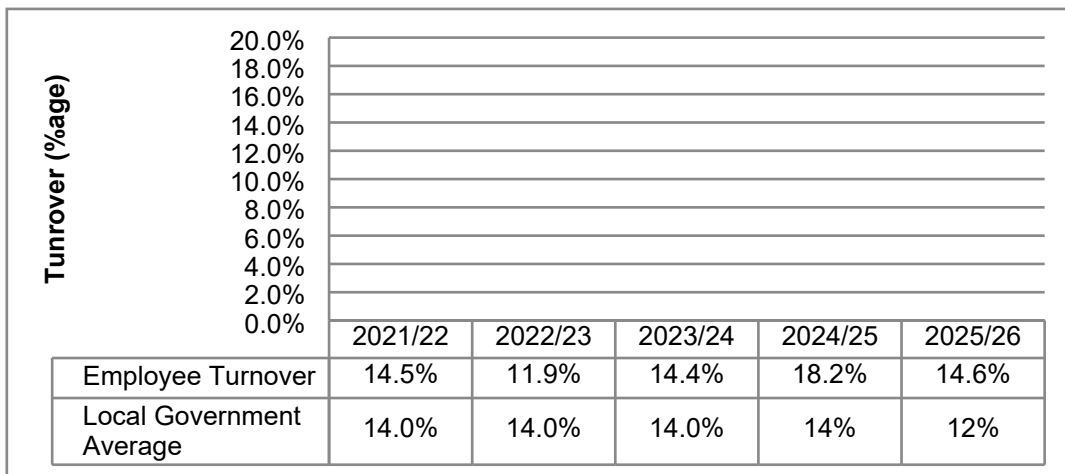


Annual Turnover Report 25/26

1.0 Summary

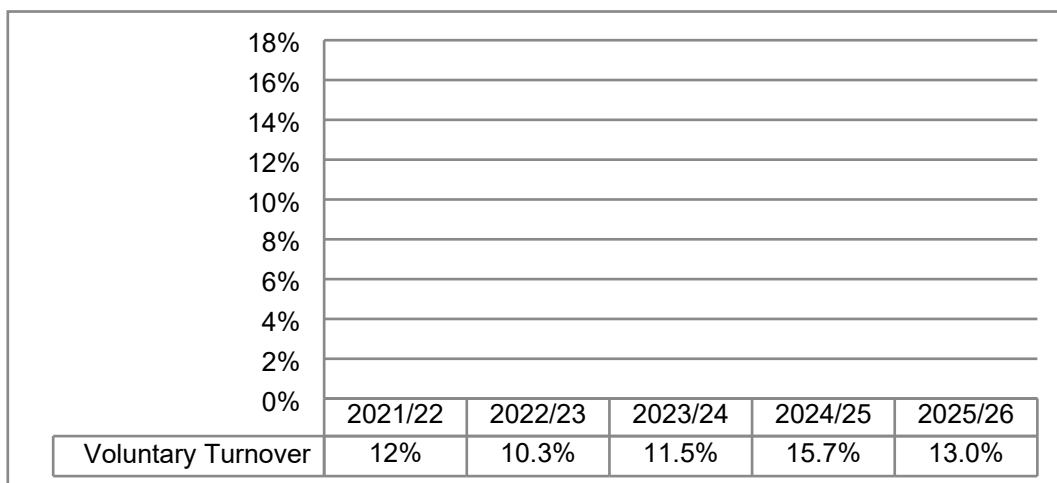
- 1.1 There was a total of 44 leavers in 2025/26: 38 of those were voluntary leavers and 6 were involuntary leavers.
- 1.2 **Figure 1** below illustrates the council’s overall turnover rate (including both voluntary and involuntary leavers) over the past five years, alongside the local government average. 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



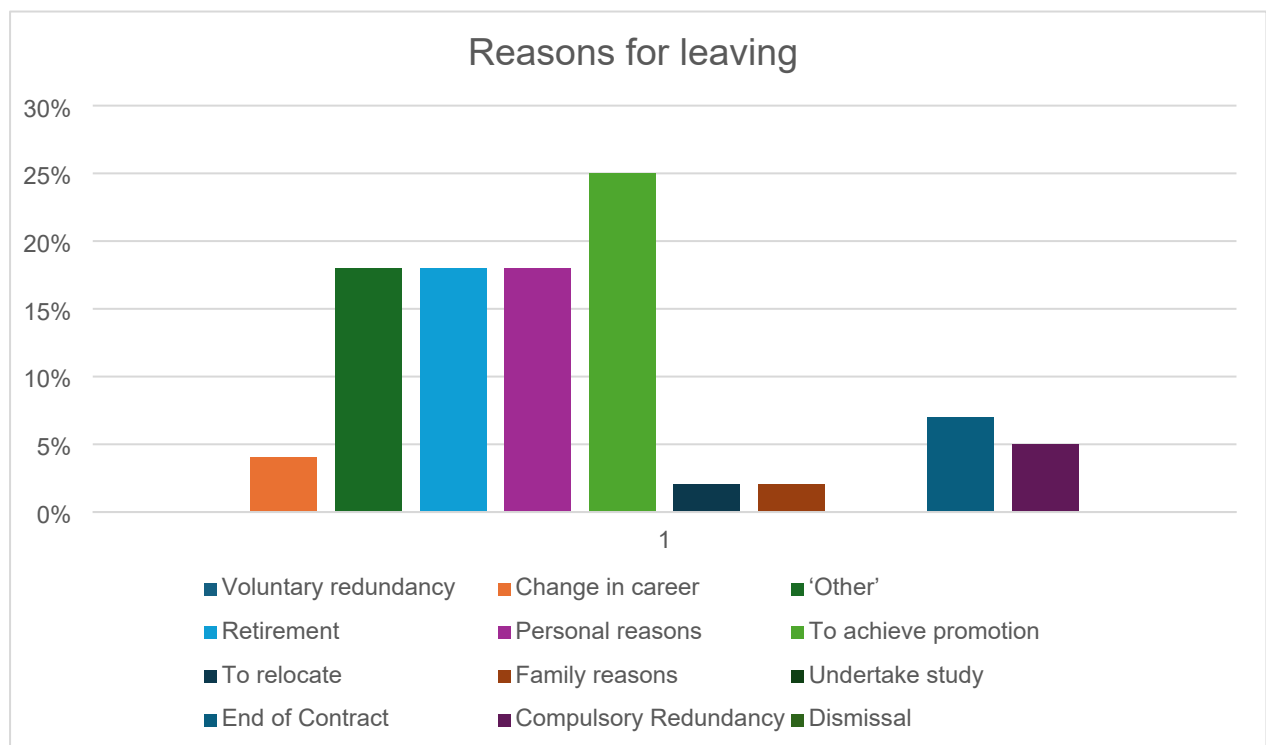
- 1.3 **Figure 2** below shows the council’s voluntary turnover rate (covering all voluntary leavers) over the past five years. This measure is presented

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.

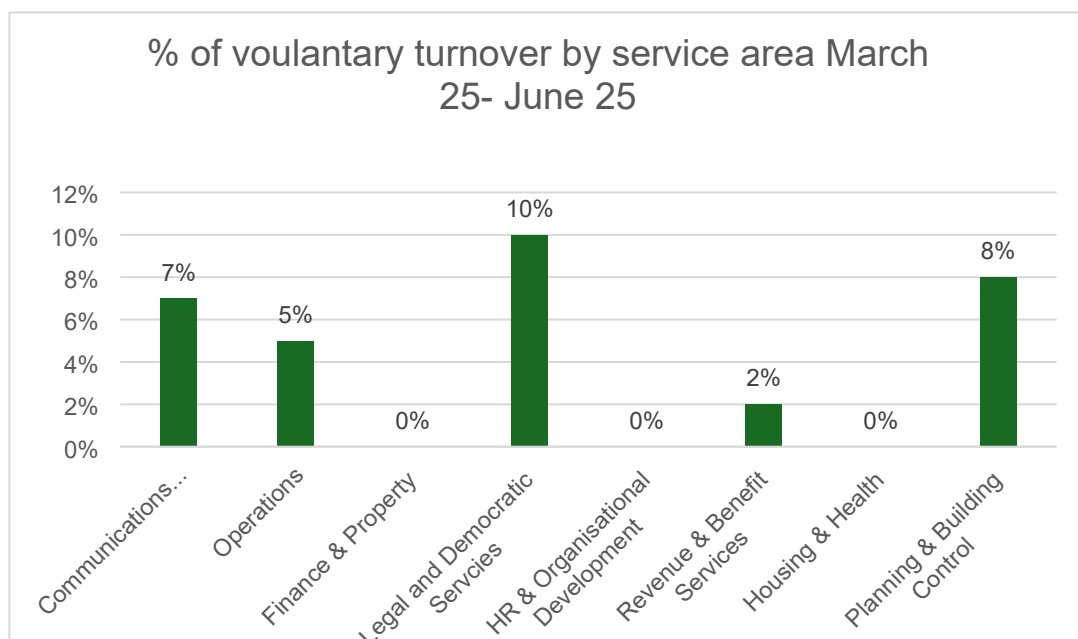
3.0 First-Year Turnover Rate

- 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

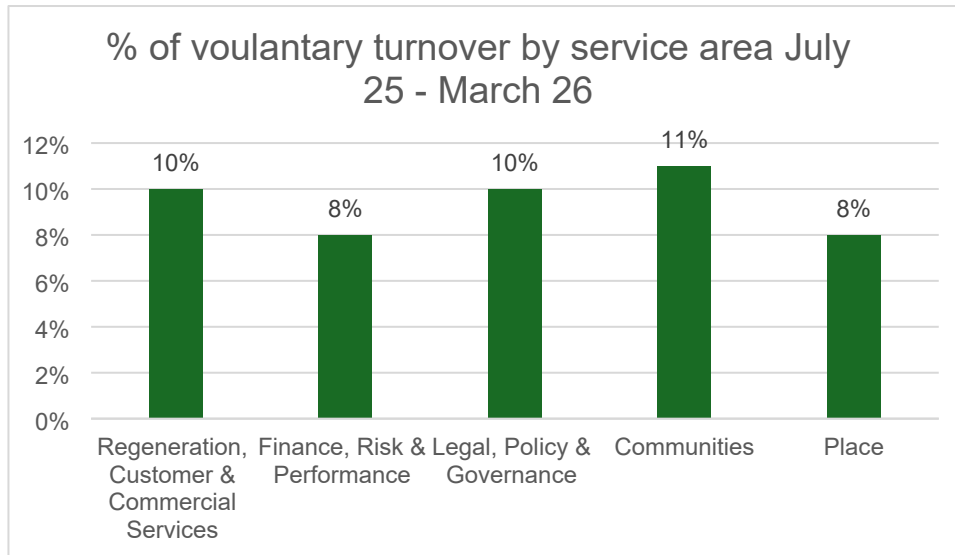
- 4.1 The voluntary turnover rate for each service area in 2025/26 is shown in **Figures 4 and 5** below. Due to a restructure of all service areas in 2025, it is not possible to make comparisons with previous years. In addition, staff were not fully assigned to the new directorates for data recording 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

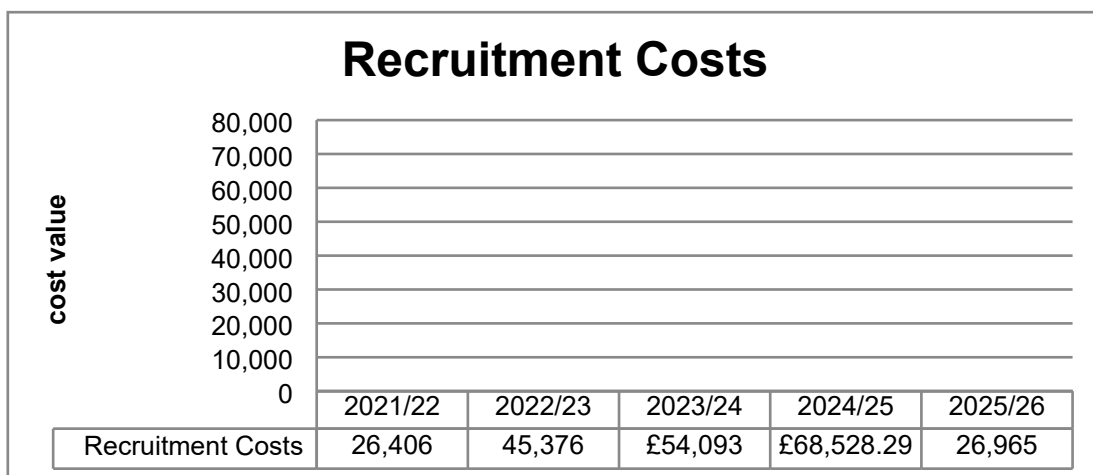
- 6.1 The council monitors its vacancy rate as this can have an impact on employee turnover e.g. employees may feel under additional pressure to cover the work of any vacant posts.
- 6.2 The vacancy rate in 2025/26 was 19% which is higher than the local government average (the mean for all English authorities 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

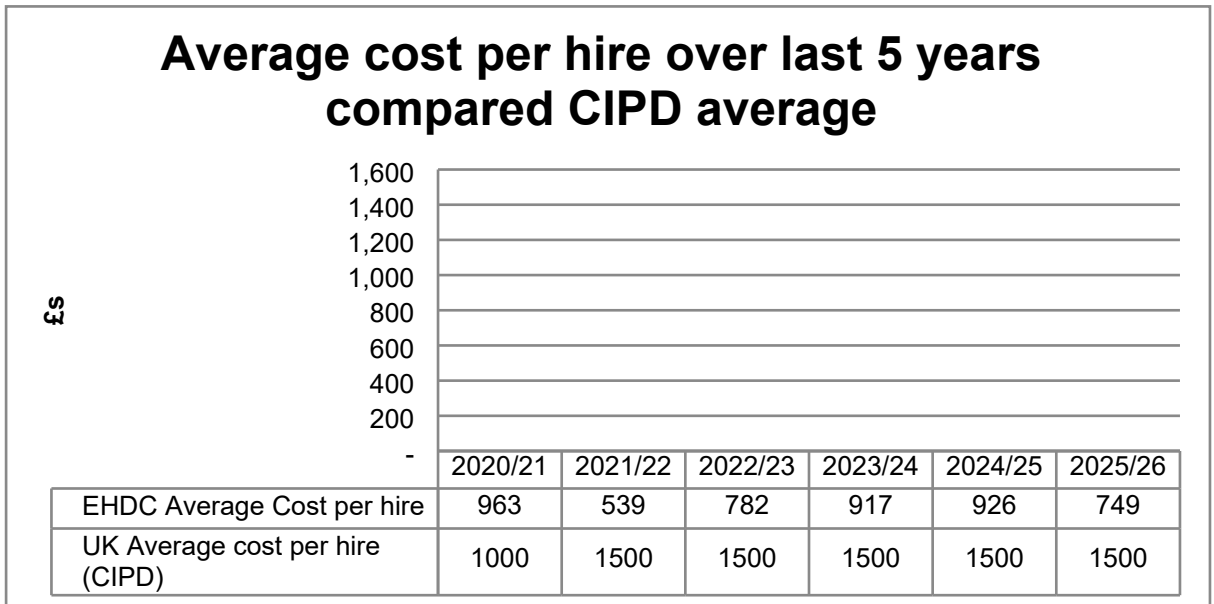


7.2 In 2025/26 there were 34 advertisement campaigns in total. The decrease in the annual cost is partly due to decreased recruitment compared to 2024/25 (74 campaigns).

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.