recognition Scheme. As part of this commitment and in line with best practice, the Council will introduce a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for members of the Armed Forces community who meet the set criteria. Under this scheme, applicants who identify as eligible, such as veterans, reservists, military spouses or partners, and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, who meet the essential criteria set out in the personal specification for the role, will be offered an interview. This reinforces the Council's pledge to ensure fair and inclusive employment opportunities and to support the successful transition of Armed Forces community members into civilian careers, consistent with the principles of the Covenant signed on 5 September 2022 and the ERS Bronze Award granted on 29 November 2022.

- 2.2 Following the Tier Review, the role title of 'Head of Service' has been updated to 'Director' and of HR Officer to 'HR & OD (organisational development) Adviser, to ensure consistency with other local authorities and to support alignment across the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) landscape, enabling the use of widely recognised and streamlined job titles that promote fair and transparent opportunities during the LGR transformation.
- 2.3 East Herts Council launched a recruitment Applicant Tracking System (ATS) called TribePad in March 2024. It is now fully integrated into all stages of the recruitment process, and the Recruitment & Induction Policy have now been updated accordingly to reflect its functionality and role within the Council's recruitment procedures.

3.0 Reason(s)

3.1 Recruitment and Induction Policy

- Introduced in section 2.4, the Council's Guaranteed Interview Scheme for the Armed Forces community
- Clarified how eligible applicants who meet the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview.
- Defined the categories in section 2.5 of employees within the Armed Forces community who are supported under this policy, including reservists, veterans, and military spouses/partners.
- Updated job titles from Head of Service to Director, and from HR Officer to HR & OD Adviser throughout.
- Removed supplier name 'Matrix' and replaced it with the term 'approved neutral vendor' to reflect potential supplier changes and maintain neutral language (Sections 3.2 & 3.6).

- In section 6.3, explained that recruiting managers must obtain approval to recruit by submitting a Job Requisition through the Application Tracking System (ATS), which is then reviewed by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance.
- In section 7.3, amended the policy names to Redeployment Policy and Redundancy Policy, reflecting the correct names as separate policies.
- In section 10.3, updated that recruiting managers should notify unsuccessful internal applicants and provide feedback on request via the ATS, while external applicants will receive an ATS notification and the option to request feedback.

3.2 General Leave Policy

- Section 6.2.4 has been added to reflect new legislation regarding bereaved partner's paternity leave and which Policy to refer to.
- Removed section 7.16.1 East Herts Carers Group from 7.16 'Further Support for Carers/Staff with Dependants', as the group is no longer in operation.
- Section 9.5.3 has been updated to explicitly include Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) to ensure eligibility for up to 3 days' paid leave in line with section 9.5.
- Updated job titles from Head of Service to Director throughout.

Community Safety

None

Data Protection

None

Equalities

The revised policies meet all requirements of the Equality Act 2010. In addition, they go beyond statutory obligations by making provision for locally or wider based important characteristics and circumstances to be considered within the Council's recruitment and leave processes, including specific support for the Armed Forces community. This approach supports fair, inclusive decision-making and helps widen access to employment and workplace support opportunities.

Environmental Sustainability

None

Financial

None

Health and Safety

None

Human Resources

HR will continue to maintain and oversee the ongoing review of this policy.

Human Rights

None

Legal

General Absence Policy has been updated to reflect the introduction of 'Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave' and to direct employees to the 'Family Friendly Policy' for further guidance.

Specific Wards

None

4.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

The updated policies are attached as appendices 1 – 2.

Contact Member

Executive Member for Corporate Services,
Joseph Dumont

joseph.dumont@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Director for Communities,
Jonathan Geall

jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Human Resources Adviser
Marie Funicello

marie.funicello@eastherts.gov.uk



EAST HERTS COUNCIL

Recruitment and Induction

Policy Statement

Policy Statement No. 36

Policy owner: Human Resources

Policy date of last review: March 2026

-
1. **March 2026** - Introduced in section 2.4, the Council's Guaranteed Interview Scheme for the Armed Forces community. Clarified how eligible applicants who meet the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview. Defined the categories in section 2.5 of employees within the Armed Forces community who are supported under this policy, including reservists, veterans, and military spouses/partners. Updated job titles from Head of Service to Director, and from HR Officer to HR & OD Adviser throughout. Removed supplier name 'Matrix' and replaced it with the term 'approved neutral vendor' to reflect potential supplier changes and maintain neutral language (Sections 3.2 & 3.6). In section 6.3, explained that recruiting managers must obtain approval to recruit by submitting a Job Requisition through the Application Tracking System (ATS), which is then reviewed by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance. In section 7.3, amended the policy names to Redeployment Policy and Redundancy Policy, reflecting the correct names as separate policies. In section 10.3, updated that recruiting managers should notify unsuccessful internal applicants and provide feedback on request via the ATS, while external applicants will receive an ATS notification and the option to request feedback.

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| EAST HERTS COUNCIL | 1 |
| Policy Statement | 1 |
| 1.0 Purpose and Scope | 3 |
| 2.0 Equality and diversity..... | 3 |
| 3.0 Agency Workers/Consultants | 5 |
| 4.0 Volunteers | 6 |
| 5.0 Secondments (Internal and External) | 6 |
| 6.0 Review of vacancies and job documentation..... | 7 |
| 7.0 Means of recruitment to vacant posts | 9 |
| 8.0 The application process | 14 |
| 9.0 Selection Panel | 15 |
| 10.0 Shortlisting | 16 |
| 11.0 Interview and tests | 17 |
| 12.0 Informing the candidates..... | 19 |
| 13.0 Starting Salary | 21 |
| 14.0 Feedback for unsuccessful candidates..... | 21 |
| 15.0 Documentation | 21 |
| 16.0 Eligibility to remain and work in the UK | 22 |
| 17.0 Work permits and visas..... | 23 |
| 18.0 Induction..... | 24 |
| 19.0 Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy | 25 |
| Appendix A - Safer Recruitment Interview Guidance | 27 |
| Appendix B - Secondment Guidance..... | 29 |

1.0 Purpose and Scope

- 1.0 The aim of this policy is to ensure that the council selects and appoints staff with the right skills for the job through a fair and

consistent recruitment and selection process, that is non-discriminatory, complies with legislation and follows good practice.

1.1 The procedure covers the following kinds of appointments:

- Permanent and fixed-term contracts
- Temporary agency staff appointments
- Appointments to casual staff bank
- Internal transfers

1.2 East Herts Council has a responsibility to ensure safer recruitment and employment practices. All staff are checked appropriately before they start employment, including where applicable a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people working with vulnerable adults, children, and young people.

2.0 Equality and diversity

2.1 All applicants are treated equally during the recruitment process and that only those factors related to the vacancy to be filled will be used to make selection decisions. The council will take no account of gender, marital status, carer commitment, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic or national origin, religious or political belief, age, colour, race or socio-economic background. The council undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

2.2 The council will support applicants with disabilities through the Disability Confident Scheme and is committed to interviewing all candidates who meet the essential criteria for a job in line with the scheme. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to accommodate applicants and employees with disabilities.

- 2.3 The council's recruitment pages will include a set of varied staff case studies that demonstrate diversity in our workforce to help attract and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates.
- 2.4 In line with our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, the Council operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for members of the Armed Forces community. Under this scheme, applicants who identify as eligible and who meet the essential criteria for the role will be guaranteed an interview. This ensures fair opportunity, recognises the value of military service, and supports the successful transition of veterans, reservists and their families into civilian employment.
- 2.5 Supported Employee Categories:
- Reservists: Employees who serve in the Reserve Forces.
 - Veterans: Former members of the Armed Forces.
 - Military Spouses/Partners: Partners of current service personnel.
 - Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAV): Volunteers who support the cadet movement.

3.0 Agency Workers/Consultants

- 3.1 The use of temporary agency workers to cover vacancies in the short-term must be authorised within budget by the Service Manager/Director.
- 3.2 All agency workers should be engaged using the approved neutral vendor contract framework/system to ensure best value in terms of agency fees and potential conversion costs. The manager (with support from HR) will make the arrangements to take on agency workers and will ensure that appropriate pre-employment checks have been undertaken by the agency concerned. All agency workers must be subject to a process of interview and testing appropriate to the length of the assignment

to ensure they have the appropriate skills and competences to do the job properly.

- 3.3** The use of consultants may be appropriate where the work is of a highly skilled and fixed-term nature and it is unlikely the council will be able to recruit an employee on the council's pay and grading structure to complete the work. The relevant HR & OD Adviser should be consulted before it is decided that a consultant should be engaged to ensure all other options have been considered.
- 3.4** Before engaging a consultant, managers must liaise with their HR & OD Adviser to complete the HMRC 'employment status for tax' questionnaire. The questionnaire will determine whether the individual falls under the IR35 regulations. The IR35 regulations apply where someone provides their services via an intermediary but would be an employee if they were providing their services directly. Where IR35 applies, the council has an obligation to inform the individual that they fall under the regulations and their tax and National Insurance (NI) contributions must be deducted at source through the payroll.
- 3.5** IR35 can apply to individuals working through agencies, umbrella companies or those with their own limited companies. IR35 cannot apply to sole traders as there is no intermediary but HMRC can class some sole traders as 'employed for tax purposes' and tax and NI must also be deducted at source through the payroll for these individuals
- 3.6** IR35 status is already applied to roles on the Councils approved neutral vendor so the 'employment status for tax' questionnaire does not need to be completed for agency workers.
- 3.7** Agency workers and contractors may apply for internally advertised vacancies at the council however to do so they must complete the external application form.

4.0 Volunteers

- 4.1 If a recruiting manager would like to use volunteers in their service, they should refer to the Volunteering Policy for further guidance.

5.0 Secondments (Internal and External)

- 5.1 Secondments are a temporary arrangement to fill a post and can be used as a learning and development opportunity for employees. Please see Appendix B for further details.

6.0 Review of vacancies and job documentation

- 6.1 Every new vacancy will be subject to a review of the council's needs in the area by the line manager with support and guidance from the HR section.

Management will consider:

- Whether it is necessary to fill the vacancy.
 - Whether the job description has changed.
 - Whether changing work patterns, organisation or technology have produced a different job, or the work can be distributed in a different way.
 - The nature of the replacement, e.g. full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, etc.
- 6.2 If the job has changed the manager should update the current job description and person specification. Where there are significant changes to the job description and person specification, a job evaluation process should be considered and managers should contact their HR & OD Adviser .

- 6.3 For brand new posts, recruiting managers will need to write a job description and person specification and submit it to HR for job evaluation.
- 6.4 In line with Safer Recruitment and the Councils commitment to Equality and Diversity all Job Descriptions and Person Specifications will include the following criteria:

Job Description:

Ensure awareness of the council's Safeguarding Policy and take a proactive approach to ensure the safeguarding of residents at all times.

Person Specification

The council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its residents specifically children and vulnerable adults. The council expects all its staff to have an understanding of Safeguarding and to share this commitment.

An understanding of and commitment to diversity and equality as it applies to council services and employment.

- 6.5 Before recruiting to any post, recruiting managers need to seek the appropriate approval via the Application Tracking System (ATS) using a Job Requisition. This will then be sent to the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance to approve. Consideration should be given at this stage whether the role may be suitable to be advertised within the Armed Forces recruitment forums.
- 6.6 If the vacancy requires additional funding and/or increases the service headcount, the recruiting manager should discuss how the post will fit into the structure and how it will be funded with both the finance team and HR and then complete both pages of the form before seeking approval to recruit from Leadership Team.

6.7 In cases of a service restructure, requests to recruit should be 'packaged up' so that the leadership team can see the overall picture of a restructure rather than a piecemeal approach.

7.0 Means of recruitment to vacant posts

7.1 **The decision on how a vacant post is to be recruited to** Posts will normally be advertised internally and externally to ensure diversity of applications, however internal only advertising will be considered where appropriate and this decision will be recorded via the ATS on the job Requisition template . The decision will be guided by a number of considerations, including the following (Director should seek support from HR to ensure consistency):

- First and foremost, the most appropriate and cost-effective manner to successfully attract the most suitable candidate.
- The range and level of skills, experience and competences required by the post.
- Fairness, diversity and equality of opportunity.
- The council's commitment to staff development.

7.2 **Sources of recruitment** may include any of the following, but no permanent appointment will be made without an appropriate selection process to ensure the quality of the appointment, fairness, diversity and equality of opportunity:

- Online recruitment advertising
- Internal advertising
- Press advertising
- Recruitment agencies
- Approaches to known potential candidates (who may include ex staff and reserve candidates from previous recruitment campaigns within the last 6 months).

7.3 **Vacant posts lasting longer than 6 months** will normally be advertised both internally and externally, provided that budgetary resources for external advertising are available. Exceptions to this, where the post might be advertised internally in the first instance, would include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Where redundancies are being made and the council is seeking to redeploy staff (temporary and fixed-term vacancies may also be offered as options). In this situation, consideration will be given to redeploying existing staff into another suitable vacant post subject to fair selection being carried out. (The separate Redeployment and Redundancy Policies applies).
- Where it is decided that a post would provide a suitable internal development opportunity for existing employees. Whether or not a post is suitable as an internal development opportunity will be decided by the Director (or Leadership Team for a new post) with advice from HR through the Recruitment Request Form, taking into account the views of line managers, on the basis of:
 - a) judgements as to whether there are internal candidates who are likely to be able to demonstrate the necessary skills and competences for the post. These judgements would be based on objective knowledge of previously demonstrated skills, competences and experience obtained via the council's normal performance management processes.
 - b) diversity/equality considerations, taking into account the make-up of the organisation as a whole and our commitment to diversity and equality.
- Where an employee has been acting up in/on secondment to a post on a temporary or casual basis which then becomes available on a longer-term or permanent basis, and that employee has been (a) covering the post or additional responsibilities for at least 3 months and has (b) been fully

assessed as having met their performance objectives and competence requirements during the period. In such circumstances the invitation to apply for the post may be ring-fenced to the individual employee in the first instance.

7.4 **Casual Staff:** The council maintains a bank of casual workers who are paid on an hourly basis for ad hoc and short-term assignments. The council is under no obligation to offer work, and the worker is under no obligation to accept work. Where the person has not previously been through a selection process they should normally be interviewed by the line manager to determine suitability. Before a person is added to the casual bank and offered any work the required pre-employment checks must be undertaken.

7.5 **Reserve candidates** Where a post/similar post has been advertised in the previous 6 months and suitable reserve candidates were identified as part of that recruitment process these candidates can be contacted and asked if they would like to be considered for the role. In this case the role would also be advertised internally as well but not always externally.

7.6 **Fixed term contract posts of 6 months or less:** Where a fixed term contract vacancy arises (e.g. to cover for long-term absence or due to limited funding etc.) and it is expected to last for 6 months or less the post can be filled in the following ways:

- By advertising the post internally where the vacancy can be seen as suitable development opportunity (either within a specific team where appropriate or council-wide) and then offered as internal secondment. Where applicable the cover for the secondment can then be considered in the first instance from the casual employee bank. Please see Appendix B for further guidance on secondments.
- By offering it as an acting up opportunity for an existing member of the team
- Using agency staff

- Using the council's casual bank
- Through speculative applications
- By advertising internally and externally (external may be restricted to previous applicants being approached alongside internal)

Whatever method is used, it must be agreed by the Director with support from HR to ensure consistency.

7.7 Internal transfers: Nothing in this policy shall prevent a member of Leadership Team temporarily or permanently filling a post by means of internal transfer where:

- a vacant post is similar in its content and on the same salary grade or lower as that currently held by an employee, with the same or similar person spec criteria, in another team or division, and/or
- where management decide that transfer is in the best interests of the organisation or the employee. This may be decided as a consequence and in line with other procedures or processes – e.g. disciplinary, capability or sickness – or for operational or other reasons.

An employee wishing to be considered for a transfer should email HR and the relevant manager.

7.8 Safer Recruitment The council's online recruitment pages contain the following statement:

East Herts Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff to share this commitment.

All external advertisements contain the following statement where the post falls within regulated activity:

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and barring list check as it is within regulated activity due to the nature of the post.

8.0 The application process

8.1 The person specification will comprise a list of criteria (qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, specific job requirement and competences) required to fulfil the requirements of the job. Candidates will be assessed on their ability to meet these criteria. The job description and person specification will be made available to all candidates for the role. All documentation should be checked for equality impact implications by the recruiting manager with HR support. All information must be available in an appropriate accessible format on request.

8.2 Applicants may be given the choice of either completing a full application form or submitting a CV accompanied by reduced application form and a written statement evidencing the applicant's skills and past achievements against the person specification for the post. The application form requires applicants to outline any gaps in employment and provide explanation of these gaps; this can then be further explored at interview if appropriate. Applicants are also required to provide the reason for leaving a post again in line with 'Safer Recruitment' practice. Applicants are required to declare any unspent or spent (in certain cases) criminal convictions or allegations so these can be considered by HR who will action in line with the Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders.

8.3 Internal applicants will be required to complete an internal application form evidencing their skills and past achievements against the person specification for the post.

9.0 Selection Panel

- 9.1 The panel will normally consist of at least two persons and be chaired by the line manager or an appropriate manager. The panel may include an external specialist where appropriate. In the case of short-term agency appointments, the line manager may complete selection alone.
- 9.2 The council will aim to ensure all staff involved in recruitment have received training or adequate briefing. Staff will be supported by the HR section to operate a fair and transparent selection process. The Chair of the recruitment panel or at least one member of the Panel is required to undertake Recruitment Training or a Briefing with HR prior to their first recruitment at East Herts. This should cover EHC processes including Equality and 'Safer Recruitment' to ensure that the selection process is probing to ask questions in respect of areas of concern and ensure that suitable people are selected.
- 9.3 Efforts should be made, where possible, to achieve diversity of representation on the interview panel and/or as part of the selection process (e.g. meet the team).
- 9.4 It will be the responsibility of the Chair of the panel to:
- Ensure that there are proper arrangements for the administration of the recruitment and selection process.
 - Ensure that appropriate questions and tests are designed for the panel's approval.
 - Complete and collect full documentation on the panel's decision-making from the shortlisting and interviewing stages and ensure it is sent to the HR section to be stored centrally for purposes of feedback or response to any claim of unfairness or discrimination.

10.0 Shortlisting

- 10.1 Shortlisting will be carried out with the aim of assessing objectively, against the person specification for the post, which applicants seem to meet the criteria most closely. Any gaps in employment should be noted to probe further at interview in line with Safer Recruitment. Shortlisting will normally be carried out by the people who constitute the interview panel. They will discuss their individual assessments with a view to reaching a consensus on the most suitable candidates for interview. This will be recorded on the shortlisting grid provided by HR and must be returned to HR at the end of the selection process.
- 10.2 The recruiting manager should invite the shortlisted applicants to an interview using the ATS. They should also ask applicants if they need any reasonable adjustments at the interview. Recruiting managers should contact unsuccessful internal applicants and provide feedback if requested via the ATS. For external applicants, they will be updated via an ATS notification email that they have been unsuccessful and offered the opportunity to request feedback.

11.0 Interview and tests

- 11.1 The assessment will consist of an interview and, in some cases, further exercises and tests relevant to the job requirements.
- 11.2 All interviews will be conducted on an objective basis, concentrating on the knowledge, skills and abilities of the applicant and their ability to fulfil the job requirements. Questions asked of the applicant will relate to the requirements of the job only and their abilities to undertake them. Any gaps in employment or short-term employment periods should be probed at interview in line with Safer Recruitment (please see Appendix A for guidance).

11.3 The recruiting manager should make the candidate feel at ease and carry out introductions:

- They should also explain the format of the interview and selection process, making it clear that there will be an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions at the end.
- If a job involves working unusual hours or shift work, these hours should be clearly set out in the job description and if necessary, discussed at the interview.
- Practical issues may be discussed during the interview, but comments about childcare, other domestic arrangements, disability, gender (including marital status), age, religion, ethnic origin, socio-economic group or sexual orientation must be avoided. Such comments may well be taken as being intrusive or maybe unlawfully discriminatory.
- Where a candidate has a disability for which adjustments may need to be considered, the candidate's requirements should be discussed with him/her once the planned questioning is complete.
- Candidates should be told by the Chair when they could expect to hear the outcome of the interview.
- Candidates must be given an opportunity to ask any questions of the panel.

11.4 Each panel member should take notes during the interview using the Interview Assessment Sheet. The panel should collectively agree the scores for each applicant and record them on the panel chair's interview assessment form. The chair can also use the last section of the form to summarise the applicant's overall performance to use for feedback purposes. The panel will select the applicant who is the most suitable overall against the person specification. The interview assessment sheet and any notes must be uploaded to the ATS system , candidates will not be provided with a conditional offer in writing until this has been received.

- 11.5 The panel will discuss which, if any, of the other candidates is most appointable as an alternative if the first-choice candidate declines the post or is unable to satisfy the pre-employment checks which include providing suitable and satisfactory references. Where another suitable candidate is identified as appointable, the candidate may be contacted as a reserve candidate, and some pre-employment checks may begin.
- 11.6 All offers will be made subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, right to work evidence and medical clearance. For relevant posts, offers will be made subject also to relevant DBS checks.
- 11.7 If no appointable candidate is identified, the chair of the panel should discuss with HR the next steps to be taken. Options may include reviewing the job description, person specification and job grade/conditions; re-advertising; approaching recruitment agencies; re-designing the job as an appropriate internal opportunity.

12.0 Informing the candidates

- 12.1 A member of the panel, normally the chair, should contact the successful candidate at the earliest opportunity to make the offer of the post – always stating that the offer is subject to references that are satisfactory to the council, medical clearance, right to work checks and any DBS checks, and any other information that might come to light during the referencing period.
- 12.2 Recruiting managers should then complete a Statement of Employee Particulars form via the ATS system. HR will issue a conditional offer letter and a contract detailing the terms and conditions of employment to the applicant. HR will obtain pre-employment checks. Identity, Right to work in the UK,

Qualifications, Medical fitness, Employment History, Employment/educational references are required for successful candidates who are given a conditional offer whilst these checks are undertaken. Full references rather than statement of facts are sought wherever possible. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks must be sought where employees have substantial or regular or unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk as part of their duties or responsibilities for or on behalf of the organisation.

12.3 Once the pre-employment checks are received, HR will contact the recruiting manager to approve them. Once approved, the recruiting manager should contact the applicant to agree a start date and inform HR. Where a DBS disclosure has not been received before a candidate is due to start employment then a Risk Assessment will be undertaken by the recruiting manager with HR support and authorised by the Chief Executive (or in their absence the Deputy Chief Executive) to ensure that it is appropriate for the candidate to start work. All other pre-employment checks should be complete to inform this risk assessment. The offer of employment will remain conditional on the outcome of the DBS check. Please see Appendix A for further information on Safer Recruitment.

12.4 Recruiting managers are responsible for informing unsuccessful applicants via the ATS system and offering feedback if requested. It may be necessary to delay this in the case of any suitable runner(s) up until the first choice of candidate has confirmed their acceptance of the post.

13.0 Starting Salary

13.1 Each job is advertised with the relevant salary range. Applicants should be offered the post on the basis of starting on the beginning of the scale unless previous earnings and/or skills and experience warrant consideration to start above the bottom point within the range; any proposal to offer the candidate above the starting point within the agreed range must be agreed and approved by the Director in consultation with the Senior Shared service HR Business Partner or in their absence an HR & OD Adviser (to ensure consistency).

14.0 Feedback for unsuccessful candidates

14.1 The methodical approach adopted for assessment will enable the panel to offer comprehensive feedback to all candidates, if requested. The chair of the panel will normally undertake this. Feedback should identify where the panel recorded clear evidence of the applicant's strengths and weaknesses. Feedback may be given orally or in writing. Where given orally, the giver of feedback should forward brief notes of the conversation with the candidate to the HR team.

15.0 Documentation

15.1 Recruiting managers should upload all recruitment documentation (i.e. shortlisting and interview documents) to the ATS and if required sent securely to a HR Administrator to process. Once received these will be stored in line with GDPR regulations.

15.2 The application and panel notes of the selection process for all applicants will be kept in HR for 12 months in case of litigation and will then be destroyed/deleted.

15.3 The staff annual equalities report will be produced for the Leadership Team and HR Committee in respect of equal opportunities monitoring so that trends can be analysed and action agreed where appropriate.

16.0 Eligibility to remain and work in the UK

16.1 To ensure that the council follows employment and immigration legislation as detailed in the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, if candidates receive a conditional offer of employment, they will be required to provide suitable document(s) which confirms their eligibility to remain and work in the UK. Suitable documents may include, but are not limited to a passport, full birth certificate, work or residency permit or suitable correspondence from the UK Home Office. The exact details of the documentation that may be accepted will be given to candidates. Copies of these documents will be taken and retained for the appointed candidate before they start employment with the council.

17.0 Work permits and visas

17.1 A sponsorship licence is required to employ someone from outside the UK. This includes citizens of the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland who arrived in the UK after 31 December 2020. The council **does not** have a sponsorship licence and therefore cannot employ anyone outside of the UK, apart from certain exceptions. The council will need to abide by this restriction when recruiting to posts.

17.2 Settled workers can work in the UK without restrictions and therefore they do not need to be sponsored and can be employed by the council.

A 'settled worker' is any one of the following:

- a British citizen
- an Irish citizen – unless they are subject to a deportation order, an exclusion order, or an international travel ban

- a European Economic Area (EEA) national who arrived in the UK before 11 pm on 31 December 2020 (and their eligible family members), provided they apply for status under the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 and that application is granted
- a person with leave to remain (settled or pre-settled status) under Appendix EU (the EU Settlement Scheme)
- a British overseas territories citizen, except for those from sovereign base areas in Cyprus
- a Commonwealth citizen (including a citizen of Zimbabwe) who has been granted permission on the UK Ancestry route on the basis they have a grandparent born in the UK and Islands
- a Commonwealth citizen (including a citizen of Zimbabwe) with the right of abode in the UK
- anyone who has indefinite leave to enter or remain (settlement) in the UK

Sponsorship is also not required for workers who either:

- has immigration permission to be in the UK which does not prevent them from doing the work in question – examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a person with permission under Appendix FM to the Immigration Rules as the partner of a British citizen or settled person can take any kind of employment
 - a person with permission as a Student may be allowed to work for 10 or 20 hours per week during term-time, depending on the type of course they are following. A student with permission can also work full time in their breaks.
- is exempt from requiring permission – for example:
 - a diplomat, government official or senior official of an international organisation – see ‘Exempt from immigration control’ on GOV.UK
 - an EEA national who qualifies as a frontier worker

18.0 Induction

18.1 Upon joining, all new employees to the council will be invited to attend a mandatory corporate induction. These may fall within a few weeks / months of starting to depend on the next induction intake. Invites will be sent via email.

18.2 Managers should also arrange a local induction with the new starter (including agency workers and contractors). The induction checklist should be followed which will cover practical information (such as building orientation, health and safety, and information about systems, policies and procedures), an understanding of the council's values and culture, alongside job specific information (including department information, discussion about what the job requires and objectives), and an introduction to the wider team.

18.3 Managers can seek a volunteer to act as the new starter's 'buddy'. A buddy can be someone who works within the same service or in a different service to the new employee who can help ease them into their role by e.g. taking them for lunch on their first day, introducing them to colleagues, showing them where things are. The buddy will not take on those more formal responsibilities usually undertaken by the manager or HR during the induction process.

18.4 There is no formal training required to become a buddy, just a willingness to take on the extra responsibility, good communication skills and availability.

18.5 For further information on induction, including useful information for new starters to read, please refer to the intranet.

19.0 Implementation, monitoring and review of this policy

19.1 The HR service has the responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed in line with legislation and best practice.

Appendix A - Safer Recruitment Interview Guidance

Asking Probing Questions

We use probing questions in order to get a better and deeper understanding of an individual's situation and experience. These can be divided into the following areas:

- Clarification
- Purpose
- Examples
- Extension

Clarification

When they are vague or have not given enough information, seek to further understand them by asking for clarification.

What exactly did you mean by 'XXX'?

What, specifically, will you do next week?

Could you tell me more about YY?

Purpose

Sometimes they say things where the purpose of why they said it is not clear. Ask them to justify their statement or dig for underlying causes.

Why did you say that?

What were you thinking about when you said XX?

Examples

When they talk about something vaguely, you may ask for specific examples. This is particularly useful in interviews, where what you want is to test both their truthfulness and the depth behind what they are claiming.

*Sorry, I don't understand. Could you help by giving an example?
Could you give me an example of when you did XXX?
Tell me about a time when you ____.*

Extension

When they have not given you enough information about something, ask them to tell you more.

*Could you tell me more about that, please?
And what happened after that?*

Appendix B - Secondment Guidance

1.0 Definition and types of secondment

- 1.1 A secondment is defined as the temporary transfer of an employee to another part of the same organisation or to a different organisation for a set period of time, which is agreed between both parties.
- 1.2 **Internal secondments** could include project work or temporary cover, for example to cover maternity leave.
- 1.3 **External secondments** could include within another public sector organisation (e.g. County Council, Police and Health authorities) or to other not for profit organisations or private companies. The council remains the employer. **The council will not normally support full-time external secondments to other organisations unless there are exceptional reasons but will consider partial secondments.**
- 1.4 **Incoming secondments** are where employees from partner organisations join the council on a temporary basis where the council will be the host rather than the employer.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

- all permanent employees excluding casual staff,
- all secondments taking place within the council and where appropriate, will apply to secondments outside the council

3.0 Approval

- 3.1 If an employee wishes to apply for an internal secondment, they must explore this with their manager who would then need to seek approval from the Director before any application is made. (Where approval is being considered, both the seconding manager and the receiving manager are expected to discuss arrangements in line with our one team approach including when they can be released, whether it should begin as a partial secondment and any other relevant transfer arrangements).
- 3.2 If an employee wishes to apply for a partial external secondment, they must explore this with their manager who would then need to seek approval from the Director before any application is made.
- 3.3 If an employee wishes to apply for a full external secondment they must make this request directly with their Line Manager or Director who must consult with the Senior Shred HR Business Partner before reaching a decision. Please note however section 1.3 which states that **the council will not normally support full-time external secondments to other organisations unless there are exceptional reasons but will consider partial secondments.**

4.0 Timescales

- 4.1 Secondments will normally be for a period of between 3 months and a year depending on circumstances. The time frame will be agreed and clearly defined in the secondment agreement. An extension to the secondment time frames must be discussed and agreed by both managers involved and Human Resources. Services need to track secondments to ensure they do not continue indefinitely.
- 4.2 The substantive manager can expect a minimum of 4 weeks' notice prior to the secondee taking up an internal secondment. External secondments will require notice in line with the contract of employment.
- 4.3 Generally, a minimum of six months between each secondment opportunity would apply but exceptions may be agreed by the substantive manager in order to ensure continuity of service.

5.0 Terms and Conditions

- 5.1 East Herts policies will apply except for employees who are seconded externally who will be subject to the host organisation's policies.
- 5.2 A post offered as a secondment will be offered at the grade for the post. If the grade of the seconded post is a lower graded post, the seconded employee will be placed at the top of the relevant grade.
- 5.3 All East Herts seconded staff will remain under the contract of employment with East Herts Council, retaining the majority of their substantive terms and conditions (except where the post to which they are seconded has a higher rate of pay and holiday entitlement); this may not include all special allowances unless relevant for the job such as, standby or other additional allowances. Continuity of employment will be protected and annual leave entitlement (where appropriate) will be adjusted accordingly for the duration of the secondment.

- 5.4 All annual leave taken during the secondment period should be signed off by the secondment manager and annual leave applied for outside of the secondment period should be signed off by the substantive manager via email and then processed in the HR system.
- 5.5 PDR arrangements and development plans will be agreed with the host manager.
- 5.6 Employees who are seconded have a requirement to keep in touch with their substantive manager and vice versa, to ensure the employee is job ready when they return.
- 6.0 HR will confirm all secondments in writing to the employee, including written confirmation of the terms and conditions that will apply during the secondment.

7.0 Conduct and Capability

- 7.1 The host manager (internal) will deal with any concerns regarding conduct and capability under the Managing Performance or any other relevant policy. The host manager must liaise with the substantive manager. If there are any concerns about work performance in the seconded post, consideration will need to be given to reverting the employee to their previous post. The host manager must ensure that adequate training and support has been provided to the employee. For partial secondments to an external organisation, East Herts policies will still apply. Where an employee is seconded full-time to an external organisation the policies and procedures of the host organisation will prevail. However, as stated in section 1.3, the council will not normally support full-time external secondments.
- 7.2 The East Herts Code of Conduct will apply to secondments within East Herts and partial external secondments. For full-time external secondments the code of conduct for the receiving organisation will apply.

8.0 Returning to the Substantive Post

- 8.1 Secondment opportunities should generally be allowed to run their course in line with the terms of the secondment agreement. However, the substantive manager reserves the right to recall the secondee prematurely, if required in exceptional circumstances. There may also be the occasion where a secondee is not meeting the requirement of the secondment and an early return to the substantive post would be beneficial to all. The secondment agreement should stipulate an agreed notice period for all parties to notify of early termination of the secondment agreement, which should not exceed one month.
- 8.2 Secondees will have the right to return to their substantive post unless a redundancy situation arose during the period of secondment or in exceptional circumstances there is some other

reason why it is not reasonably practicable to return to the original job. In such cases secondees will be fully consulted at the earliest opportunity.

8.3 It is recognised that in certain circumstances there may be organisational needs to fill the substantive post on a permanent basis. In these circumstances secondees must be consulted first and given the opportunity to return to their substantive post.

8.4 At the end of the secondment, if the employee is successful in gaining a consecutive secondment, or an extension to the secondment which takes the arrangement over 2 years, then they will no longer retain the right to return to their substantive post, but will retain their permanent employment status and in line with the council's redeployment policy will be considered as an 'at risk' candidate for any applications made for posts at their previous substantive level or below, when their secondment ceases. HR will inform employees of the implications of extending their secondment past two years at that time.



East Herts Council

General Leave

Policy Statement

Policy Statement No 7 (Issue No 2) March 2026 (updated April 2019, December 2019, March 2020, April 2024, March 2026)

-
1. **April 2019** - Minor updates made to reflect pay and terms and conditions changes agreed through collective bargaining in March 2019. This policy applies to situations which arise from 1 April 2019 onwards.
 2. **December 2019** - Updated to ensure dependency leave is clear and no longer relies on a separate Carer's policy to provide clarity. Carer's Policy has been incorporated and deleted with General Leave updated to ensure consistency, changes were not material but have been agreed with Unison and will be reported to LJP/HRC.
 3. **March 2020** - Updated to ensure a change in legislation on statutory parental bereavement leave from 1 April 2020 is included.
 4. **April 2024** - Carer's leave is a new right for employees that was passed into law in April. This gives employees the right to request unpaid leave of up to five days FTE per year to care for dependents. Adding the carer's leave to the General Leave Policy connected to our current Dependants Leave (5 days paid leave per year to give emergency leave to dependants). To open the current pot of five paid days to be split between both types of leave. This will allow employees to take leave for planned or unplanned situations to support their caring duties.
 5. **March 2026** -Section 6.2.4 has been added to reflect new legislation regarding bereaved partner's paternity leave and which Policy to refer to. Removed, section 7.16.1 East Herts Carers Group from 7.16 'Further Support for Carers/Staff with Dependants', as the group is no longer in operation. Section 9.5.3 has been updated to explicitly include Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) to ensure eligibility for up to 3 days' paid leave in line with section 9.5. Updated job titles from Head of Service to Director throughout.

| Contents | Page |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Contractual Relationship during Absence | 3 |
| 3. Granting and Recording Leave | 3 |
| 4. Public Holidays | 3 |
| 5. Annual Leave | 4 |
| 6. Bereavement | 5 |
| 7. Dependency Leave and Carer's Leave | 8 |
| 8. Career Breaks | 11 |
| 9. Citizenship Duties | 14 |
| 10. Union Duties | 16 |
| 11. Training Courses and Day Release | 17 |
| 12. Examination and Study Leave | 17 |
| 13. Interviews in Other Authorities | 17 |
| 14. Leave for Medical Reasons | 18 |
| 15. Time of for Religious Observance | 19 |
| 16. Review | 19 |

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The General Leave Policy provides employees and managers with information on the various types of leave entitlement.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all employees including Chief Officer level that are employed by East Herts Council.

2.0 Contractual Relationship during Absence

- 2.1 Having granted a period of paid or unpaid leave, the contract of employment between both parties remains in existence (except in the case of a Career Break) and therefore a commitment to maintain confidence, trust and act in good faith during the period of leave.
- 2.2 Employees on periods of extended leave will be required to maintain regular contact with their manager and, if appropriate, inform them of any changes in circumstance which may affect their intention to return to work.
- 2.3 Employees suspected of abusing the provisions of these procedures or fraudulently applying for leave will be subject to disciplinary investigation as detailed in the Disciplinary Policy.

3.0 Granting and Recording Leave

- 3.1 It is the Line Manager's responsibility to consider applications for special leave or approving and logging dependency leave and use the following information as guidelines (please contact HR for further guidance where appropriate and to ensure consistency).

4.0 Public Holidays

- 4.1 Employees are entitled to public holidays, irrespective of length of service. Part time employees are entitled to a pro rata entitlement to these holidays. This is calculated as a fifth of the employee's working week, for each bank holiday, regardless whether this is a working day or not. For example, an employee working 20 hours per week would be entitled to receive 4 hours for each bank holiday.

5.0 Annual Leave

5.1 Leave Year

5.1.1 The Council operates an anniversary leave period commencing on the date an employee commenced working for the Council. Those employees starting or leaving employment during the year are entitled to leave proportionate to the number of completed weeks of service during the year.

5.2 Part Time Staff

5.2.1 Annual Leave entitlement and any other leave allowances will be applied pro-rata for part time employees based on 37 hours full time working week. For example, an employee with full time equivalent 25 days annual leave (7.4 hours x 25 days = 185 hours) entitlement working 20 hours per week will be entitled to 13.5 days/100 hours annual leave.

5.3 Approval for Taking Leave/Carrying Forward Leave

5.3.1 All leave is taken at the discretion of your Line Manager and requests will need to be looked at in the context of the cover available within the team to ensure that the service provided is not disrupted.

5.3.2 Managers should try and plan staffing arrangements well in advance so that peak holiday periods are adequately covered so that holiday requests can be treated equitably.

5.3.3 Where a late request is received, the employee should not expect or assume that it will be granted and managers should treat such requests, due to unexpected events, sympathetically. As a general rule, however, employees should give at least twice the amount of notice that they wish to take as leave. Therefore, if 5 days' holiday is being requested, at least 10 working days' notice is required.

5.3.4 As far as possible all employees should take their annual leave before the end of their leave year. Where this is not possible up to five days annual leave may be carried forward into the next leave year with the prior written consent of their Line Manager.

5.4 Cancelling Leave due to sickness

5.4.1 If an employee is due to go on annual leave or during their leave becomes unwell, any absence will be counted as sickness absence rather than annual leave if a fit note is provided. Employees must notify their manager as soon as possible to inform them that they are unwell. Details of the nature of the illness and an indication of the expected return to work should be provided.

5.5 Continuous Service

5.5.1 Employees who have 5 years' continuous local authority service with East Herts or another local authority are entitled to an extra 5 days annual leave.

5.6 Basic Leave Entitlement

5.6.1 The basic leave entitlement is dependent upon the scale point an employee has reached. It is banded as follows:-

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| SCP 4 - 22 | 26 days |
| SCP 23 - 25 | 27 days |
| SCP 26 - 28 | 28 days |
| SCP 29 and above | 29 days |

6.0 Bereavement

6.1 Bereavement of Immediate Family Members

(Please also see 6.3 Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave in relation to a child under the age of 18)

6.1.1 When an employee suffers the loss of an immediate family member, for example, partner, child, parent or sibling, the employee will be entitled to 5 paid days leave. Leave may be taken at/or around the time of bereavement at the employees request.

6.1.2 If the employee has the same relationship with the deceased as described above, for example, having been brought up by the person, then the same provision of leave will apply.

6.1.3 Managers should endeavour to facilitate any requests for leave in these circumstances. However, if the Manager has any query

regarding leave arrangements these should be discussed with the appropriate Director and Human Resources before any action is taken.

- 6.1.4 There may be circumstances where an employee requires more than the 5 days leave when an immediate family member has died. In this event the employee should make their Line Manager aware of the situation in order to arrange that annual leave or accrued flexi time can be added on.

6.2 Bereavement of Relatives / Friends

- 6.2.1 When an employee suffers the loss of a relative or friend, for example, grandparent, aunt/uncle or neighbour, the employee will be entitled to 1 day's paid leave to attend the funeral.

- 6.2.2 Line Managers should endeavour to facilitate any requests for leave in these circumstances. However, if the Line Manager has any query regarding leave arrangements these should be discussed with the appropriate Director and Human Resources before any action is taken.

- 6.2.3 There may be circumstances where an employee requires more than 1 day's leave when a relative or friend has died. In this event the employee should make their Line Manager aware of the situation in order to arrange that annual leave or accrued flexi time can be added on.

- 6.2.4 When an employee suffers a loss of their partner, they may be eligible for bereaved partner's paternity leave, please refer to the East Herts Family Friendly Policy for full guidance.

6.3 Bereavement of a Child under the age of 18 (Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave)

- 6.3.1 When an employee suffers the loss of a child under the age of 18 (including parents who suffer a still birth after 24 weeks of pregnancy), the employee will be entitled to two weeks parental bereavement leave. The leave must be taken as a single block of two weeks or two separate blocks of one week at different times. Leave cannot be taken as single days.

- 6.3.2 Employees can take the leave at the time(s) they choose within the 56 weeks from the date of the death. They might choose, for example, to take it at a particularly difficult time such as their child's birthday.
- 6.3.3 If the employee has lost more than one child, they have a separate entitlement to bereavement leave for each child who has passed away.
- 6.3.4 The scope of who qualifies as a bereaved parent for the right to statutory parental bereavement leave and pay includes the following:
- Biological and adoptive parents;
 - Natural parents of adopted children who have been granted some court-ordered contact;
 - Intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement (who must either have applied or intend to apply (within six months of a child's birth) for a parental order under ss.54 or 54A of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 in relation to the child);
 - Local authority foster parents who are also prospective adopters under a fostering for adoption scheme; and
 - "Parents in fact" who, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child died, lived with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for them (but who are not being paid to look after the child).
- 6.3.5 The partner of qualifying parents, who lives with the child and the parent in an enduring family relationship, also qualifies for statutory parental bereavement leave and pay.
- 6.3.6 Employees do not need to have a continuous period of service to be entitled to take statutory parental bereavement leave or to receive statutory parental bereavement pay.
- 6.3.7 The council will pay statutory parental bereavement pay. An enhanced contractual provision will be made for the first week of parental bereavement leave where the 5 day paid provision set out in 6.1.1 above will be used to enhance to full pay for the first week. The second week will be paid at the statutory rate.
- 6.3.8 If the employee needs to take parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days after their bereavement, they can take the leave straight away. They do not have to provide any notice however they must let their manager and HR know no later than when they are due to start

work on the first day on which they wish to take leave or, if that is not feasible, as soon as they can.

- 6.3.9 To take leave more than 56 days after their bereavement, employees must give their manager at least one week's notice.

7.0 Dependency Leave and Carer's Leave

7.1 Pay entitlement for Carers' and Dependency Leave.

- 7.1.1 The Council has historically offered up to 5 days (pro rata for part-time staff) of paid leave for dependency leave. Starting in April 2024, you can use this same paid entitlement for Carer's leave and Dependency leave. However, you can only claim up to 5 days (pro rata) of paid leave in a rolling year for both types of leave combined. Once you've used up the 5-day (pro rata for part-time staff) entitlement, any additional leave for either carer's or dependency leave will be unpaid. Alternatively, you can take annual leave or use the flexible time scheme. Unpaid dependency leave is a reasonable amount as described in 7.2.4. Combined total of paid and unpaid carer's leave is defined as a statutory entitlement in 7.10

7.2 Dependency Leave

- 7.2.1 Eligibility to dependency leave:
- 7.2.2 Employees have the right to take dependency leave during working hours to deal with unforeseen/unplanned or emergency events.
- 7.2.3 The right applies to all employees regardless of length of service, hours worked, permanent or fixed term.
- 7.2.4 Employees are entitled to take reasonable time off in order to take action necessary in relation to the types of unplanned circumstances set out in 7.3 below.

7.3 What is a dependant?

- 7.3.1 A dependant is someone who relies on the employee for care. A dependant is defined for the purposes of this procedure as an employee's spouse, partner, child, parent, dependant relative or someone who lives in the same household as the employee but who is not his or her employee, tenant, lodger or boarder or someone else

who is dependent on the employee. If a manager or employee requires further clarity on what a dependant is please contact HR.

7.4 When dependency leave may be taken

7.4.1 Employees may take reasonable time off during working hours in order to take action necessary to deal with the following types of unforeseen/unplanned or emergency events:

- To provide assistance on an occasion when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
- To make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- Because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant; or
- To deal with an incident that involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which an educational establishment that the child attends is responsible for him or her.

7.4.2 These are examples of instances which may require dependency leave; however, the council will give consideration to requests for dependency leave which are not included above but may require the support of the council, **manager should consult with HR to ensure consistency**. Illness and injury do not necessarily have to be serious or life-threatening and may be linked to a dependant with a deteriorating condition requiring occasional support. The council will consider sympathetically each individual request for dependency leave considering the merits and circumstances of the specific case.

7.5 Procedure for taking dependency leave

7.5.1 The council will allow employees reasonable time to do what is necessary in any particular given situation. Employees will need to notify their line manager who can approve dependency leave by logging it into MyView (the council's HR & Payroll system) which will ensure the paid allowance is managed. Agreement should be reached regarding what time is required and for what purposes, though it is accepted that the employee may need to alter the initial agreement depending on the circumstances. Each request will be considered individually in the context of the particular circumstances.

- 7.5.2 There is no limit to the number of occasions on which an employee can exercise the right to take time off; however, such leave should normally be for genuine emergencies and unforeseen matters or in the case of paid provision for providing care. Employees should, therefore, utilise annual leave, carer's leave or parental leave for any planned absence, as dependency leave is not intended for such purposes.
- 7.5.3 Permission for dependency leave should not be unreasonably refused. Employees who feel they have not been treated reasonably in relation to such leave should discuss the matter with HR and if it cannot be resolved they should access the council's grievance procedure.
- 7.5.4 Paid dependency leave should be used to take the appropriate action necessary to resolve or deal with an emergency/unplanned event which has arisen because of a dependant. Once the employee has had reasonable time to make alternative arrangements for care provision, any further planned time off for that particular event should be taken as annual leave, carer's leave, flexi leave or unpaid if appropriate.

7.6 Carer's Leave

- 7.6.1 This section sets out the statutory right of employees to carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need, and other support that we offer to combine work with care. We recognise the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health. As an organisation, we are committed to doing what we can to help to ensure that the health and wellbeing of employees with caring responsibilities is looked after. The right to carers leave does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

7.7 Being a Carer

- 7.7.1 A carer is anyone with caring responsibilities who provides care, assistance and support to any other individual who may be seriously ill or unable to care for themselves.
- 7.7.2 Carers might find it difficult to distinguish their caring role from the personal relationship they have with the individual they are caring for, be it a relationship with a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, or friend.

Therefore, some employees may not immediately identify themselves as a carer.

7.7.3 The activities that carers undertake are wide-ranging, including but not limited to:

- help with personal care;
- help with mobility;
- managing medication;
- practical household tasks;
- emotional support; and
- help with financial matters or administration.

7.8 Requesting support

7.8.1 We recognise that caring can be unpredictable and emotionally upsetting. An employee may acquire caring responsibilities overnight or caring responsibilities may develop over time. We realise that caring is a subject that not everyone finds it easy to talk about. However, we urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support. In particular, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager about your caring responsibilities to explore how we can help you with any challenges you are facing. If, for any reason, you are unable to approach your line manager, you can speak to the HR department. Any information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager or the HR team will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

7.9 Entitlement to carer's leave

7.9.1 Whatever your length of service, you have a statutory right to take carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need.

7.9.2 In the context of statutory carer's leave, a dependant means:

- your spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- any person who lives in the same household as you (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee); or
- any other person who would reasonably rely on you to provide or arrange care.

7.9.3 A dependant has a long-term care need if they:

- have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months;
- have a condition that amounts to a disability under the Equality Act 2010;
- require care for a reason connected to their old age.

7.9.4 This statutory right to carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where your child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

7.10 Amount of carer's leave you can take

7.10.1 The amount of carer's leave that you can take is up to 1 week in any 12-month rolling period. A week of carer's leave is the same duration as your normal working week, meaning that a full-time employee is entitled to five days' carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period. If you are contracted to work four days per week, you will be entitled to four days of carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period, and so on. You can take the leave in one continuous block, as individual days, or as half days. If you are caring for more than one dependant, you do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

7.11 Notice to take carer's leave

7.11.1 The council will allow employees reasonable time to do what is necessary in any particular given situation. Employees will need to notify their line manager who can approve carer's leave by logging it into MyView (the council's HR & Payroll system) which will ensure the paid allowance is managed. Agreement should be reached regarding what time is required and for what purposes, though it is accepted that the employee may need to alter the initial agreement depending on the circumstances. Each request will be considered individually in the context of the particular circumstances. We ask that you give as much notice as possible when requesting carer's leave so that we can plan for your absence. In any event, you must give notice in advance that is either twice the number of working days that you wish to take as carer's leave, or three days, whichever is earlier.

7.12 Postponing your carer's leave

7.12.1 While every effort will be made to meet your request, we may postpone a period of carer's leave if we consider that your absence will disrupt the operation of our business. If a decision is taken to postpone your leave, your line manager will consult with you to find an

alternative leave period within one month of the carer's leave period original requested.

7.13 Cancelling your carer's leave

7.13.1 You can cancel your carer's leave and take it at a different time as long as you let your line manager know before your leave has started. You cannot cancel any carer's leave that has already begun.

7.14 Our commitment to you

7.14. You have the right not to be subjected to any detrimental treatment (including being unfairly penalised, disciplined or dismissed) because you have taken, sought to take, or made use of the benefits of carer's leave.

7.15 Other types of leave

7.15.1 The statutory right to carer's leave is intended to be for planned and foreseen caring commitments. If you need to take time off to manage an unexpected or sudden problems relating to a dependant this is Dependency Leave. We recognise that you may need a longer period of time off work that goes beyond your statutory entitlement to carer's leave under this policy. In such cases, we may agree for you to take the time off work as annual leave or flexi leave.

7.15.2 Requesting flexible working

We realise that flexible working can help navigate the challenges of caring while also working. We enable a wide range of flexible working practices within the workplace. If you feel that you would benefit from a permanent change to your working arrangements to help balance your work and caring responsibilities, we encourage you to look at our Flexible Working Scheme.

7.16 Further support for Carers/Staff with dependents

7.16.1 Other provisions

As set out in this General Leave Policy and the Family Friendly Policy in addition to providing an enhanced provision of paid dependency leave and operating a flexi-leave scheme for most staff:

The council also provides enhanced occupational paid leave in the following areas:

- Antenatal care
- Maternity
- Adoption
- Paternity
- Fostering
- Bereavement

The council also provides the opportunity to take unpaid leave in the following areas:

- Parental Leave
- Career Breaks which can be used to support a longer term caring arrangement

7.16.2 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) The council provides employees with an external EAP which provides proactive, practical information and emotional support to help you to manage and reduce the impact of all of life's events, both at home and at work. The service is available 24/7 and is completely free and confidential. The service provides a specially trained, legal and information team which can help to resolve issues around: debt, legal concerns, consumer and care etc. In addition to a helpline/ telephone service and online support where appropriate employees will have access to up to 6 sessions of structured counselling.

7.16.3 Useful Links:

- Carers UK: <https://www.carersuk.org/>
- Herts Carers: <https://www.carersinherts.org.uk/> this site also provides links to many other useful sites
- Hertfordshire County Council:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/home.aspx>
- Unison (Trade Union) Carers support/news:
<https://www.unison.org.uk/search/carers/>

8.0 Career Breaks

8.1 What is a Career Break?

8.1.1 A career break enables an employee with 2 years continuous service with the Council to take an unpaid break from work for personal reasons and maintain continuity of service with the Council. The employee is required to give a minimum of 3 months' notice to

commence a career break. With the exception of continuity of service, all other terms of the employment contract with the Council will be suspended. On return, at an agreed date following the career break, the employee will be able to return to the same or similar post within the Council without competitive selection.

8.1.2 It is recognised that during an employee's working life there will be times when personal commitments may take priority over work for example, bringing up children, longer term care for sick or elderly relatives, or pursuing a course of further education. The Council can accommodate such personal commitments, where operationally practicable, through career breaks.

8.2 What is the purpose of a career break?

8.2.1 The purpose of a career break could be:

- To extend the maternity/ paternity leave period
- To extend a period of adoption leave
- To care for dependent relatives
- To enter full time education
- Extended foreign travel
- To convalesce after a period of illness or major life crisis such as bereavement or divorce

8.2.3 These reasons are not all inclusive and others may be considered, with the major exception of taking up other paid employment.

8.3 How long is a career break?

8.3.1 The minimum break is 3 months and the maximum break is 1 year.

8.3.2 There is no limit to the number of career breaks an employee can take providing that they return to work for the Council for a minimum of 2 years between each career break.

8.4 Who can apply for a career break?

8.4.1 All permanent employees, with at least two years continuous service with the Council, regardless of the number of hours worked, are eligible to apply for a career break.

8.4.2 An employee must submit their request to their manager, with a copy to Human Resources stating when they would like their career break

to commence, the reason for their career break and the durations of the requested break.

8.5 What happens to the employee's job?

8.5.1 After a career break the employee will have the right to return to their same or equivalent position (in terms of service area and pay) where this is available. However, where this is not available the Council will offer an alternative which can include work elsewhere in the Council at a different level and pay. The new job would need to be a suitable alternative, within the definition used when employees are facing redundancy and would be in line with the Redeployment Policy regarding salary protection. (see Redundancy policy and Redeployment policy for more details)

8.6 Extending or cutting short the career break

8.6.1 If the employee wishes to extend the career break, they must do so in writing giving a minimum of three months' notice. The Line Manager will give consideration to the extension along the same lines as the original request and may grant up to one year in total.

8.6.2 There will be no automatic right to cut short a career break but Line Managers will consider such requests from an employee as they can accommodate, without impacting on service level.

8.7 Contract of employment

8.7.1 The employee will be required to sign an agreement suspending all terms of their contract of employment, with the exception of continuity of service with the Council. The contract of employment will remain suspended for the duration of the career break. This will not constitute a break in service and general conditions of service will apply as at the start of the career break when the employee returns to work.

8.8 Rate of Pay/Pension

8.8.1 At the end of the career break the employee will return to the same incremental point they were on at the start of the career break which may result in salary protection if the post has been downgraded in a restructure or an alternative post has been agreed by all in lieu of the original post.

8.8.2 Employees considering career breaks should contact LPFA pensions for more information.

8.9 Disciplinary warnings

8.9.1 Any live disciplinary warnings will be suspended for the duration of the career break and will be carried forward upon the employee's return to work.

8.9.2 Please also view the Flexible Working Policy for more information.

9.0 Citizenship duties

9.1 Elected Members of other Council Authorities

9.1.1 Employees who undertake duties as an Elected Member in another authority will be allowed to take up to a maximum of 10 days paid leave per annum. Leave must be used to attend official functions or meetings. Requests for leave must be accompanied by proof that attendance is required.

9.1.2 All employees paid on or above SCP 44 are politically restricted and therefore, unable to undertake these duties. Other employees may also be restricted from undertaking these duties. Guidance should be sought from their line manager or Human resources. In both circumstances the restriction will be detailed in the employee's contract.

9.1.3 It is the Line Manager's responsibility to approve and monitor requests for time off to undertake Civic Duties. However, if the Manager has any query regarding leave arrangements these should be discussed with the appropriate Director and Human Resources before any action is taken.

9.2 Magistrates

9.2.1 Employees who are Magistrates will be allowed to take up to a maximum of 10 days paid leave per annum. Leave must be used to attend court sessions. Requests for leave must be accompanied by proof that attendance is required.

9.2.2 It is the Line Manager's responsibility to approve and monitor requests for time off to undertake Civic Duties. However, if the Line Manager has any query regarding leave arrangements these should

be discussed with the appropriate Director and Human Resources before any action is taken.

9.3 Court Attendance as a Witness/Jury Member

- 9.3.1 Employees summoned as a witness or jury member will be allowed the necessary time off to attend court. The employee should inform their Line Manager at the earliest convenience and pass on the summons document to Payroll for completion.
- 9.3.2 Any monies received by an employee to compensate for loss of pay must be declared to Payroll.

9.4 Court Attendance as the accused or to pursue a Personal Claim

- 9.4.1 Employees who are attending court as the accused or to pursue a personal claim will be required to take annual or flexi leave.

9.5 Active Citizen Duties

- 9.5.1 Employees who volunteer their expertise for public service may take up to 3 days paid leave per annum to attend formal meetings or functions.
- 9.5.2 Applications for leave must be accompanied by proof that attendance is required. Leave will be granted at the discretion of the manager.
- 9.5.3 The definition of active citizenship duties would include School Governors, Trustees of Charitable Trusts, Management Committee members of charitable trusts, members of publicly constituted watchdog organizations, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) N.B. This list is not exhaustive, other bodies may fall into this category.

9.6 Service in Reserve Forces

- 9.6.1 Employees who are members of the Reserve Forces may be required to attend summer camp on an annual basis. Two weeks' paid leave will be allowed in these circumstances.
- 9.6.2 Employees are required to give as much notice as possible for annual camp in order for the Line Manager to arrange appropriate cover. Leave may be refused if it would have a detrimental impact on service delivery.

9.6.3 In circumstances where a reservist employee is mobilised they will not be paid by East Herts Council and should be placed on a Career break for payroll purposes to ensure their continuous service is not broken.

10.0 Union duties

10.1 Time off to Undertake Trade Union Duties

10.1.1 Unison stewards and officers are entitled to reasonable time off for Unison activities in accordance with the Recognition and Procedural Agreement 2004. As much notice as possible must be given to their line manager of absence due to union duties.

10.1.2 When the Employer request Unison to attend meetings, the employees concerned will be allowed paid time off from their normal duties to attend. Any additional expenses incurred by attendance will be reimbursed under the normal Council guidelines subject to approval by the Employer before they are incurred.

10.2 Unison Annual General Meeting

10.2.1 The annual general meeting will be arranged in consultation with the Chief Executive who should be given at least one month's notice of the date of the meeting.

10.2.2 The meeting will generally be held at lunchtime and Unison members attending may credit flexi time up to the end of the meeting.

10.3 Executive and Safety Committee Meetings

10.3.1 Unison will hold monthly executive meetings at Wallfields, Hertford and occasionally other EHDC venues.

10.3.2 The meeting may commence any time after 16.00 hours and employees attending may credit the flexi system until the end of their attendance or until 17.30 hours whichever is first.

10.4 Other Trade Union Activities

10.4.1 Managers may allow reasonable time off for Unison Officers to attend training courses, regional meetings and the annual conference in accordance with the Recognition and Procedural Agreement 2004.

11.0 Training Courses and Day Release

- 11.1 Employees who are required by the Council to participate in training events and/or day release courses will be allowed paid time off.
- 11.2 Employees will not be required to work extra hours to compensate for time off to attend Council run training events or courses. If an employee attends a course the time should be recorded in flexi time in accordance with the Flexitime Policy and guideline.

12.0 Examination & Study Leave

- 12.1 Employees who are required by the Council to undertake training course examinations will be allowed paid time off to do so. The time should be recorded in accordance with the Flexitime Policy and guideline.
- 12.2 Employees may apply to take one day's study leave per exam at the discretion of their manager.
- 12.3 Time off to resit exams should be taken as annual leave or flexi leave.
- 12.4 Employees should inform their manager of dates and times of examinations in order that cover arrangements can be made.

13.0 Interviews in other Local Authorities

- 13.1 Employees will be able to take up to 5 days' paid leave per annum in order to attend interviews at other Local Authorities.
- 13.2 It is the Line Manager's responsibility to approve and monitor requests for time off to attend Local Authority Interviews. However, if the Manager has any query regarding leave arrangements these should be discussed with the appropriate Director and Human Resources before any action is taken.

14.0 Leave for Medical Reasons

14.1 Medical Screening

- 14.1.1 Employees will be entitled to paid time off for the purpose of medical screening as deemed necessary by their GP or any relevant medical body.

14.1.2 Employees should inform their Line Manager of date and times of the appointment and provide details of appointments as soon as practicable in order that cover arrangements can be made.

14.2 Hospital Appointments

14.2.1 Employees are entitled to paid time off to attend hospital appointments following referral by their GP or any relevant medical body.

14.2.2 Disability leave should be considered where a person needs time off every week, every few weeks, every few months or every year for medical appointments, treatments or rehabilitation relating to disability. Disability leave should not be counted towards trigger points. Please refer to the Absence Policy for detail.

14.2.3 Employees should inform their Line Manager of date and times of the appointment and provide details of appointments as soon as practicable in order that cover arrangements can be made

14.3 Fertility Treatment

14.3.1 An employee will be given reasonable time off to undertake fertility treatment.

14.3.2 Employees must agree their time off arrangements with their manager in advance of the appointments and produce their appointment card where appropriate.

14.3.3 Employees on flexi-time should record time to attend appointments as described in the Flexitime Policy in the section relating to hospital appointments.

14.4 GP and Dental Appointments

14.4.1 Normally employees should use flexi time to visit their GP or Dentist or arrange appointments outside work time.

15.0 Time off for religious observance

15.1 Many religions or beliefs have special festival or spiritual observance days. Employees may request holiday in order to celebrate festivals or attend ceremonies. Line Managers should sympathetically consider such requests and grant leave out of holiday entitlement, flexitime or unpaid leave.

16.0 Review

16.1 This procedure will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there are any changes in legislation requiring amendments to be made.