



# Agenda

Meeting: **Personnel Committee**  
Date: **20 July 2023**  
Time: **2.00 pm**  
Place: **Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone**

To: **All members of the Personnel Committee**

The Committee will consider the matters listed below at the date, time and place shown above. The meeting will be open to the press and public.

Members of the Committee who wish to have information on any matter arising on the agenda which is not fully covered in these papers are requested to give notice prior to the meeting to the Chairman or appropriate officer.

This meeting will be webcast live to the council's website at <https://folkestone-hythe.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

Please note there will be 37 seats available for members of the public, which will be reserved for those speaking or participating at the meeting. The remaining available seats will be given on a first come, first served basis.

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest (Pages 3 - 4)**

Members of the Council should declare any interests which fall under the following categories:

- a) disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI);
- b) other significant interests (OSI);
- c) voluntary announcements of other interests.

3. **Minutes (Pages 5 - 6)**

## **Queries about the agenda? Need a different format?**

Contact Jemma West – 01303 853495  
Email: [committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:committee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk) or download from our  
website  
[www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](http://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

To consider and approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2023.

4. **Appointment of the Joint Staff Consultative Panel**

To appoint Members to the Joint Staff Consultative Panel for the municipal year 23/24. Membership must include the Leader of the Council and 1 member from each political group.

5. **Gender Pay Gap reporting (Pages 7 - 14)**

This report outlines the council's statutory obligations regarding the publication of gender pay gap data and provides the data for this reporting year.

6. **Report of the Head of Paid Service (Pages 15 - 20)**

This report is from the Chief Executive in relation to the adequacy of resources across the Council.

7. **HR Annual Review 2022/23 (Pages 21 - 92)**

This report presents a review of the HR function over the last financial year 2022-2023.

## **Declarations of Interest**

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)**

Where a Member has a new or registered DPI in a matter under consideration they must disclose that they have an interest and, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed in advance that the DPI is a 'Sensitive Interest', explain the nature of that interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a DPI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation permitting them to do so. If during the consideration of any item a Member becomes aware that they have a DPI in the matter they should declare the interest immediately and, subject to any dispensations, withdraw from the meeting.

### **Other Significant Interest (OSI)**

Where a Member is declaring an OSI they must also disclose the interest and explain the nature of the interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a OSI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation to do so or the meeting is one at which members of the public are permitted to speak for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter. In the latter case, the Member may only participate on the same basis as a member of the public and cannot participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter and must withdraw from the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

### **Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)**

Where a Member does not have either a DPI or OSI but is of the opinion that for transparency reasons alone s/he should make an announcement in respect of a matter under consideration, they can make a VAOI. A Member declaring a VAOI may still remain at the meeting and vote on the matter under consideration.

#### **Note to the Code:**

Situations in which a Member may wish to make a VAOI include membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items; where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person; or where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position. It should be emphasised that an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Minutes

## Personnel Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Thursday, 2 February 2023
Present	Councillors Mrs Ann Berry, Ray Field, Jackie Meade (In place of Nicola Keen), David Monk (Chairman), Tim Prater(minute 13 onwards), Patricia Rolfe(minute 13 onwards) and Rebecca Shoob
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Nicola Keen
Officers Present:	Sue Lewis (Case Officer (Committee)), Susan Priest (Chief Executive) and Andrina Smith (Chief HR Officer)
Others Present:	

### 10. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 11. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 June and 20 October 2022 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

### 12. **Pay Policy Statement 2023/24**

This report presented the revised pay policy statement for 2023/24 for approval and recommendation to council.

Proposed by Councillor Ray Field  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Ann Berry and

#### **Resolved:**

- 1. To receive and note report P/22/04.**
- 2. To recommend to council that it approve, under S38(1) Localism Act 2011, the Pay Policy Statement appended to this report for 2023/24.**

(Voting: For 5; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

13. **Senior Management update**

This report provided an update on the senior management at the council. It seeks the committee's approval to move ahead with the recruitment for the proposed interim and subsequently the permanent Corporate Services Director role.

Proposed by Councillor Ray Field  
Seconded by Councillor Patricia Rolfe and

**Resolved:**

1. **To receive and note report P/22/05;**
2. **To agree that the Chief Executive, with support from the Chief HR Officer, proceed to source an interim Director for Corporate Services who will act as the s151 Officer, reporting the outcome to Council in due course; and**
3. **To approve option 2 as the preferred method of recruitment and selection to the permanent Director for Corporate Services (s151 Officer) vacancy.**

(Voting: For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

14. **Exclusion of the Public**

Proposed by Councillor David Monk  
Seconded by Councillor Patricia Rolfe and

**Resolved:**

**To exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it is likely to disclose exempt information, as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 –**

**'Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.'**

(Voting: For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 0)

15. **Pay Award update**

Andrina Smith, Chief HR Officer updated members on the progress in respect of the pay award.

It was agreed that once the staff ballot had closed members of the Committee would be notified by email of the result.

This Report will be made public on 5 July 2023

# Agenda Item 5

Folkestone  
& Hythe



District Council

Report Number **P/23/03**

**To:** Personnel Committee  
**Date:** 20 July 2023  
**Status:** Non-executive Decision  
**Chief Officer:** Andrina Smith, Chief HR Officer

## **SUBJECT: GENDER PAY GAP REPORTING**

**SUMMARY:** This report outlines the council's statutory obligations regarding the publication of gender pay gap data and provides the data for this reporting year.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Personnel Committee is asked to note the contents of the report set out below.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note Report P/23/03.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 requires employers with 250 or more staff to publish statutory gender pay gap data every year. The council is required to undertake and publish 6 different calculations that display and help explain any gender pay gap.
- 1.2 The statutory calculations are:
- a) Gender pay gap as a mean average
  - b) Gender pay gap as a median average
  - c) Gender bonus gap as a mean average
  - d) Gender bonus gap as a median average
  - e) Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses
  - f) Proportion of men and women in each quartile pay band

The data resulting from these calculations appear in section 2 of this report.

- 1.3 The council is required to publish this data on its own website and on a dedicated government website annually. The salary data for this year is based on the mandatory snapshot date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 with a publication deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The HR Senior Specialist completed the review of our data during February 2023 which was followed by a report to the Corporate Leadership Team. The council's data was then uploaded to the government's website ([click here](#)) and the Council's website ([click here](#)) during March 2023.

- 1.4 While the Council must upload data onto the government website in a standardised template, we can choose how to publish our data on our website. In order to make the data both accessible and understandable, the council has published an accompanying narrative.
- 1.5 This is the sixth year that reporting gender pay gap data has been mandatory so we are able to make some comparisons with our previous results.
- 1.6 The gender pay gap is different to equal pay. The gender pay gap is a measure of the difference between the average earnings of men and women across an organisation. Equal pay relates to men and women receiving equal pay for equal work, which has been a legal requirement for 50 years. The council is, of course, committed to diversity and equality of opportunity. Policies and procedures, such as the Recruitment and Selection policy and the job evaluation process, ensure we remunerate employees fairly and equally.

## 2. THE GENDER PAY GAP DATA

- 2.1 The gender pay gap is expressed as a percentage of men's pay. A positive percentage figure shows that, typically or overall, men are paid more. A negative percentage indicates that women are paid more.

The council's average gender pay gap as at the snapshot date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 is as follows:

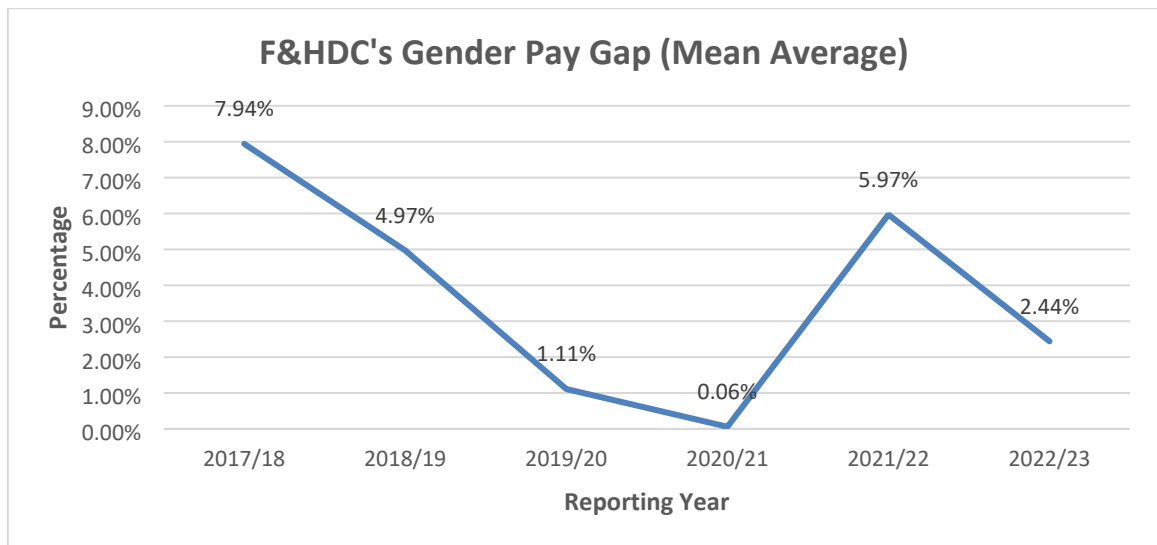


2.1.1 **Gender pay gap as a mean average: 2.44%** (last year 5.97%)

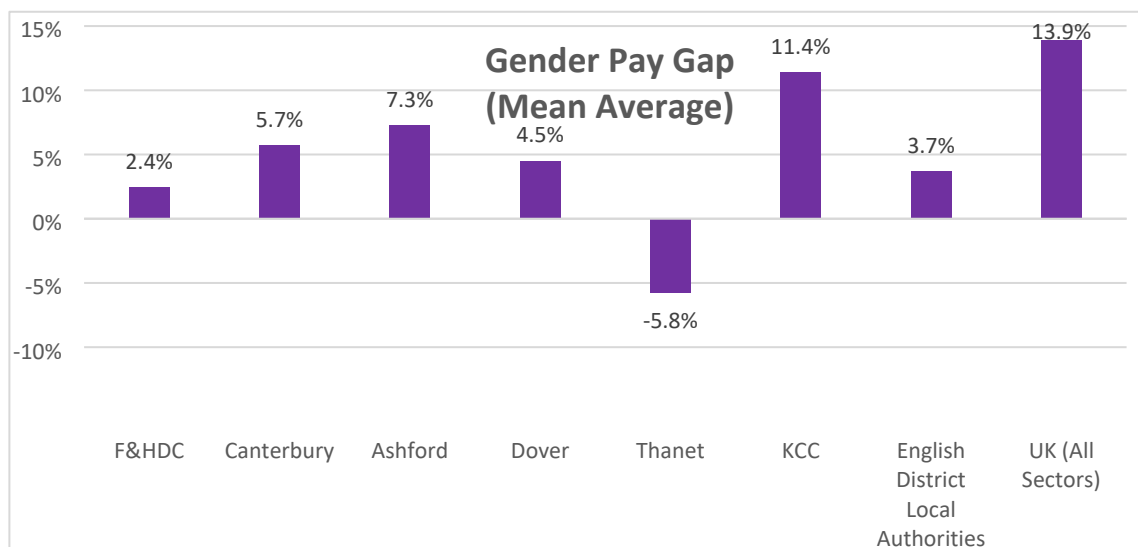
This calculation shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women across the council is nearly 2.5%.

The average man earns £18.48 per hour whereas the average woman earns £18.03 per hour.

This calculation reflects a reduction in the council's gender pay gap in comparison with last year.



The Office of National Statistics currently estimates the UK mean gender pay gap to be 13.9%<sup>1</sup>, while analysis undertaken by the Local Government Association reports an average of 3.7% amongst those District local authorities in England required to report this data.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: The Office of National Statistics 2022 dataset [Gender pay gap - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Source: LG Inform: The Local Government Association's analysis of data submitted to the Gender Pay Gap Service in 2022/23.

The mean average is useful because it takes into account the low and high earners and gives a good overall indication of the gender pay gap. However, very large or small rates of pay can 'dominate' and distort the calculation. By identifying the wage of the middle earner, the median calculation avoids this issue and is often considered a better representation of the typical difference in earnings.

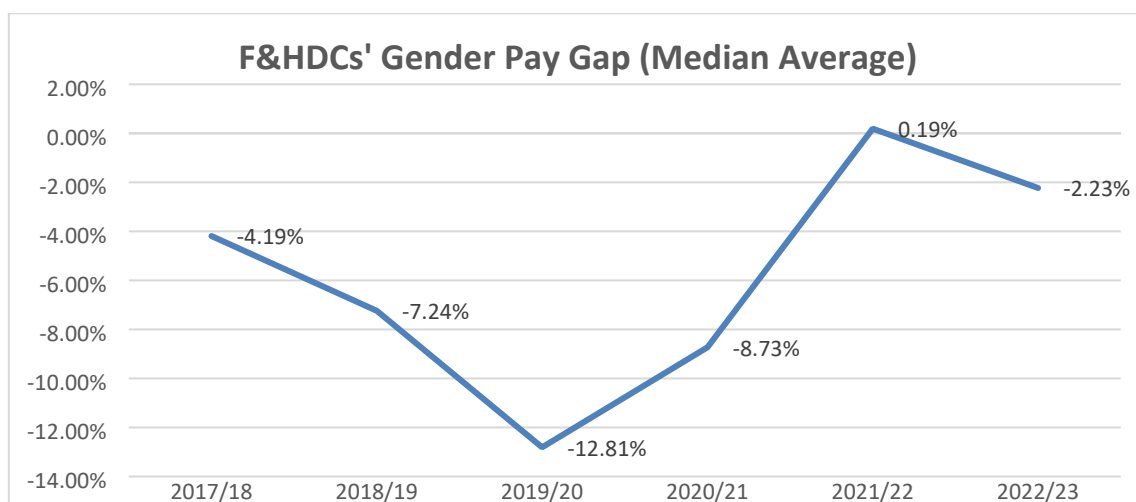
### 2.1.2 Gender pay gap as a median average: -2.23% (last year 0.19%)

The median calculation shows that the average woman employed at the council earns 2.2% more than the average man.

If all the women working at the council were lined up in order of their hourly rate, then the middle woman (the median) would earn £16.08 per hour. The median man earns £15.73 per hour.

The median calculation is often considered a better representation of the typical difference in earnings as very large or small rates of pay can distort a mean average. The median therefore is ordinarily utilised by publications and is the figure that is widely reported in the press.

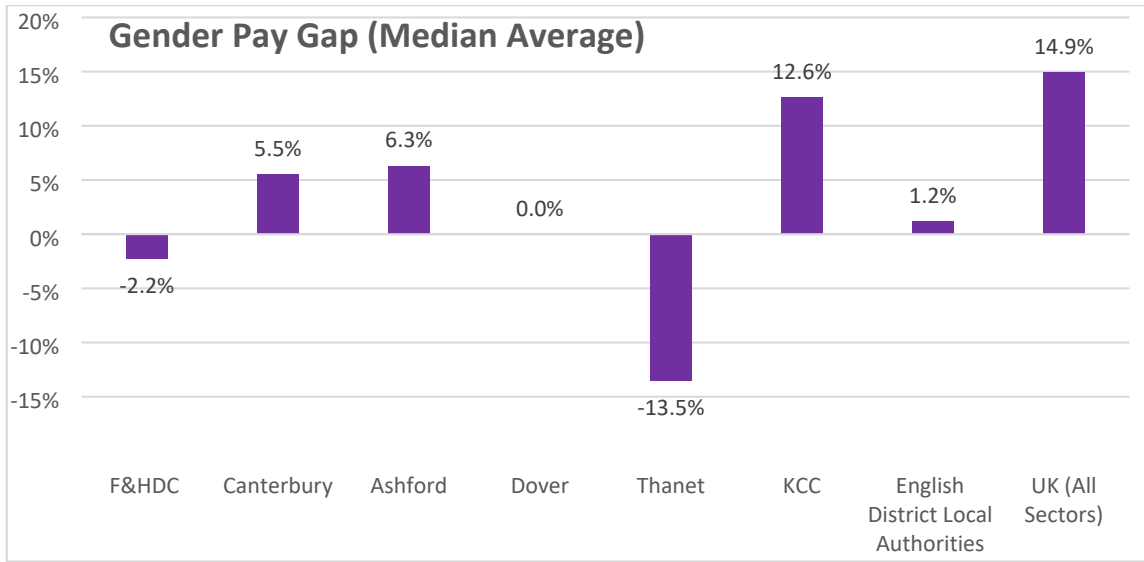
The reason for the difference in mean and median calculations is considered in paragraph 3.1 below.



### 2.1.3 The most recent data from the [Office for National Statistics](#) estimates the UK median gender pay gap to be 14.9%<sup>3</sup>, while analysis undertaken by the Local Government Association reports an average of 1.2% amongst those District local authorities in England required to report this data.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Source: The Office of National Statistics 2022 dataset [Gender pay gap - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> Source: LG Inform: The Local Government Association's analysis of data submitted to the Gender Pay Gap Service in 2022/23.



2.2 The council is also required to calculate and publish figures relating to bonus payments in the 2021/22 financial year. While the council’s Pay Policy states that there is no provision for bonus payments, the gender pay gap legislation defines “bonus pay” as referring to any remuneration that relates to performance, whether this is discretionary or contractual. As the Corporate Leadership Team are able to make a one-off discretionary honorarium award to employees that demonstrate an exceptional level of performance, such payments have been determined as meeting this definition of “bonus pay” in this context.

This interpretation of what constitutes “bonus pay” has been consistent with all previous reporting years and is made clear in our publications.

During the period between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, 13 staff (5 men and 8 women) received one-off honorarium payments that have been included in the calculations below.

2.2.1 **Average bonus gender pay gap as a mean average: 33.82%**

This is significantly less than the figure of 3.61% reported last year. Our figures fluctuate due to the low volume of honorarium payments and this is made clear in our publications.

The mean average one-off honorarium payment made to women in the period was £913.25. The average payment to men was £1,380.

2.2.2 **Average bonus gender pay gap as a median average: 30.0%**

Last year the council reported a figure of 50%. Again, fluctuations in our figures are due to the low volume of honorarium payments and this is made clear in the publication.

The median one-off honorarium payment made to females in the period was £350. The median payment to males was £500.

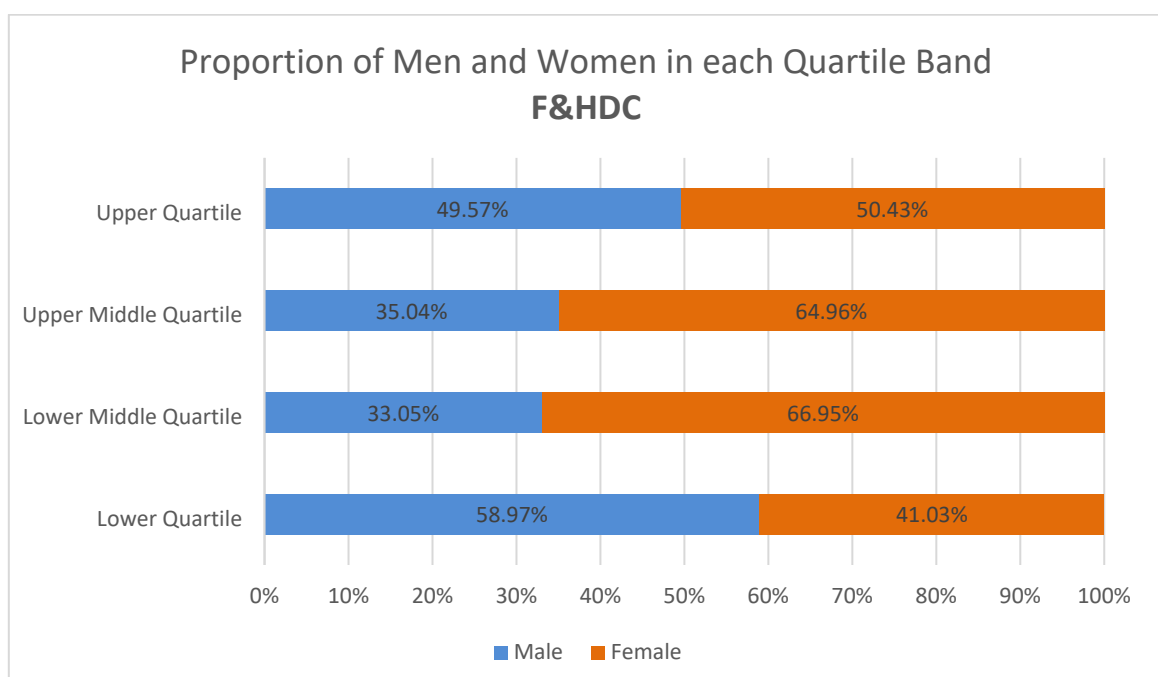
### 2.2.3 Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses:

The purpose of this calculation is to indicate how much more likely male employees are to receive a bonus payment when compared to female employees (and vice versa).

2.4% of male employees received a one-off honorarium payment when compared to 2.96% of female employees. These figures represent a reduction on what was reported last year (8.47% and 8.59% respectively) when a number of honorarium payments awarded for work undertaken during the Covid pandemic were included.

2.3 The chart below shows the proportion of males and females when divided into four equal sections based on their hourly rate. The lower quartile represents the lowest paid 25% of council staff and the upper quartile contains the highest paid 25%.

#### 2.3.1 Proportion of men and women in each quartile pay band



## 3. SUPPORTING NARRATIVE

### 3.1 The Difference Between the Mean and Median Averages

The chart above helps to explain the difference between the council's mean average (2.44%) and median average (-2.23%) figures reported in paragraphs 2.1.1 and 2.1.2.

The council employs more women than men. 57% of staff included in these gender pay gap calculations are female. This is rather typical in local government and on

average leads to a higher proportion of women in all pay quartiles across the sector. However, at Folkestone & Hythe the distribution of men and women is more uneven. The majority of women (59%) are concentrated in the middle pay quartiles, while the majority of men (61%) are counted in either the lowest or highest pay bracket.

While the upper pay quartile may appear evenly split (i.e. 50% male / 50% female) the fact that the council employs more women than men means that, proportionality, we find more of our male staff amongst our top earners. Indeed, 28% of our male employees are in this highest earning bracket compared to 23% of our female staff. This helps to explain a mean average that shows, overall, men are paid more than women. There are more women counted in this highest pay bracket than last year though, which helps to explain the reduction in our gender pay gap.

However, the large proportion of males amongst our lowest paid staff (a third of all our male staff are counted in the lowest paid quartile), coupled with a female domination of the middle quartiles, has resulted in the median female being found higher on the pay spectrum than the median man.

## 3.2 **Supporting Narrative**

3.2.1 Paragraph 2.3.1 highlights the distribution of males and females across the pay quartiles. A third of all male employees have been counted in the lowest pay quartile. A significant proportion (33%) of the staff that appear in this lower pay quartile work in the council's Grounds Maintenance department, maintenance or Housing caretaker teams, the vast majority of which are male. The ratio of males to females is ordinarily higher in manual roles and attracting women into these positions is a noted national challenge. Strategies the council is implementing to increase diversity in this area include creating gender neutral job titles.

3.2.2 The data continues to indicate a correlation between working hours, gender and the pay quartiles. Overall, 26% of the posts included in the calculations are part time. While the proportion of men working part-time hours is increasing, the majority of part-time roles (73%) are undertaken by female staff. The Office of National Statistics consistently reports that women fill more part-time jobs and that this is generally less well paid than full-time work. Indeed, 63% of part-time posts appear in the lower half of our pay spectrum.

With this correlation in mind, the council has introduced and will continue to support initiatives to increase gender diversity within the upper pay quartile:

- The council's agile working culture encourages flexibility in working hours and location.
- Prior to recruiting externally or seeking candidates for promotion, the council carefully considers whether working hours and locations can be flexible and, if the post is full-time, whether it could be undertaken on a part-time basis. This is then clearly stated on the advert in order to remove such barriers and increase diversity in recruitment and promotion activities. Job sharing options are also considered.
- It is recognised that working part-time can impact on the ability to attend training courses, which may then impact on career progression. The council therefore considers its training programmes carefully in order to reduce barriers to development. A range of flexible development opportunities are

available, including coaching, mentoring, in house training and formal qualifications. When considering our training courses we put on shorter courses or split over different days to enable part-time staff to attend, as well as co-ordinating sessions with school terms to give working parents the best chance of being able to attend. To increase accessibility even further we deliver courses remotely or in a hybrid manner where possible, and record our sessions so they can be viewed at any time.

- The council also runs training courses and provides dedicated support aimed at helping managers understand the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and ensure fair, non-discriminatory and consistent processes are followed in matters such as recruitment and promotion.
- In order to reduce the gender pay gap further, the council offers supportive options for those returning from maternity leave and encourages greater sharing of caring responsibilities through raising awareness of benefits and initiatives such as Flexible Working, Shared Parental Leave and Tax-Free Childcare.

#### **4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS**

- 4.1 Legal Comments (NM) – There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report other than those already clearly stated therein.
- 4.2 Finance Comments (TM) – There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 4.3 Equalities Comments (GE) – This report demonstrates Folkestone & Hythe District Council’s continued commitment to equality and diversity. There is no Equality Impact Assessment required.

#### **5. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting

Andrina Smith, Chief HR Officer  
Telephone: 01303 853405  
Email: [Andrina.Smith@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:Andrina.Smith@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

Ritchie Bennett, HR Senior Specialist  
Telephone: 01303 853693  
Email: [Ritchie.Bennett@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:Ritchie.Bennett@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None

This Report will be made public on 5 July 2023

# Agenda Item 6

Folkestone  
& Hythe



District Council

Report Number **P/23/01**

**To:** Personnel Committee  
**Date:** 20 July 2023  
**Status:** Non-executive Decision  
**Head of Paid Service:** Dr Susan Priest

## **SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE**

**SUMMARY:** This report is from the Chief Executive in relation to the adequacy of resources across the Council.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Personnel Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note Report P/23/01.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Head of the Paid Service of the council is appointed under s3 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- 1.2 The council has a duty under that act to provide the Head of the Paid Service “with such staff, accommodation and other resources as are, in his opinion, sufficient to allow his duties...to be performed” (s4(1)(b) of the Act).
- 1.3 It is therefore appropriate to formally report to the Council, via the Personnel Committee, on the adequacy of staff resources that the Council has provided to give assurances that they are sufficient to discharge the Head of Paid Service duties.

## 2. RESOURCES OF THE COUNCIL

- 2.1 The immediate day-to-day demands for high quality council services continue, with the focus of resource delivering the Corporate Plan. Welfare support to residents with increased cost of living pressures continues to be a high priority, as well as providing support for asylum seekers or to those settling in the district from Ukraine and Afghanistan. While resources are focused on the corporate plan, a change in administration and a worsening of the economic climate means that pressures to deliver things beyond those in the Plan remains high and this is not a sustainable position. As we set the budget for the coming years in the autumn members will be encouraged to focus resources on fewer priorities.
- 2.2 A mixed-model approach to resourcing continues, with an expectation that this trend will remain at least in the short term. This mixed-model uses a combination of permanent full and part-time staff, specialist advisors, for a specific task, fixed contracts largely in response to additional grant funding for a specific purpose, and specialist interims to fill a gap. This approach is widespread across the local authority network. The advantages of this mixed-model are that it provides greater flexibility in resourcing and the ability to source specific skills particularly when the labour market is tight. The downside is that the costs can be higher than an equivalent full-time permanent member of the establishment, but an overall balance has to be struck considering both the needs of the council and the prevailing labour market conditions.
- 2.3 Elements of particular note in the draw on council resources since the last annual report include:
  - i. **Climate change** – resources have been focused on deepening and progressing the council’s understanding and approach to the environment and climate change. A series of strategies and plans, supported with targeted projects, are now underway and the level of general awareness and depth of understanding of the subject matter continues to broaden across the council and through our communities. Being a trailblazer on significant pieces of work this year, e.g., the two phases of social housing decarbonisation project, allow us to not only improve the quality of housing for our tenants, but to learn from and amend our approach while sharing that



learning more broadly across the local authority network. Resources in this specialism continue to be scarce nationally and moves have been made to bring the available expertise from consultant contract to be part of the council's in-house team to strengthen capacity.

- ii. ***Delivering regeneration, housing and place-shaping projects*** – resource has focused on projects such as Coast Drive Beach Huts; Otterpool Park; Princes Parade; Folkestone Town Centre and the LU award; Ship Street; Mountfield Road; and the HRA capital programme. As a result of the significantly changed economic climate, many of these larger projects have necessitated a review and in some cases delivery routes have changed and the projects have been modified. The council is not alone is reconsidering and / or re-positioning projects and many other local authorities have done similar. The scale of cost and stubborn inflationary pressures has meant that intended plans and timescales have in some cases been reconsidered and re-phrased. It is important to note that those projects that have been changed do not necessarily release council resource, the capacity is deployed delivering the projects in a slightly different way, for example rather than directly delivering a development project staff may be involved in facilitating and enabling various delivery activities via others, etc. Keeping staff motivated and engaged during these changes has needed senior management focus and clear messaging for staff, councillors and residents.
- iii. ***Staff turnover & expertise*** - A number of senior and middle management posts have left the organisation this year and as the labour market remains tight recruitment challenges are expected to continue; gaps and shortages in some teams unfortunately continue to be a stubborn cause of concern. Staff movement between local authorities is also a worrying trend as is pay inflation as councils secure the most competent well-skilled and experienced officers. However, the council's HR team remains creative and continues to provide innovative suggestions to address the gaps and our in-house training & OD team continues to be well respected and valued by staff and by other East Kent councils that contract to use their services.

Of particular note is that the council's offer of hybrid working continues to be highly valued by staff and it has become a firm expectation by many of those seeking new roles. Our unique selling point (USP) used to be the offer of flexible working and post-covid, this has now become mainstream. So, our ability to remain flexible in the number of days per week in the office is used as a differentiating factor, i.e., we do not prescribe 2 or 3 days per week in preference for this being a matter for the relevant manager who is accountable for service quality and performance, while contributing to achieving the overall corporate objectives and enhancing / protecting the positive culture of the organisation.

- vi. ***Establishment*** - The revised MTFs position reported to Council last November provided the context for a deep analysis of the organisation which was undertaken between January and July by the Chief Executive, supported by a small core team of staff. Vacancies were held where possible to ease in-year budget pressures and the Taking Stock exercise has provided very rich and useful data which will be used as the council's financial pressures are considered and the budget strategy is formulated

throughout the autumn. It also provides data to allow more strategic workforce planning and longer-term succession management planning for individual teams and across the organisation more broadly. The use of apprenticeships continues to be valued, and senior colleagues and expert interims are also being asked to 'coach' the development of more junior members of staff that show the potential for development.

- v. **Local election** - This year has also seen the additional acute demands of running the local elections, with significant planning activities leading up to polling day and the count on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May. Over 300 staff were involved in managing the elections while the delivery of day-to-day services remained the focus for other colleagues. To support the new administration, a revamped induction programme has been prepared, and staff resources continue to be focused on supporting all members as they settle in to their roles.

### 3. THE FORWARD LOOK

- 3.1 Despite the persistent tough economic climate, and the vacant posts in some teams, the culture of the organisation remains positive, and efforts continue to protect the supportive environment we have created. Staff surveys have continued throughout the year providing useful and rich intelligence on morale and associated staffing matters; the Chief HR Officer's report to committee gives far more detail on this and other related matters. In addition, teams have settled well in working periodically from the civic centre to ensure cross team and within team relationships remain strong. As mentioned earlier, hybrid working has become not only a normal part of the work rhythm at the council, but a key point in attracting and retaining staff to work for the authority. Our resource base now covers a wider geographic area, facilitated by remote working.
- 3.2 There are however strains on certain teams and posts, which are a cause for concern, and these will continue to be supported by the senior team. For example:
  - a. The council's unreasonably persistent complaining behaviour policy continues to be applied in a number of cases. The personal impact of persistent questioning and complaining is damaging, stressful for those dealing with the matters, and contributes to the fragility of certain teams within the council. There is a relentless expectation that access to information should be provided and a balance needs to be struck that addresses matters of transparency while allowing council staff to progress matters efficiently. The Chief Executive continues to take her duty of care to staff and members extremely seriously and she will not hesitate to act as the need arises.
  - b. The tight labour market means that the council has pockets of vulnerability from staff that are deemed to be a high risk of flight. These are generally in teams carrying vacancies where there is a national shortage of skills, and with those under exceptional scrutiny and high work pressures. A targeted and individual approach to those at risk of flight is taken and tools such as

retention payments, training contracts and market supplements are available for the Chief Executive to use.

- c. With an ageing workforce in some teams, coupled with recruitment difficulties in those teams, succession management remains a focus of attention and trainee opportunities to 'grow our own' continue to be supported. Strong relationships continue with local schools and a variety of activities are taking place to highlight opportunities and to encourage local school-leavers to join the council. Opportunities to highlight the various skills shortages to government colleagues remains a key lobbying point and work with the local authority network is seeking to address the matter; the Local Government Association (LGA) and District Council Network (DCN) are both actively campaigning for further entry and development opportunities to be supported.
  - d. Demands remain high on the Development Management team to progress not only the volume of planning applications, but also to address enforcement activities and to progress the significant planning applications related to Otterpool Park. There is a shortage of planning capacity across the public sector and inter-authority moves are common place resulting in significant pay inflation in some posts. The use of contracted consultants to provide the much needed capacity is likely to continue.
  - e. In the autumn decisions will be made with the executive to *right-size* the establishment. While front-line service will be protected as far as possible, the largest single ongoing financial demand relates to staffing costs. In the last year the number of Chief Officer posts has been reduced, spans of management control widened, and further work is taking place to increase the numbers within line management groupings to reduce, where possible, overall management costs. The number of tiers across the organisation will also be considered to ensure the establishment is leaner and has a lower ongoing cost base. This may necessitate further automation and self-serve using IT systems to allow the more expensive staff resource to be deployed to help those residents in most need of additional support. As these matters are considered further, and if a major restructuring programme is needed to give efficiencies, Personnel Committee will be advised further.
- 3.3 In summary, while there is a challenging agenda and a number of unknowns remain such as understanding the full impacts of new legislation in the Environment Act, or reprocurring key service contracts such as Parking Enforcement, the council's staffing resource base will continue to be dynamic but it will need to reduce. The senior team is working hard to explore all opportunities and to ensure that unnecessary cost pressures on the General Fund and HRA are avoided and that available resource is used most efficiently and effectively.

#### **4. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS**

##### **4.1 Legal Officer's Comments (AK)**

There are no direct legal implications arising directly out of this report.

#### **4.2 Finance Officer's Comments (BT)**

There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report. In terms of the resourcing pressures outlined within the paper and the impact these may have upon the MTFS and the immediate budget, these are separate factors and will be reported to relevant committees of the council as appropriate. Many of the pressures highlighted above will also factor in the budget process for 2024/25 which will be reported to both Cabinet and Council throughout the budget cycle. The council's MTFS will also be updated for these factors where costs may have an impact over future financial years.

#### **4.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (ASm)**

There are no specific Diversities and Equalities Implications arising from this report.

### **5. CONTACT OFFICER AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Susan Priest  
Tel: 01303 853315  
Email: [susan.priest@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:susan.priest@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None

# Agenda Item 7

Folkestone  
& Hythe



District Council

This Report will be made  
public on 5 July 2023

Report Number **P/23/02**

**To:** Personnel Committee  
**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
**Status:** Non-executive Decision  
**Head of Service:** Andrina Smith, Chief HR Officer

**SUBJECT: HR ANNUAL REVIEW (2022/2023)**

**SUMMARY:** This report presents a review of the HR function over the last financial year 2022-2023.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report set out below.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note report P/23/02.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The HR Service has been back in-house at Folkestone & Hythe since March 2012 following a period of out-sourcing to the East Kent HR shared service. This report is written to give Committee members an annual overview of the service and the HR developments that are in place to support managers in achieving their council objectives.
- 1.2 A report is presented to the Personnel Committee on an annual basis in order for members to be satisfied that the HR team is appropriately supporting the council.

## **2. HR STRUCTURE AND SERVICE**

- 2.1 Following completion of the Transformation programme, the HR & OD team are still embedding the case management approach into our processes with the support of the ICT & Digital team to enable many routine queries to be dealt with via the Staff Hub directly by a Case Officer trained in HR tasks. The current HR & OD Team structure can be seen in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 Overall, the service continues to maintain a Business Partner approach to supporting managers. This enables a greater understanding of the council's service areas particularly for the two HR Specialist roles as they continue to develop and widen their generalist knowledge, however the team do also provide generalist advice across the whole business and work in an agile way to ensure that adequate support is always provided.
- 2.3 The HR Senior Specialist and Specialists continue to have monthly meetings with the Assistant Director and Chief Officers along with some Lead Specialists to discuss a standing agenda of HR items, including recruitment, absence management, casework, restructuring and corporate developments. They will also attend the relevant managers meetings within the service areas when required.

The OD Lead Specialist, HR Senior Specialist and HR Specialists each have a monthly 1-2-1 with the Chief HR Officer.

The HR team also have a weekly team brief to share knowledge, discuss casework and receive corporate information.

- 2.4 The HR team have continued to work flexibly over the last year, attending the office when required for certain tasks or meetings and in addition coming in to the office on a Wednesday each week to enable further interaction and knowledge sharing.

## **3. CASEWORK**

- 3.1 During 2022/23 the HR team have supported the following cases:
- 16 disciplinary cases resulting in 4 verbal warnings and 4 first written warnings. Under section 4.4 of the disciplinary procedures a penalty up to and including a final written warning can be agreed outside of a disciplinary hearing if the employee is in agreement. Seven of the eight case numbers mentioned above were issued in this way; the exception being one of the first written warnings which was the result of a formal disciplinary hearing.
  - 0 formal capability cases during the year.
  - 1 grievance was submitted which was partially upheld and the employee who raised the grievance requested to be redeployed which was accommodated.

While not formal cases, the team have continued to support a number of managers and staff with interventions including targeted actions and short-term performance improvement plans using our behavioural framework.

The continuation of the use of section 4.4 to enable warnings to be issued and recorded without the need for a formal hearing continues to reduce the amount of time being spent on formal hearings and the associated preparation time unless the case is particularly serious or complex in nature.

- 3.2 As a comparison, during 2021/22 the following cases were dealt with:
- 6 disciplinary cases resulting in 1 verbal warning, 1 first written warning, 3 final written warnings and 1 summary dismissal. Under section 4.4 of the disciplinary procedures a penalty up to and including a final written warning can be agreed outside of a disciplinary hearing if the employee is in agreement. Five of the six case numbers mentioned above were issued in this way; the exception being the summary dismissal which was the result of a formal disciplinary hearing.
  - 2 capability cases which resulted in one member of staff leaving before the process concluded and the other was dismissed on the grounds of ill health capability.
  - 0 grievances were raised during the year.
- 3.3 The last financial year saw a number extremely complex and high profile disciplinary investigations which saw HR and Internal Audit working closely to support managers appointed to investigate the various allegations. Some of these investigations were very time consuming, with two of the particularly complex cases taking in excess of 6 months to bring to a conclusion.
- 3.4 In 3.1 above it was stated that there were 16 disciplinary cases but only 8 outcomes are recorded. It is worth noting that 6 of the remaining 8 cases were linked to the complex investigations mentioned in 3.3 above and resulted in the employee resigning either before the investigation completed or before a formal hearing could be convened.
- 3.5 Members of the Personnel Committee will be aware that since the investigations in 2022 a governance action plan has been implemented by the Director of Corporate Services and Assistant Director for Governance & Law. As part of that action plan, during Q4 of 2022/23 the HR & OD team have been instrumental in designing a 'Getting it Right' session outlining the importance of declarations, contract management and compliance with the officer code of conduct and financial procedures. The intention is to have several 1 hour sessions which will be made mandatory and conducted face to face in the Council Chamber with a member of CLT present to introduce each session. A register of attendance will be kept and after each session every member of staff will receive a newly designed declaration form which they will need to complete and have authorised before it being saved on their personnel records.

*Whilst this report is intended to be a review of the last financial year, given the high focus on ensuring staff receive appropriate training to understand the importance of getting these elements right, it is felt appropriate to update members of this committee on progress even though it would technically be part of the 2023/24 report.*

*Throughout May 2023, 7 face to face sessions were held with attendance made mandatory at the civic centre. One final session was then held remotely via Teams at the start of June*

to enable the few staff who were unable to attend for various reasons (agreed with the Chief Executive and Chief HR Officer) to receive the training.

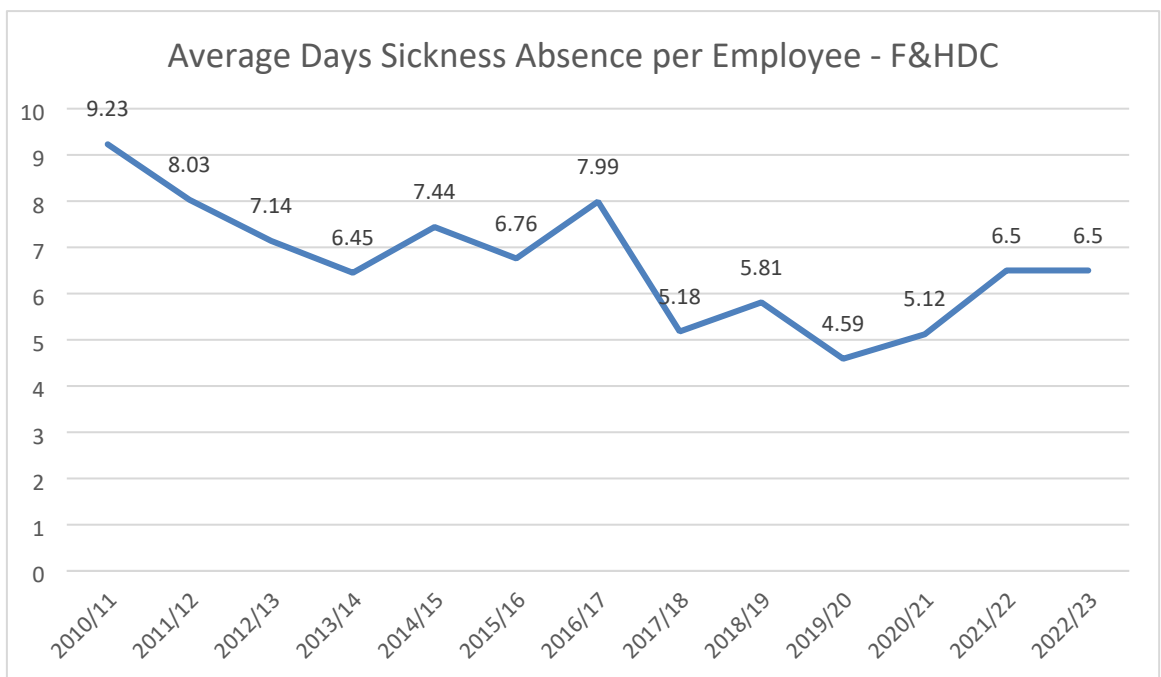
Including agency workers, 480 staff were invited to the Getting it Right Training sessions. At the time of writing this report, 437 staff have attended one of the sessions. Of the 43 that haven't attended: 8 are on maternity leave, 19 are on casual zero hour contracts, a further 8 were due to leave the council's employment before the end of June 2023, 2 are on long term sick leave, leaving only 6 staff who could not get to a session due to their shift pattern.

The remote session was recorded and will be made available for all new starters at the council as part of their initial induction period and will be sent to those who haven't yet attended a session to ensure that we reach all of the staff.

#### 4. ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

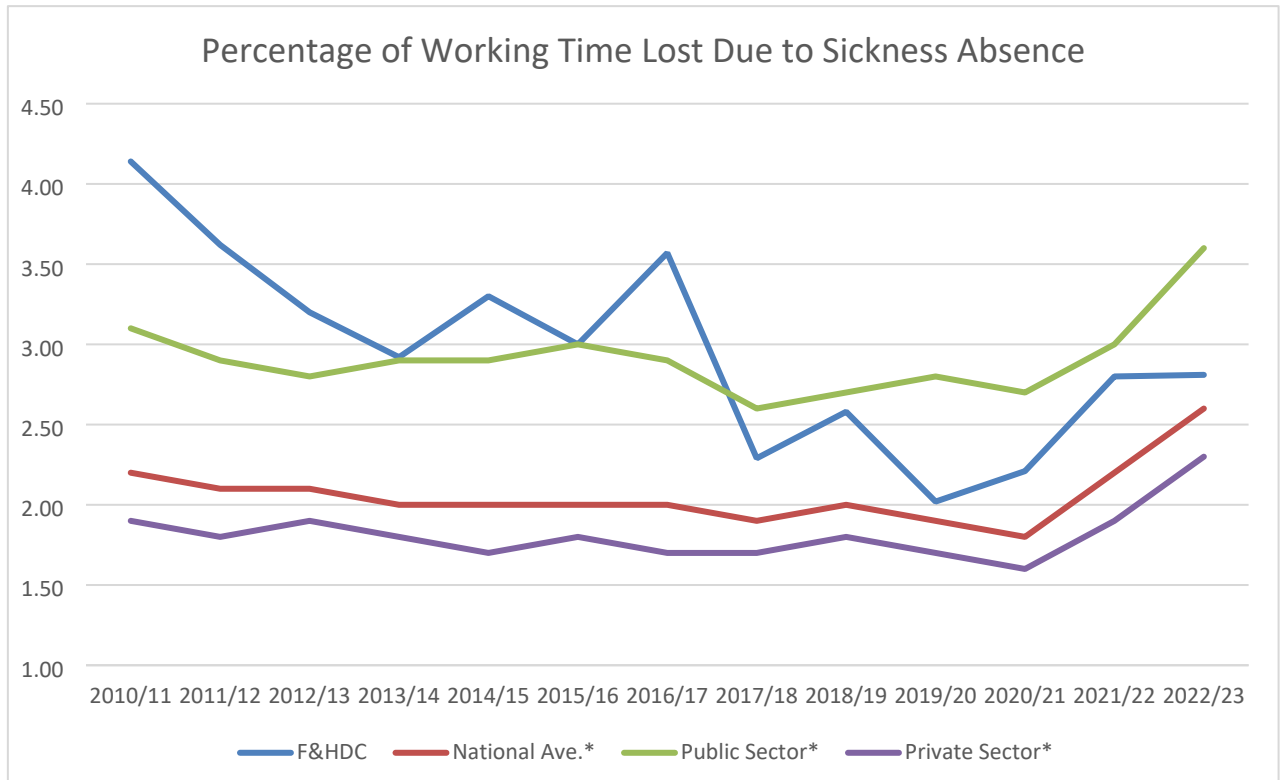
4.1 In 2022/23 there was an average of 6.5 days sickness absence per employee. This is based on an average headcount of 468.5. During the year, 2.8% of all working time was lost due to sickness absence.

4.2 This represents the same level of sickness absence across the authority as reported last year:



4.3 Measuring absence rates in terms of the “average number of days per employee” is a widely used formula across different sectors and has previously enabled comparisons to be made using data collected by professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). However, the pandemic and associated measures have had a deep impact on businesses, the UK labour market and the validity of this as a comparative measure of data in both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 reporting years. While we therefore need to be cautious with data comparisons, using the percentage of working time lost due to sickness absence is the measure least impacted by the pandemic measures, is utilised by the Office of National Statistics, and is therefore used for comparative purposes here:





Source: [Office of National Statistics](#), April 2023  
 \*Comparisons made with calendar year data

The pandemic had a significant effect on sickness absence data in recent years. While Covid-19 infections may have led to increased absences, measures such as furloughing, social distancing, shielding and increased homeworking helped to reduce other causes of sickness and, nationally, absence rates actually fell to a record low in 2020. However, the reduction in these measures, coupled with new Covid-19 variants, led to a rise in sickness absence across the country in 2021 to above pre-pandemic levels. Sickness absence rates in the UK continued to rise again in 2022 and is now at their highest level since 2004.

The national picture is reflected in both the public and private sectors, which experienced increases of 0.6 and 0.4 percentage points respectively in comparison to the previous year. Sickness amongst public sector workers have consistently been higher than private sector workers and there are several factors that may cause this, including the types of work undertaken in the public sector.

4.4 Since the 2014/15 annual report the HR team have provided a breakdown of sickness absence figures in terms of long-term and short-term cases.

Long-term absence is classed as four weeks or more.

The instances of absence and amount of days lost to sickness will be influenced by fluctuations in staffing levels. The introduction of the new housing service in October 2020 increased the council's headcount and therefore an influence on the instances of sickness absence for example. The average number of days per employee column gives the most accurate indication of the relative impact that short or long-term absences have had on the organisation.

“Days lost” refers to the amount of working days lost to sickness absence.

“Ave. days” refers to the average amount of days sickness absence per employee.

Year	Short-Term Absences			Long-Term Absences		
	Instances	Days Lost	Ave. Days	Instances	Days Lost	Ave. Days
2014/15	425	1031.5	2.72	36	1788	4.72
2015/16	349	1016.89	2.65	33	1562	4.06
2016/17	375	985	2.62	29	2021.5	5.37
2017/18	345	951.5	2.58	18	957	2.60
2018/19	258	675	1.87	30	1424	3.94
2019/20	294	879.5	2.42	16	787.5	2.17
2020/21	250	768.5	1.85	27	1355	3.27
2021/22	454	1372.5	2.98	34	1630.5	3.54
2022/23	547	1717	3.66	32	1317	2.81

4.5 Over the past two years we have experienced an increase in short-term absenteeism (absences of less than 4 weeks). The average number of days lost to short-term sickness cases is at the highest level since the HR team have reported data in this format in the Annual Report.

Nationally, sickness absence rates are at their highest since 2004, with minor illnesses (such as coughs, colds, flu, sickness, nausea and diarrhoea etc) increasing sharply over the past year and the most common reason for absence in the country. Mirroring this national trend, such illnesses are recorded as the most prominent reason for sickness absence at F&HDC.

Paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 outline the measures the council is taking to reduce sickness absence rates.

4.6 Long-term sickness absence (absences of more than 4 weeks) have reduced in comparison to last year. Overall, 5.5% of absences were classified as long-term and this equated to 43% of the total time lost due to sickness.

The most prominent reason for long-term absence over the past year remains mental ill health and stress, which accounted for 50% of our long-term sickness cases. Overall, 27% of working time lost to sickness absence has been classified as relating to “stress, depression, anxiety, mental health, fatigue”. While this represents a reduction on the previous year, where we reported a figure of 34%, this remains our most predominant reason for working time lost.

There is a mixture of work and personal related cases and while the team work to get people back into work as quickly as possible such cases have to be handled appropriately, including ensuring sufficient recovery time, in order to enable an effective return to work. The prominence of this type of absence is not unique to Folkestone & Hythe; the CIPD continue to report mental health and stress amongst the most predominant cause of long-term absence across the country, particularly in the public sector.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development: Health and Wellbeing at Work 2022.

4.7 With this in mind, the council has implemented a number of measures to support employees in the workplace, proactively manage mental health and prevent stress related issues:

- Specific Learning & Development sessions focused on personal resilience, managing and reducing the causes of stress, promoting well-being, and positive management actions that can be taken. This has included dedicated sessions on financial wellbeing, men's mental health, and menopause awareness for example, as well as the facilitation of health & wellbeing groups such as the wellbeing café.
- Initiatives to keep staff connected while working in an agile manner, including the virtual kitchen ("Chai There"), New Starters and Manager Forums, Armed Forces community staff group, connection days and weekly email communications.
- Developing a team of mental health first aiders and promoting their role throughout the council.
- Virtual "drop in" support and wellbeing sessions, where an HR representative and mental health first aider are always available.
- Access to an online wellbeing centre, which includes a range of health and wellbeing advice and resources, and an Employee Assistance Programme available through F&H Rewards. Staff can access counselling services and specialist information and support on a range of personal and professional issues that could be affecting them in their work or their health and wellbeing generally, including financial, debt and legal advice.
- A range of resources and support on a dedicated health and wellbeing intranet page, including access to 'My Wellbeing' which provides staff with a weekly programme of information aimed at improving overall well-being.
- Health and wellbeing activities including swimming at Hythe Pool, discounted gym memberships available through the council's reward platform 'F&H Rewards', and initiatives organised and supported by the Civil Service Sports Club.
- Utilising our occupational health providers and resources such as HSE risk assessment questionnaires to understand the causes of stress for individuals and teams, and taking targeted actions to mitigate these effectively.
- Promoting flexible working options and other policies or initiatives that may support work/life balance and those with caring responsibilities.
- Undertaking staff surveys, which help us identify both team and organisation-wide issues and assess the positive steps taken to address these.

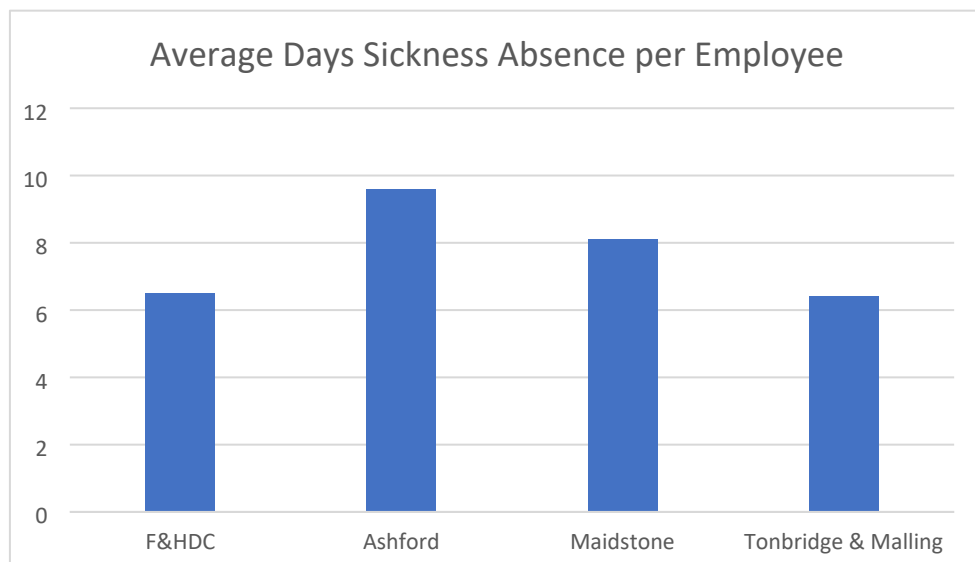
Further detail and specific initiatives to support health and wellbeing are outlined in section 7 of this report.

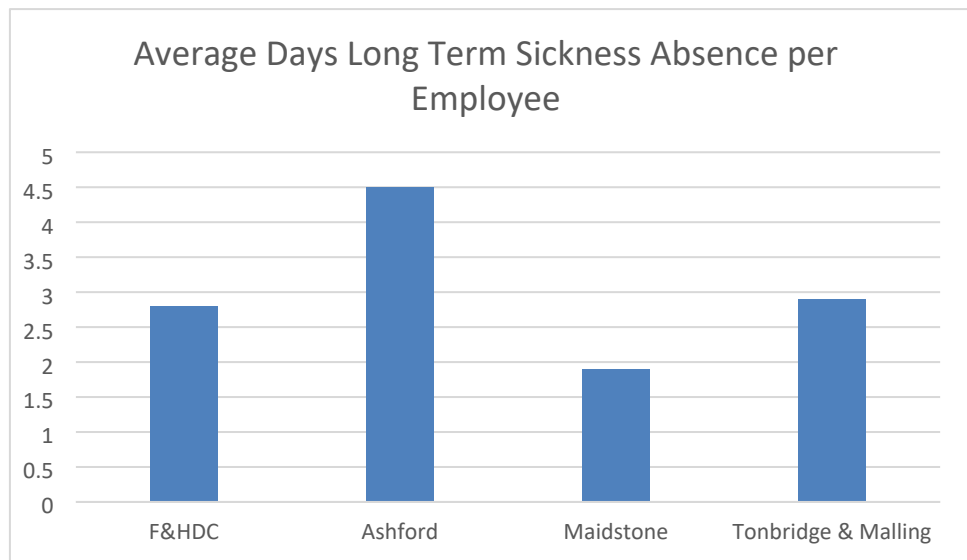
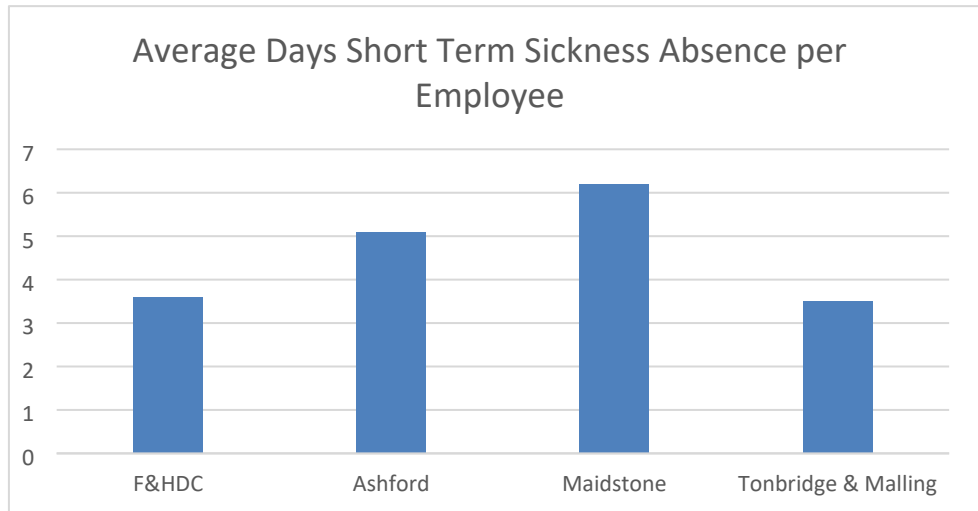
4.8 In addition to the initiatives outlined in paragraph 4.7, a number of other measures are in place to ensure that we continue to support health and wellbeing and reduce absenteeism:

- A robust absence monitoring system is in place. The line manager immediately records the absence, cause, and expected duration on the Staff Area, ensuring swift interventions from the team.
- As the expected duration of absence is included in the notification HR can monitor the undertaking of return to work interviews, which form an integral part of effective absence management. If HR have not received a copy of the return to work interview as expected reminders are sent to the line manager to ensure they are completed.

- There are clear absence triggers in place and the HR team provide dedicated and focused support to managers, including attending return to work interviews if there is a cause for concern. At these meetings supportive measures may be discussed that enable the employee to return to work earlier than otherwise anticipated or, in the case of frequent absenteeism, attend work on a more regular basis. If appropriate, formal processes may be instigated and/or the continuation of occupational sick pay considered.
- Absence data and cases are reviewed with relevant Directors, Assistant Directors, or Chief Officers as appropriate on a regular basis.
- Alongside a case management approach and providing focused support to line managers, HR also provide general training on absence management as part of the manager induction process. There was a specific training session delivered to managers and team leaders on effective absence management and supporting staff health & wellbeing in November 2022, with the next session scheduled for March 2024.
- Occupational Health services continue to be utilised and through increased contract monitoring, focused KPIs and closer working relationships, we believe we have overseen an increase in quality of medical advice and effective support received in recent years as a consequence. The contract provider changed in January 2022 and these increases in quality and effectiveness have continued as a result.
- The HR team continue to promote the council's Employee Assistance Programme available through F&H Rewards.
- The HR team have continued to work with other external organisations and sources of support, such as Access to Work, and relevant internal departments (such as Health & Safety) to improve health and wellbeing and support absence management.
- The council's agile working culture enables staff who are self-isolating to continue working if they were well enough to do so.
- The council historically offered staff free 'flu vaccinations at the Civic Centre and post-Covid this practice has continued with staff being able to reclaim the cost of obtaining a vaccination privately.

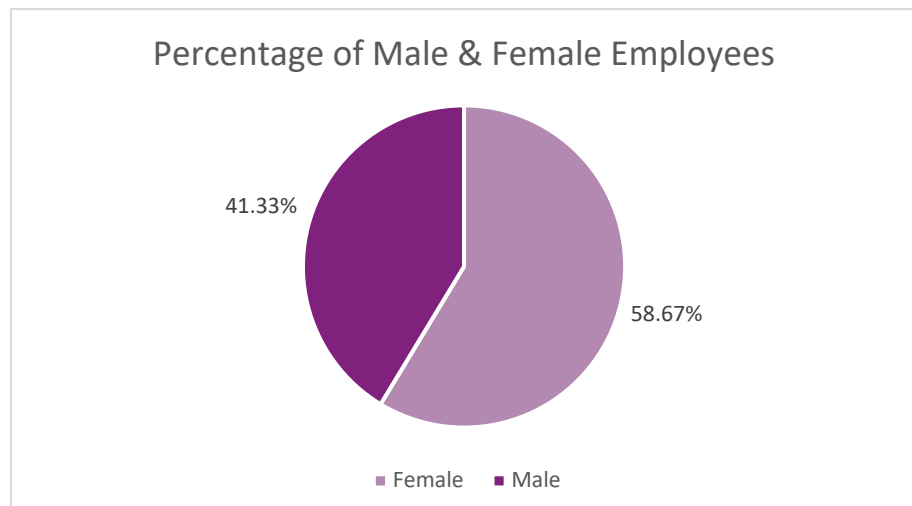
4.9 By way of a small local comparison, we have been able to obtain some benchmarked data from 3 other local authorities in Kent. At the time of writing this report, not all of the local authorities had responded to the request originally made by Ashford Borough Council.



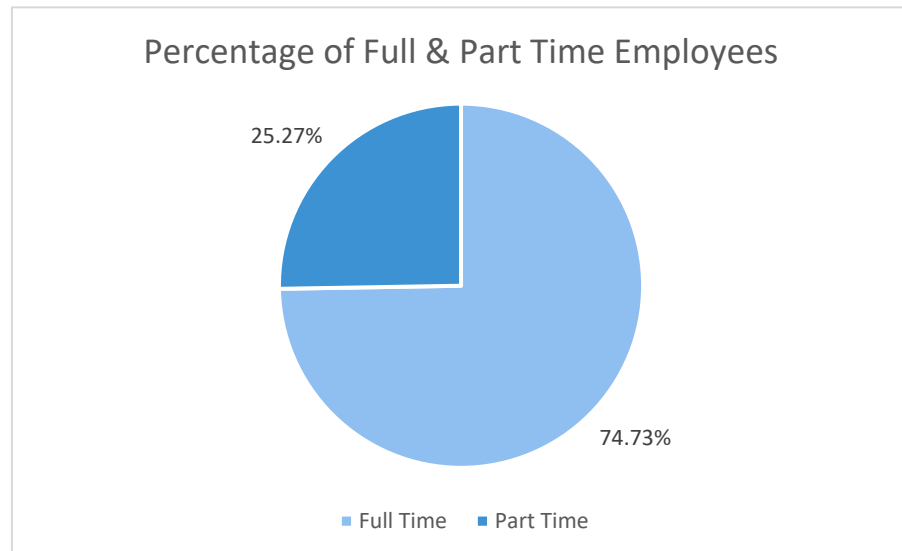


**5. WORKFORCE INFORMATION (31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)**

5.1 As a snapshot on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the Council employed a headcount of 467 staff which is reflected as 411.6FTE (Full Time Equivalent).

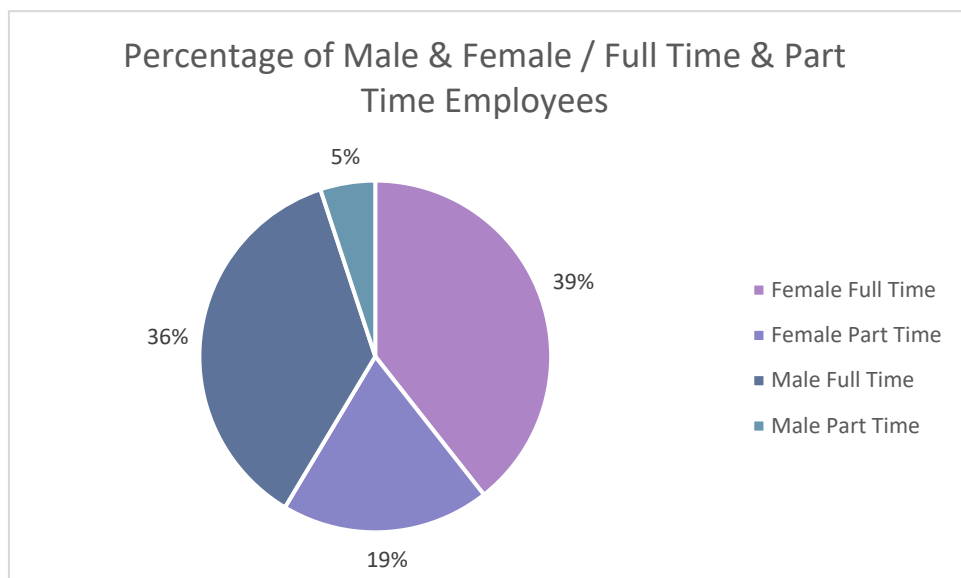


5.2 Staff are employed on a contract which specifies the number of hours to be worked each week. Full time is considered to be 37 hours per week and part time contracts could be anything up to 36 hours per week.

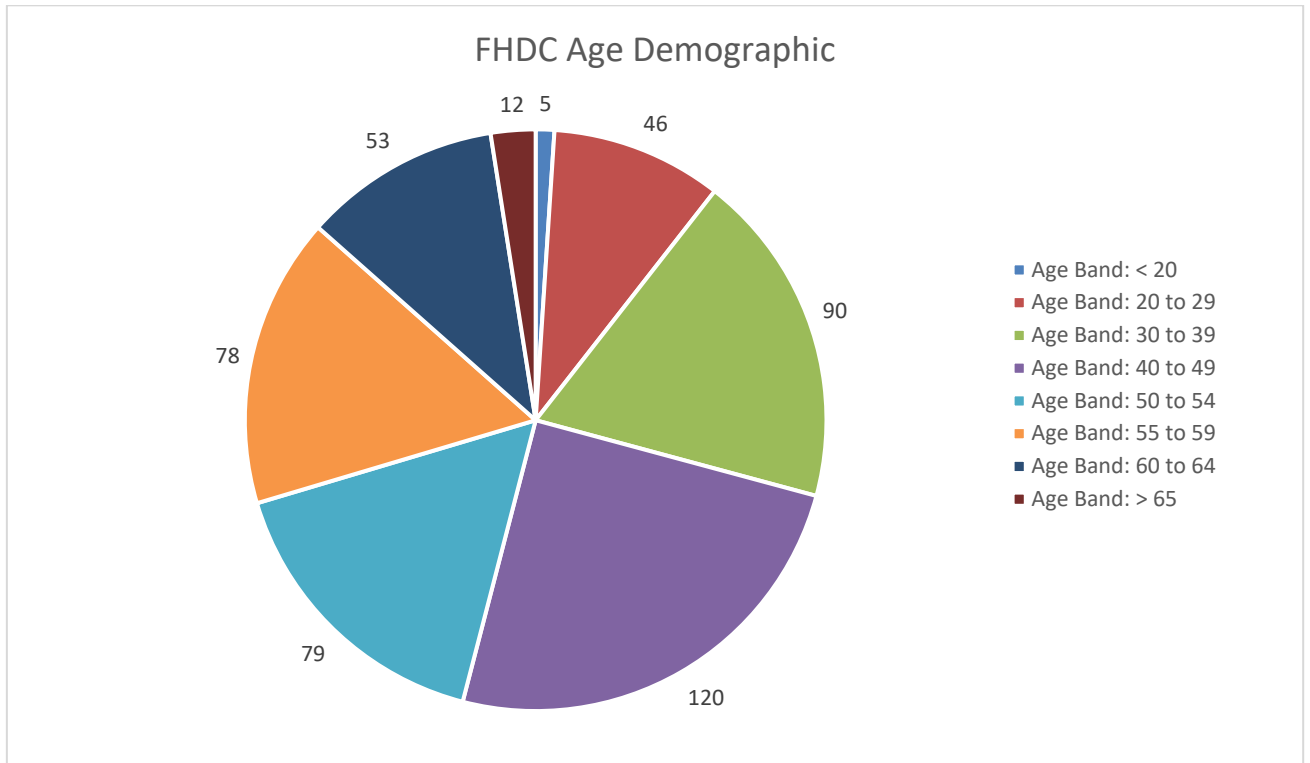


Of the 118 staff (25.27%) who work part time, 92 are female whereas we only have 26 males who work part time.

5.3 When looking at the breakdown of male & female employee in terms of whether they work full time or part time:

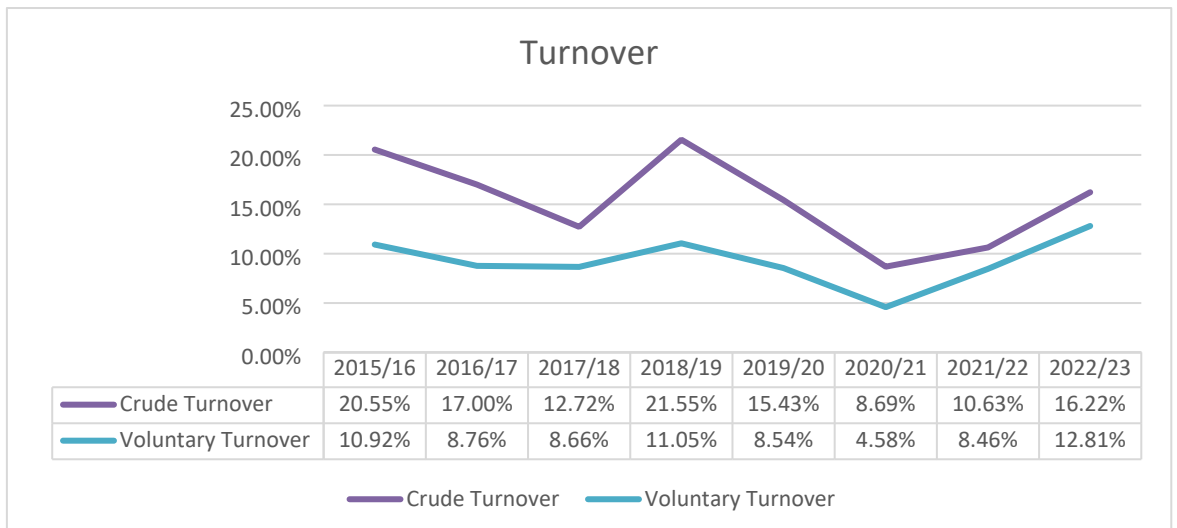


5.4 The age profile of the Council does clearly show that we have an ageing workforce with nearly 50% aged 50 or over:



The age profile of every team has been created as part of the Taking Stock project which has provided a clear indication of where we need to focus efforts on clear succession planning for the future.

5.5 Employee turnover is monitored annually and the chart below tracks the turnover over the last 8 years:



Employee turnover reflects the percentage of staff that have left the council each year. People may leave employment for a number of reasons; staff may resign, retire, their casual or fixed-term contract to cover for example maternity leave or work on a short-term piece of work such as the annual canvass may end, there may be redundancies, ill health, or staff may be dismissed because of their conduct, capability or failed probation.

Crude turnover figures include all those that have left the council, whatever the reason. Voluntary turnover figures include those that have left because they have decided to resign or retire.

Following the national trend, we have seen an increase in turnover in 2022/23. While people may have refrained from changing employers at the outset of the pandemic, the opening up of the economy along with factors such as labour shortages and a reduction in geographical barriers due to hybrid working approaches have created greater opportunities in the job market.

Whilst the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development and Office of National Statistics don't produce annual information on turnover trends, Price Waterhouse Cooper (PwC) provided some research in a recent article which included some benchmarking across the UK clearly outlining the increase in voluntary turnover<sup>2</sup>.

## **6. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 The focus of our OD and Engagement Team is to enhance organisational effectiveness. This is achieved through several areas of our People Strategy, with the primary focus being: Learning and Development, Workforce Engagement and the recognition element of Reward and Recognition. Each of these areas will be taken in turn.
- 6.2 The OD & Engagement Team delivers work for other East Kent Councils, including apprenticeship delivery and running training and development courses and coaching. During 2022/23 this work generated £118,900 of income for the council. The cost of additional staff brought in to support with the delivery of this work has been covered with this income and our approach has given the OD Team greater resilience, economies of scale, and a wider range of facilitators to appeal to different personalities. Working with other councils has meant that our staff have benefited from a more diverse learning environment, sharing best practice in management with participants from other local authorities. Feedback from the councils we are working with has been resoundingly positive and we have been fostering a deeper sense of community between F&HDC and our neighbouring authorities.

## **7. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1 Our Learning and Development offer is comprised of general skills development (we develop managers, deliver training, and run apprenticeships to help ensure staff perform well and reach their potential) and technical skills development (we make sure the Council is compliant, appropriately skilled and that the professional skills training budget for the whole organisation is well-managed).
- 7.2 Our Management Development Programme has, as usual, been updated to reflect the development needs of people managers. The majority of sessions are an hour long, with some longer, as needed. Topics covered have included:
- May 2022: Creative recruitment and selection
  - May 2022: FOI requests
  - June 2022: Data protection

---

<sup>2</sup> [Employee turnover trends revealed: How economic uncertainty is influencing churn, and what employers can do about it - PwC UK](#)



- June 2022: Better business cases
- June 2022: Political insight Q&A
- July 2022: Our approach to project management
- September 2022: Managing performance forum
- November 2022: Absence management and supporting wellbeing
- December 2022: High performing teams – what drives team performance?
- January 2023: Personal Development Plans – simple but effective!
- February 2023: Political insight Q&A
- March 2023: Contract Management Standards

OD & Engagement also offer managers ad hoc support and coaching with specific people management-related issues.

7.3 Over the course of the 2022/23 year we have offered a variety of online development opportunities for staff at all levels. The OD & Engagement team have run 60-minute to half-day sessions on:

- April 2022: Six-week resilience through mindfulness course
- June 2022: Assertive communication and building relationships
- September 2022: Presenting online with confidence
- September 2022: Beginners' Excel
- September 2022: Six-week resilience through mindfulness course
- October 2022: Managing conflict and challenging conversations
- January 2023: Contract Standing Orders
- January 2023: Building resilience at work
- January 2023: Fraud Awareness
- March 2023: Fraud Awareness for Grounds Maintenance

Following each development session, a review is undertaken to evaluate the success of the topic. Workshops are evaluated based on the extent to which participants felt that they have increased their competence and confidence in the topic area of the workshop. The majority of participants reported that the workshops have increased their competence and, to a lesser extent, their confidence which develops as they begin to put into practice what has been learnt during the sessions.

7.4 In addition, we have commissioned training on other areas of cross-organisational interest, as follows:

- April 2022: Effective Complaint Handling
- May 2022: Asbestos Awareness Training
- June 2022: First Aid at Work
- October 2022: Intermediate and advanced Excel
- January 2023: Fraud Awareness (East Kent Audit Partnership)
- January 2023: Prevent (KCC)

7.5 Role-specific professional development enables us to deliver the Corporate Plan and this year we have invested in the following courses for staff:

Name of Team	Course
Democratic Services	AEA Foundation Course Local Government Governance Training Governance & MO Training
Transportation	Civil Enforcement Regulations 2022 ParkMap Training
Procurement	CIPD L6 Professional Diploma in Procurement & Supply Carbon Action Requirements within Procurement Forthcoming new legislation within Procurement
ICT Support	Business Objects Reporting Administering Microsoft Endpoint Manager Administering Microsoft Office 365 and Teams
Housing Options	Decision Letter Writing
Revenues & Benefits	Vulnerability Academy (UK Finance) Data, GDPR & Vulnerability (Money Advice Trust) Supporting Customers with Addition (Money Advice Trust) Understanding & Supporting Customers with Serious Illnesses Self-Harm Awareness Post-Natal Depression Awareness Schizophrenia Awareness Understanding Phobias Housing Benefit Subsidy Workshops Appeals Training
Communications & Engagement	Essential Video Skills CIPR Stakeholder Engagement
Food Safety & Health & Safety	ABC Food Law online training Competency Development Portfolio – CIEH PACE Interview Skills Acupuncture, Tattoo & Cosmetic Skin Piercing
Licensing	Professional Licensing Practitioner Qualification Responsible Authority Licensing Training Canine & Animal First Aid Course L3 Certificate for Animal Inspectors with C&G conversion Scrap Metal Course – Institute of Learning Taxi Licensing
Private Sector Housing	DFG Procurement Course

	<p>BRE Fire Door Inspection  HHSRS Enforcement  HMO Practical Inspection  HHSRS Damp, Mould and Excess Cold  Basic Electrical Awareness</p>
<p>Grounds Maintenance &amp;  Property</p>	<p>Chainsaws  Chainsaws in Trees  Tree Climbing  ICCM Diploma  Manual Handling  Use of Trailers for Beginners  C&amp;G NPTC L2 Award in Safe Use of a Powered Pole  Pruner  CDM Principal Designer  ROSPA Weekly Inspection  RICS Dilapidations Annual Conference 2022  JCT Minor Works Building Contract 2016  CIOB Chartered Membership  PASMA Mobile Access Towers for Users</p>
<p>Case Management  (Corporate)</p>	<p>Governance  FOI Refresher Training – Leadership through Data  NNDR Masterclass Course &amp; One Day Overview – DM  Training Services</p>
<p>Economic Development</p>	<p>APM Exam &amp; Refresher Course</p>
<p>Strategy, Policy &amp;  Performance</p>	<p>Train the Trainer – Safeguarding Training  Effective Performance Management and Analysis  Implementing Carbon Net Zero Locally – RTPi  Heritage &amp; Conservation – RTPi  Planning &amp; Good Design – RTPi  Planning &amp; Community Engagement – RTPi  Impactful Planning Communication – RTPi</p>
<p>Hythe Pool</p>	<p>NPLQ Training</p>
<p>Environmental Protection</p>	<p>Mallard Consultancy Subscription  Court Case Review &amp; Preparation  National Enforcement Academy Training – Keep Britain  Tidy  Building Community Engagement – Keep Britain Tidy  Dogs in Public Spaces</p>
<p>Customer Services</p>	<p>Security Industry Assessment licence renewals</p>
<p>Estates &amp; Assets</p>	<p>RICS – Landlord &amp; Tenant</p>
<p>Finance</p>	<p>CIPFA Courses  Business Rates CIPFA / IRRV</p>

7.6 Chief Officers, Assistant Directors and Corporate Directors are also offered coaching and bespoke training courses provided by respected organisations, for example, one Chief Officer is attending the Springboard programme for highflyers run by the Local Authority training provider SOLACE.

7.7 E-Learning modules have been promoted to all staff in order to comply with our duties for providing relevant Health & Safety and statutory training. We are continually improving our system and in January 2023 introduced Manager Dashboard functionality to enable Managers to track the completion rates of those in their teams.

7.8 With the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2016/17 Personnel Committee agreed to focus on apprenticeships.  
As a council, we decided to become an accredited Apprenticeship Training Provider, so that we can deliver our own apprenticeships and draw down on Apprenticeship Levy funds to pay ourselves to do so. This has the dual benefit of bringing in an income to the council and allowing us to carefully tailor our courses to meet the specific needs of local government.

This means that we are subject to inspection by Ofsted and in August 2022 we received our first full inspection.

We were delighted to be graded as a 'Good' provider; here are two comments from their report:

- "Apprentices benefit from a welcoming and positive environment that is highly conducive to their learning. They value the high-quality online learning sessions that they participate in."
- "Apprentices enjoy their apprenticeship and value the new skills, knowledge and behaviours that they acquire. They are motivated, conscientious and keen to produce work to a high standard. Their confidence grows over time and they take on additional responsibilities at work".

7.9 In terms of the specific apprenticeships we offer, we have 10 officers currently undertaking a Level 3 Team Leader Apprenticeship which also involves studying for an ILM Level 3 Diploma for Managers/ Team Leaders qualification (we are an ILM Centre so deliver this ourselves).

Five of these learners started in March 2023 so are just beginning.

This is a 13-15 month long programme and helps develop our talent pipeline of aspiring managers. To enhance their development, our management apprentices have taken on additional management and cross-training responsibilities as well as shadowing budget managers (where they don't manage a budget themselves) to learn the basics of budget management.

7.10 We also have 3 officers undertaking our in-house Level 3 Apprenticeship in Business Administration, which also involves studying for a City & Guilds L3 Diploma for the Business Administrator, and 3 officers undertaking our in-house Level 5 Professional Coach apprenticeship, which involves achieving an ILM L5 Certificate in Effective Coaching and Mentoring (as an accredited City & Guilds/ILM training provider, we deliver these ourselves).

Where appropriate we continue to use external training providers to support apprentices. We currently have officers undertaking the following:

- a Solicitor Apprenticeship (with associated degree);
- an Accountancy apprenticeship (with professional accountancy qualifications);
- a Digital and Technology Solutions Apprenticeship (with associated degree);
- a Level 4 Project Management Apprenticeship;
- an IRRV Apprenticeship (Revenues and Benefits) and
- Senior Housing and Property Management Apprenticeships (with professional CIH qualification).

This is an economical way of funding training as it is funded from our apprenticeship levy account and when this is used up, 95% of the course fees are funded by Central Government.

7.11 We are also engaged in developing future local talent. This is done through engagement with schools/education facilities and through initiatives such as the Central Government's Kickstart programme (supporting young people who are unemployed).

Our work with schools/ education establishments has included:

- June 2022: F&HDC Presents: A Career in Local Government Webinar: <https://youtu.be/BNdq93GFFdQ>
- July 2022: Work experience placements with students from: Harvey Grammar; Folkestone School for Girls; Folkestone College; Brockhill Park and University.
- October 2022: Talk at Folkestone College about careers in Case Management.
- January 2023: Discussion about work expectations and competencies at Folkestone College
- January 2023: Careers talk at Turner Free School.
- January 2023: Careers talk at Folkestone Academy.
- January 2023: Jobs Fair at Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone.
- February 2023: T-level placements (45 days) for three East Kent College Group students.
- February 2023: Two work experience placements for students from Folkestone College.
- March 2023: Interview/ employability skills support at Folkestone College.

7.12 The Kickstart Scheme provided funding to create new short term jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who were at risk of long term unemployment. There was also funding available to support young people to develop new skills and to help them move into sustained employment after they have completed their Kickstart funded job.

The funding covered the following:

- 100% of the [National Minimum Wage](#) (or the [National Living Wage](#) depending on the age of the participant) for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months
- associated [employer National Insurance contributions](#)
- [minimum automatic enrolment pension contributions](#) (up to 3%)

Each placement also received £1,500 funding towards PPE, uniform, equipment and training.

Participants had to be placed in employment by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 as the funding was only agreed until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

We hosted and developed five Kickstart placements covering a range of roles. Three of the placements were within our Case Management teams learning office based skills, one is working within Grounds Maintenance as a Gardener and the final placement is learning skills as an Assistant Caretaker within our Housing Management service.

The employability support they received from the HR & OD Team included: Careers Workshop; CV Writing training; Preparing for an Interview; Mock job interviews.

One of the Kickstarter placements subsequently secured a permanent role with us and we are supporting him to complete a law degree (via the apprenticeships scheme) and qualify as a solicitor.

- 7.13 We are also supporting government-backed T-Levels (vocational courses with an in-built 45 days of industry placement) and are working with EKC Group to organise placements for students, the first three of which started in February '23.

In addition, we are currently funding two school leavers/ graduates to do degree or masters level apprenticeships in areas of the organisation that require additional succession planning (Finance and ICT). This gives local people the opportunity to obtain a degree or masters that is funded by our apprenticeship levy whilst learning on the job. This represents an evolution of the Grow Our Own scheme that we ran from 2015 to 2019 and enables us to reduce costs by using government funded apprenticeships that have now been made available at university level.

## **8. WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT**

- 8.1 A key part of our role in OD & Engagement is to drive employee engagement, which has been proven by numerous studies to drive organisational performance.

In 2021, we were ranked as number 4 in the Best Companies category for 'not for profit bodies' in the UK, with outstanding levels of employee engagement.

We have sought to maintain our strong position and in June 2022 we carried out our own, in-house, survey using similar questions to the Best Companies questions, plus the well-established Employee Net Promoter metric, in which we scored +45 (higher than Google, Netflix and Microsoft in their latest published results).

- 8.2 Our Internal Communications and Engagement and Wellbeing strategies translate insights from our employees into a series of actions. Activity is delivered via various online and in-person channels:
- Weekly emails with links to videos and intranet articles (this will transition to Teams channels as we embed this new communications platform). Emails were more frequent during December as we delivered the F&HDC 12 days of Christmas.
  - Staff briefing (every 2 months).
  - Connection events: Chai There (monthly), New Starters' Forum and New Managers' Forum (quarterly); Connection Days in the office (every 2 months)
  - Wellbeing events: Menopause café, Craft Club, Wellbeing café and support for HR drop-in sessions, lunchtime meditation.
  - Other events (ad hoc) e.g. Bingo, Games, Quiz Time.

- 8.3 This year, with the continued implementation of our Wellbeing Strategy, we have delivered a range of internally and externally run sessions focused on employee wellbeing:
- May 2022: Let's talk Wellbeing
  - June 2022: Managing stress and improving team wellbeing with Dr Anthony Parker
  - July 2022: Financial Wellbeing – getting the most out of your pension
  - July 2022: Yoga for All (6 week course)
  - October 2022: Menopause Awareness (Best me in 45)
  - November 2022: Men's Mental Health (Best me in 45)
  - November 2022: Intro to Financial Wellbeing (Best me in 45)
  - Dec 2022: Measuring & improving wellbeing with Tom Jeffs from Changing Minds Kent
  - Feb 2023: Let's Talk Wellbeing
- 8.4 In July 2022, our in-house Mental Health First Aiders went on tour (virtually), running 15-minute wellbeing sessions at team meetings for teams across the Council. We have also undertaken some targeted wellbeing interventions for specific teams, for example, in October 2022, a bespoke 'Managing stress and improving wellbeing' session with Dr Anthony Parker was delivered specifically for Customer Services, given the challenging calls they sometimes deal with.
- 8.5 In November 2022, we ran 'Let's talk wellbeing' sessions for all Grounds Maintenance staff alongside on-site health checks to support with their wellbeing. This work has been in tandem with improving welfare facilities for Grounds Maintenance staff at their depots (water coolers, drying facilities etc).
- 8.6 In October 2022, we received the Bronze Award from Kent and Medway's Healthy Workplaces programme, acknowledging our commitment to employee wellbeing. In March 2023, we achieved Kent and Medway's Healthy Workplaces Gold Award. We submitted evidence for 30 wellbeing activities that we undertake, in line with healthy workplace initiatives that are considered best practice by Public Health England, Health and Safety Executive, Business in the Community and NICE.
- 8.7 In February 2023, following on from a recommendation from our Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Assessor we ran focus groups with staff affected by vicarious trauma to understand their wellbeing needs. As a result of these sessions, we will implement an action plan to better support staff affected by vicarious trauma.
- 8.8 We ensure strong two-way communication with our people through a variety of interactive workshops and focus groups, e.g. the Civic Centre relocation working group.
- 8.9 The OD & Engagement team have also run meetings and Away Days for teams to help them review progress and plan for the future. These have included sessions for:
- Grounds Maintenance: Wellbeing and Engagement for GM; Hot Weather working protocol; and Head Gardeners management training (x2).
  - Environmental Enforcement: Team building.
  - Case Corporate: Team Building and Planning event for Team Leaders.
  - Case Management (Corporate and Place): Accountability for Case and Specialists (3 sessions).
- 8.10 We have also facilitated meetings of the wider management team (every 2 months), engaging Middle Managers in the organisation's strategic thinking and planning.

## 9. RECOGNITION

- 9.1 We have continued with the delivery of our recognition scheme. The peer-nominated scheme recognises those who have noticeably displayed behaviours aligned to our core values. The panel meets three times a year and small prizes are issued shortly afterwards. We also focus on embedding our core values through the corporate induction and our behaviour framework. We continue to promote our E-cards service, making it easier for staff to recognise one another for displaying our values at any time of year. In addition to this, we recognise those officers who have dedicated significant years of service to the organisation with small tokens of appreciation.
- 9.2 In October 2021 we ran a special recognition for our Housing Service, to celebrate a year since they had come in-house. This was an opportunity to thank and motivate this new team who have worked so hard to deliver a brand new service.
- 9.3 In January 2023, we awarded our Employee of the Year for the third year. This was introduced to recognise a single individual who has relentlessly demonstrated our core values. The winner was Mark Mullender for his tireless support managing migrations and upgrades for the council's major ICT systems, including Revenues and Benefits, Housing, Finance and Cash and payments and document management.

## 10. F&H REWARDS

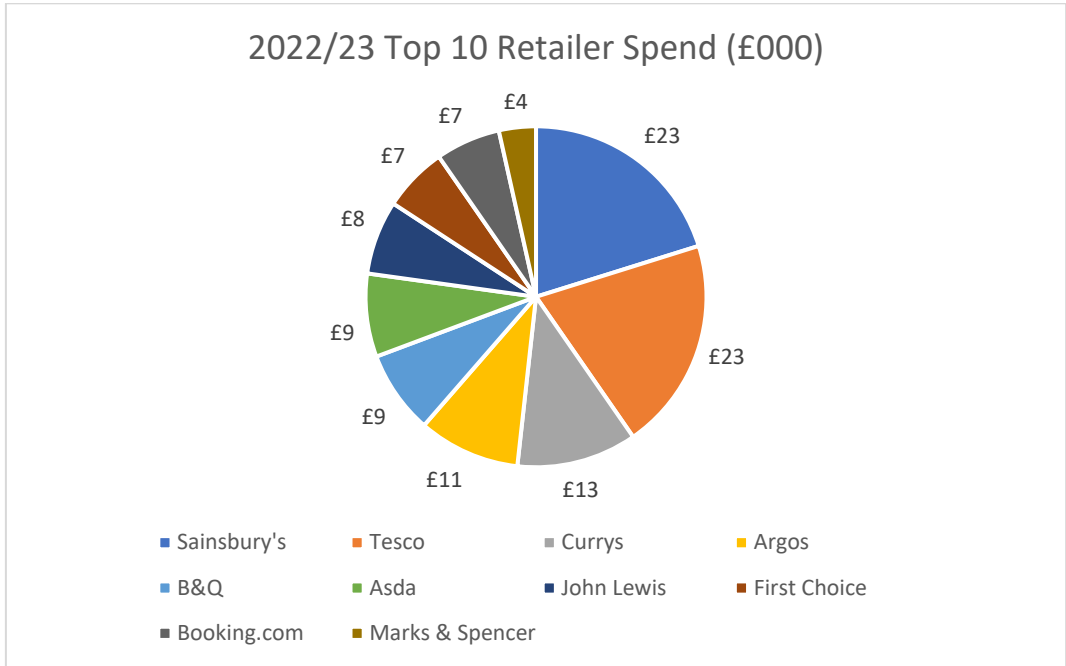
10.1



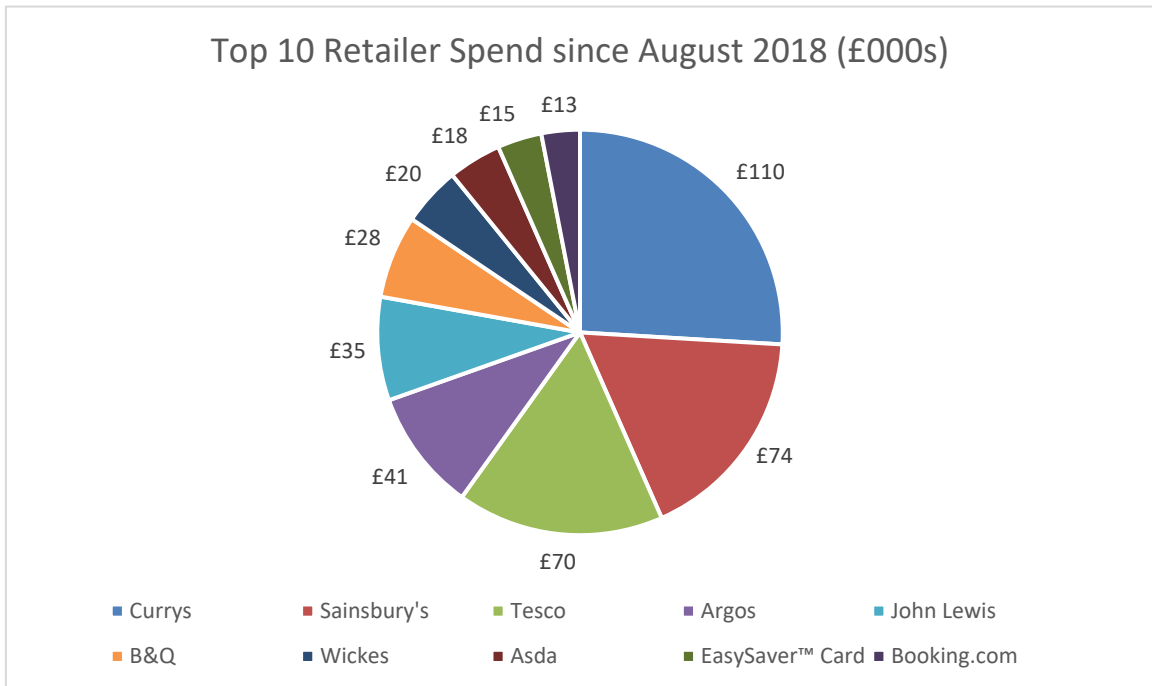
F&H Rewards via Reward Gateway was launched to staff in 2018 and has been extremely successful and popular with staff. Previous members of the Personnel Committee received a report at the meeting dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022 which provides a comprehensive overview of the platform and the different elements available to staff. That report 'Update on F&H Rewards' – P/21/08 can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

- 10.2 By way of an update since the report mentioned in 9.1 above, the Tusker car lease scheme was launched to staff on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and we now have 5 employees who have ordered a car through this scheme with several other members of staff also expressing a strong interest in the scheme over coming months. Whilst this take up may sound on the low side, other councils who have introduced the scheme have reported a 1% average take up of the scheme. In addition, the current new car market for many manufacturers (regardless of whether it is via salary sacrifice or direct interaction) has a notoriously long lead in time from the point of ordering to building the car and the actual delivery – to the extent that a 12 month wait is not unusual. The impact of this is that many people do not want to wait (or cannot wait) that long for a car and therefore the second-hand market is more attractive to source nearly new vehicles that can be ready almost immediately.
- 10.3 The top 10 retailers are shown below in terms of the amount of spend over the 22/23 financial year, and it can clearly be seen that the big supermarkets are where staff are really taking advantage of this scheme.



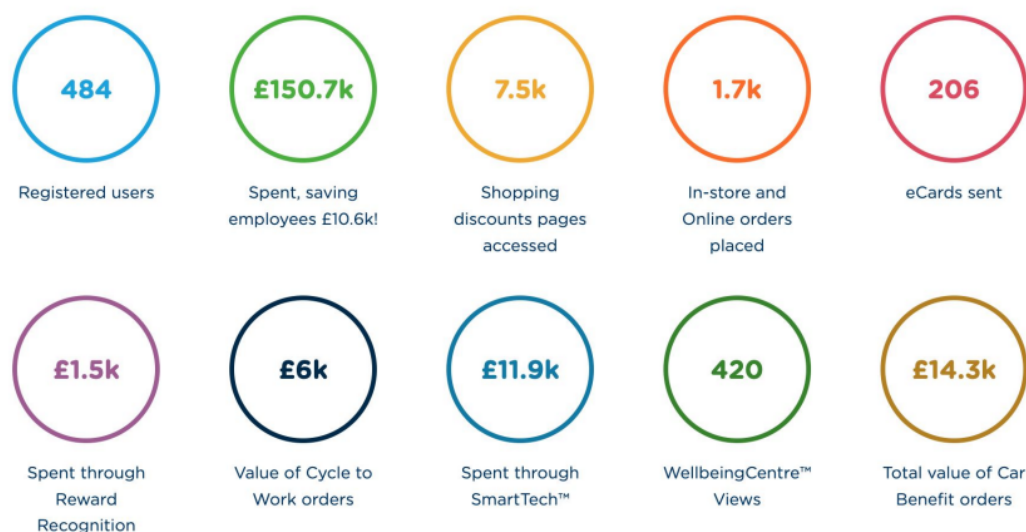


Looking back at this element of the F&H Rewards platform to when it was first launched in August 2018, the top 10 retailers are very similar:



10.4

#### How is F&H Rewards doing?



This is a general overview of the scheme over the last 12 months and the intention is to bring a detailed update to members at the January 2024 committee meeting.

## 11. PEOPLE STRATEGY

11.1 Since 2019, the People Strategy has become embedded within the council framework and underpinned not just the transformation programme but all of our people related activities. Following a review with the Continuous Improvement Board, a new strategy was devised and launched in 2021 aimed at supporting the council's objectives as we move forward with new ways of working following the pandemic.

The People Strategy 2021 can be found at **Appendix B**.

11.2 The 6 main themes of the people strategy are:



11.3 Behavioural Competency Framework

The framework continues to support our recruitment and selection process and has become embedded within performance management enabling managers to feel more confident in approaching behaviours as part of their 1-2-1s with team members.



Looking forward work is now underway to understand what additional selection exercises managers feel would enhance the selection process so that we can design, write and implement different selection exercises in order to provide more opportunity outside of a traditional interview for candidates to demonstrate their abilities and attitudes. Of course this will also naturally mean training managers in how to appropriately assess these types of exercises with the added consideration of whether some are face to face in the future or whether using media such as Microsoft Teams will remain an option.

In addition, the forms associated with annual performance reviews have been redesigned to bring a focus towards self and manager assessment of performance against the behavioural framework in order for development plans to not only focus on 'hard' targets but also on the behaviours we expect as an employer. This new format is likely to be rolled out during Q2 of the 2023/24 year following a 'test and learn' pilot with a limited number of staff in Q1 followed by a review at CLT.

Our behavioural framework can be found in **Appendix C**.

#### 11.4 Agile Working

As an employer, we have continued to recognise the need to develop and encourage modern working practices to enable employees to maximise their performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the business, whilst maintaining high levels of customer service and a good work life balance.

An Agile Working Framework was developed to support this approach. The Agile Working Framework can be seen at **Appendix D**.

When the civic centre first re-opened managers were able to book specified zones on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hot-desking space for their team to work together as well as individual desks for those that needed to access to the office for various reasons. Since that time we have sought feedback from staff and the booking system has now been removed with all staff working on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hot desks rather than spread across the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. Meeting rooms are still bookable to enable team meetings or hybrid meetings to take place.

- 11.4.1 We have surveyed staff regularly since March 2020 on how they have been feeling about working from home, the regularity with which they feel there is a need to be in the office (taken from both an employee view and a managers view for their team). The consensus of opinion has consistently been that agile working works well for individual performance, for teams, for customers and for managing teams.

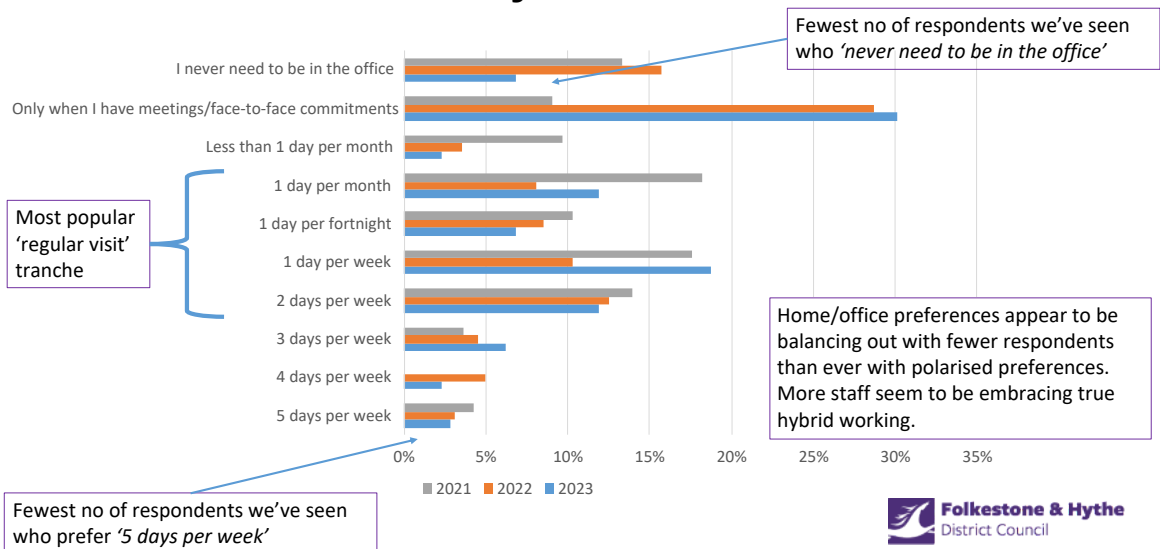
In addition, feedback is often received commenting on how agile working has improved the work/life balance, health & wellbeing and also reduced environmental impacts, reducing travel time and savings on fuel costs to travel to the office. Some staff have even commented that they would no longer work here if they were unable to work in an agile manner.

- 11.4.2 We have seen a real benefit from agile working when it comes to communication with staff. Prior to lockdown driving the move to an increase agile way of working, our staff briefing was always held in the council chamber and would only reach a small number of staff who could fit into the council chamber. Now that we have developed the agile way of working with hybrid meetings, on average over 200 staff attending in person or viewing via Teams

each briefing enabling important corporate messages to reach a much wider audience at one time.

11.4.3 The snapshot below taken from the most recent agile working survey in 2023 clearly illustrates how views have developed over the last 3 years with fewer staff having the extreme views of never needing to be in the office or wanting to be in the office 5 days per week. Most staff members are settling on preferences including 1 or 2 days per week or fortnight in the office.

### Preferred number of days in the office



11.5 The People Strategy is due to be refreshed during Q2-Q3 of the 2023/24 financial year and a full review of progress against the existing People Strategy as well as the updated People Strategy will be presented to Personnel Committee in due course.

## 12. TRANSFORMATION – TAKING STOCK

12.1 Since January 2023, a small team drawn from HR, OD and also a manager from the Systems Development team have been working with the Chief Executive to review the Transformation Programme that took place primarily from 2018 through to 2021. The project has been referred to as ‘Taking Stock’ as it has been an opportunity to pause, reflect and review how the council has developed and changed over a number of years in order to inform decisions on any future changes that may be appropriate.

12.2 Taking Stock was split into 3 main workstreams – System & Customer Insight (led by the Systems Development Senior Specialist), Team & Staff Insight (led by the Chief HR Officer) and Communications & Engagement (led by the OD & Engagement Lead Specialist and Senior Specialist).

A wealth of data has been gathered on workload metrics, performance metrics, staffing data and information plus survey information and targeted focus groups to gain views from as many staff as possible on our current operating model with Specialists and Case Management.

The aim for the team is to complete the majority of the Taking Stock work by May 2023 to then able a period of time with CLT where various options can be considered and modelled

to ensure we move forward as a council with a structure that is not only fit for current purpose but fit for the future to deliver on our ambitions and also affordable in light of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **13. NEW COUNCILLOR INDUCTION & TRAINING FOR MAY 2023**

- 13.1 During Q3 and Q4 of 2022/23 attention was placed on considering the May 2023 elections and subsequent requirements for an induction and training plan that would meet the needs of newly elected councillors and also those re-elected for a further term of office.
- 13.2 The Chief HR Officer sought feedback from all of the group leaders on the previous programme delivered in 2019 and also reviewed programmes from other local authorities in order to create the new programme for 2023.

The feedback gathered was extremely useful and changes for the 2023 programme have included shorter sessions wherever possible (compared to some that were 3 hours in 2019) and splitting briefings on each committee away from the first actual meeting of that committee in order to provide some breathing space to digest the information being conveyed to members plus having training over a concentrated couple of months rather than drawing it out for a longer time.

In addition, a massive development that came about during lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic was that the majority of people have become accustomed to using apps such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Google Meet for meetings meaning that we could consider remote sessions as part of the programme rather than it all having to be face to face at the council as it had been in previous years.

- 13.3 The programme for May 2023 onwards focusses on delivery in-person initially, moving to a mix of face to face and remote sessions, and will include the following:
- Elected Councillor Information & Welcome Session
  - Introduction to Otterpool Park
  - Governance, The Constitution & How Council Works
  - Introduction to Local Government Finance
  - Introduction to Planning & Defensible Decision Making
  - Safeguarding
  - Scrutiny Essentials
  - Communications & Social Media
  - Licensing Act 2003 and Taxi Licensing
  - Housing & Homelessness
  - Introduction to the Personnel Committee
  - Chairing Skills
  - Introduction to the Joint Transportation Board
  - Outside Bodies – Roles & Responsibilities
  - Audit & Governance Introduction

- Introduction to our Partnerships & Supporting our Communities
- Personal Safety for Councillors
- An A to Z of Licensing
- Working with Central Government
- Prevent Awareness and Radicalisation
- FHDC Climate Commitments
- Questioning Skills for Overview & Scrutiny

A new addition for May 2023 will be the availability of FHDC's e-learning modules via the Workrite platform for councillors which will be optional but will cover topics such as anti-bribery & corruption, environmental awareness, equality & diversity and GDPR.

## **14. PAYROLL**

- 14.1 Following Cabinet approval in February 2014, Ashford Borough Council have provided our council payroll service and our election payroll. The delegation arrangement and service level agreement are reviewed annually by the Chief HR Officer and the Head of Personnel at Ashford.
- 14.2 The payroll service continues to run in a very efficient manner between the two councils. Performance is monitored on a monthly basis with any fall below 100% accuracy reported being investigated and appropriate actions taken.
- 14.3 During 2022/23 a planned migration of the iTrent payroll service took place to enable Ashford Borough Council to move from a server based provision to a cloud based service. The project was led by a consultant from MidlandHR who run the iTrent system and FHDC had representation from the HR Senior Specialist and also members of the ICT team as the move meant ensuring elements such as two factor authentication and single sign on were effectively implemented.

The system went live for the February 2023 payroll and ran extremely smoothly. Staff were kept informed as the changes took place to ensure there was clear communication around the single sign on and how to access the system for self service and manager authorisation.

A new development was the introduction of being able to access iTrent via a weblink on a mobile device which now means receipts for expenses can be uploaded from a picture on the mobile device and employees can access their annual leave balances etc without having to log on to their work laptop.

## **15. PAY UPDATE**

- 15.1 In December 2021 the pay negotiations were successfully concluded following meetings of the Joint Staff Consultative Panel and the subsequent staff ballot.

The pay award agreed was as follows:

### 2022/23

- Removal of Grade B Point 7 from the council pay scales. (Those staff who were held at Point 7 following the removal of Grade A in April 2020 will be held on Point 8 in future as a spot salary subject only to pay awards but not increments). This is to ensure compliance with the National Living Wage in the forthcoming years.
- £500 to be added to the salary points 8 - 10 within Grade B (which is equivalent to 2.6%).
- 2.0% pay award to all salary points within FHDC's Grades C to L and the old EKH Grades D to N.
- Increase in annual leave for those staff in Grades A to J who are currently on 24 days per year, to 25 days per year

### 2023/24

- £500 added to the salary points within Grade B (which is equivalent to 2.5%).
- 2.0% pay award to all salary points within FHDC's Grades C to L and the old EKH Grades D to N.

- 15.2 Towards the latter end of 2022, Unison requested that the pay award for 2023 be re-negotiated given the impact of the cost of living increases on staff. The Personnel Committee agreed to this request and negotiations took place resulting in a revised offer being tabled by members at a meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Panel to the staff side representatives.

Following agreement to ballot staff on the revised offer, it was confirmed in February 2023 that the vast majority of staff were in favour of accepting a revised offer comprising:

- £1,500 added to every salary point on the main FHDC pay scale and the old EKH pay scale or 3%, whichever is the greater; and
- Closure of the civic centre between Christmas and New Year each year.

This agreement was implemented for the 2023/24 financial year in the April 2023 payroll.

- 15.3 It should be noted that whilst staff have received pay awards of 3%, 3%, 2% and 3% for the financial years 2020/21 through to 2023/24 respectively, these awards do not apply to either the Chief Executive or Directors.

The senior management pay scales were last reviewed (following benchmarking by South East Employers) in early 2019 and revised pay scales (one for the Chief Executive and one for Directors) was implemented following discussion at Personnel Committee in June 2019, therefore whilst progression has taken place through the salary grade points on each scale, there has not been any percentage increase since 2019.

Before the end of the previous administration, work was commissioned with South East Employers to undertake a new benchmarking review of senior salaries across the region. That work has now been handed over to the Chief HR Officer and a report will be presented to Personnel Committee in due course.



## **16. HR SERVICES IN 2023/24**

16.1 In line with the People Strategy, as well as continuing much of the work already highlighted throughout this report, some of the work already identified for the team during the 2023/24 year includes:

- Further development of the behavioural framework, particularly in relation to recruitment activities
- Review of the behavioural framework to ensure it still adequately meets the values of the Council
- Focus on support required to ensure identified training and development is rolled out to staff as a result of the governance action plan
- Continued support to the project covering the future relocation of the Civic Centre leading on the changes that will directly affect our people
- Continued support to the Taking Stock project and any subsequent organisational changes that may result from decisions
- Development of guidance and system developments that will enable managers to be more self sufficient and work monitored via the Salesforce system
- Training for managers on the Job Evaluation process to enable them to sit on evaluation panels
- Training for managers on the skills required to lead disciplinary investigations
- Delivery of the induction and training programme for members elected in May 2023
- Comprehensive refresh of the People Strategy

## **17. LEGAL / FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS / POLICY MATTERS**

### **17.1 Legal Officers Comments (NM)**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **17.2 Finance Officers Comments (TM)**

There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report.

### **17.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (ASm)**

There are no specific Diversities and Equalities Implications arising from this report.

## **18. CONTACT OFFICER AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

Andrina Smith – Chief HR Officer  
Tel: 01303 853405  
Email: [andrina.smith@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:andrina.smith@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None

**APPENDICES:**

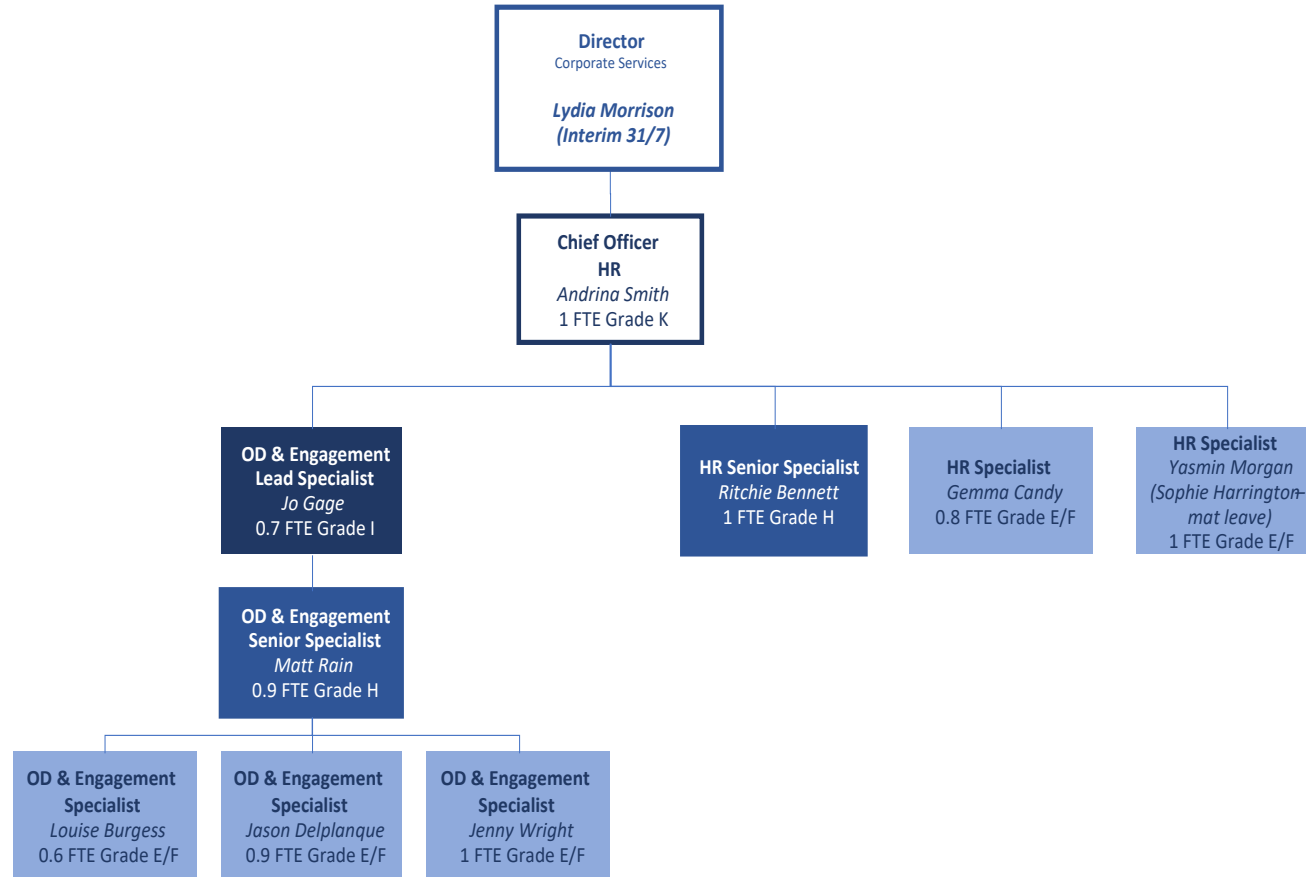
Appendix A – HR & OD Team Structure Chart

Appendix B – People Strategy 2021

Appendix C – Behavioural Framework

Appendix D – Agile Working Framework

# HR & OD Structure Chart



This page is intentionally left blank

# PEOPLE STRATEGY

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

2021 – 2024



# CONTENTS

- Strategic narrative..... 1**
- Transformation..... 2**
- People perspective..... 3**
- Our approach..... 5**
- People Strategy themes..... 7**
  - Culture..... 8
  - Smarter Agile & Flexible Working..... 9
  - Employee Engagement and Wellbeing ..... 11
  - Recruitment and Retention ..... 14
  - Learning and development..... 16
  - Performance..... 18
  - Reward and recognition ..... 20
- Review of the People Strategy..... 22**

# STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

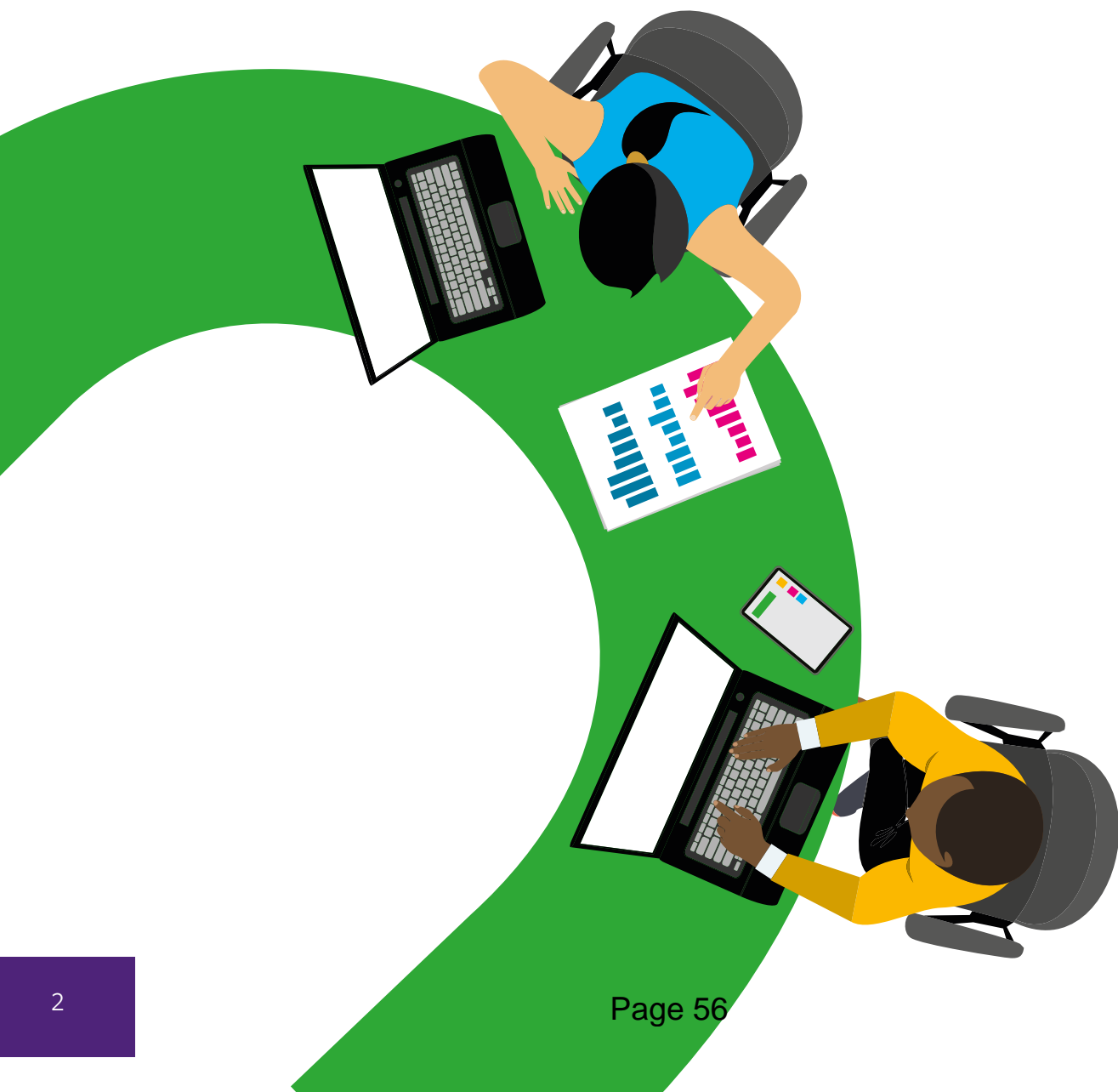
The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2030 'Creating Tomorrow Together' sets out the main strategic priorities over the coming years. There are four service ambitions within the plan underpinned by six guiding principles.



# TRANSFORMATION

The council has undergone a two year transformation programme to March 2021 and is now entering into continuous improvement to further embed the steps already taken to develop a council that is efficient and fit to serve its community and meet the aspirations of residents in the context of reduced resources.

Our operating model was established to improve service delivery, resilience and efficiency based on 12 design principles developed by staff and endorsed by Cabinet.





# PEOPLE PERSPECTIVE

Expectations continue to change (both in terms of our expectations of our people and their expectations of us) and as a result our focus remains on the behavioural competencies which has led to a framework based around our core values:

## **One Team**

- Engaging Communication
- Working Together

## **Customer First**

- Understanding Others
- Integrity & Ownership

## **Thinking Ahead**

- Reasoned Thinking
- Always Improving

## **Performance Counts**

- Making Time Count
- Constantly Building Skills
- Positive Mindset



Our leaders and managers role model and live these behaviours, inspiring and energising the council providing clear direction, purpose and support. Our style will be open and honest utilising coaching skills to give and receive valued feedback.

We want our people to feel supported, appreciated and valued beyond the transformation programme and stimulated by the opportunities that continuous improvement will bring. Our people are treated with respect and integrity and will be encouraged to maximise development opportunities that arise from the changes.

Ultimately, we continue to expect a shift in our culture, whereby working and thinking flexibly are our norm with people who are willing to learn new skills, able to contribute ideas, be innovative and influence decisions. We have become an organisation of technologically-enabled employees who welcome customer insight and use a test and learn approach to devise lean processes and approaches to our work.

# OUR APPROACH

The people strategy has been created to support the Council's corporate plan and to enable us to achieve and support the ethos of continuous improvement. We will continue to deliver excellent HR and OD services through our business partnering approach, whilst exploring opportunities that will further enhance the service to recognise the changing workplace. We will do this in a number of ways:

- Our approach will build a workforce that is fit for the future
- Our council will become one of the best places to work in the area and be recognised as one of the best not for profit organisations to work for in the UK
- Our behaviours-led culture will generate, encourage and reward flexibility and innovation
- Our culture of flexibility and innovation will develop with people who feel supported and who have the confidence to challenge why we do things and the ability to implement digital (and other appropriate) solutions to make us more efficient
- Our People Strategy will be delivered by the Human Resources & Organisational Development team in partnership with our leaders, managers and people

Our People Strategy will be set out within six main themes that are underpinned by our culture. A separate detailed implementation plan is being developed which will set out clear actions, timescales and measures of success.

Our people strategy is set out across 6 main themes that are underpinned by our culture. In recent years, we have embraced agile working with many staff already equipped to work away from the office, however during 2020 this took on a whole new meaning as the lockdown requirements following the Covid-19 pandemic meant a swift shift from many staff still travelling to the office every day to a culture that is very much focussed on staff working remotely from home and out in the district.

With the agreement in principle by Cabinet in January 2021 to consider relocating the civic offices by 2023/2024 it is essential that we continue to build a culture that embraces a more agile smarter style of working developing more flexibility around when and where staff work.

There are a number of benefits in developing an agile working environment including: improved productivity, improved work/life balance and increased staff motivation, greater resilience, lesser impact on the environment and reduced absence levels. We are also mindful of employee wellbeing and will create opportunities for face-to-face contact to support good mental health, strong relationships and creativity.

It is important to recognise that all the themes are interlinked and they should not be viewed in isolation.

# PEOPLE STRATEGY THEMES



# Culture

The six people strategy themes are all influenced by the changing culture of our council. Our aim is to create a continuous improvement culture which supports our employees to continuously reflect on practice, identify what went well, what improvements need to be made and take action in order to work smarter and strive to be the best.

Throughout our people strategy we will actively support this cultural shift by ensuring we:

- promote a culture of accountability and collaborative team working by developing and supporting cross-organisational project teams
- actively engage and empower staff to act within a collaborative culture which encourages innovation and creativity
- review our core values to ensure they still fit with our new ways of working
- help our people to understand our values and behaviours and the expectations and responsibilities contained within them
- promote a test and learn, agile, iterative culture where staff are encouraged to learn from their mistakes, be adaptable and to learn new skills
- encourage an environment of mutual trust, transparent decision making underpinned by values-led leadership
- build on our constructive employee relations climate with trade unions and staff representatives within a clear and progressive policy framework
- review our internal policies and procedures to remove any unnecessary bureaucracy and encourage flexible / agile working practices for our service areas, providing managers with the discretion they need to manage their people with minimal intervention from HR
- Explore opportunities to develop an HR system to support smarter working

# Smarter Agile & Flexible Working

Ensuring that within the rapidly changing world of work we are identifying and implementing the most appropriate organisational structures and working practices to meet demands.

## Where are we now?

The council has shifted away from a traditional bureaucratic and hierarchical structure which led to service area silos to a flatter, more empowered operating model, incorporating flexibility wherever possible. All of our office-based staff are able to work effectively and flexibly from home.

## What will we do in the future?

- Develop a modern and agile workforce with diverse and digital-focussed skill sets
- Play a key role in the development of plans for a new Customer Access Point and relocation of civic offices, leading on the changes that will directly affect our people (year 1)
- Empower employees to make appropriate decisions and deliver excellent services, using better technology to increase flexibility and efficiency
- Identify and implement posts that can be primarily agile or homeworking (using this USP to attract a wider pool of talent) (year 1)
- Promote flexible working across the wider workforce (year 1)
- Develop a new agile / smarter working policy to promote flexibility in when and where staff work in the future (year 1)
- Review our policies and procedures to make sure they recognise the need for agile / smarter working practices with appropriate document management controls (years 1-2)
- Encourage our management team to role model our operating model and smarter working arrangements, challenging behaviours that are not in line with our values

- Develop structures, policies and a culture that supports the council's Carbon Action Plan and greater efficiencies through reducing commuting and work related travel (longer term)
- Develop flexible career pathways and support development programmes & opportunities to support our people develop their careers with us
- Design jobs to reflect the benefits and impact of our digital investment and that enable people to apply their skills, knowledge and behaviours to the best effect
- Continue to develop flexible, generic job descriptions supported by role families (years 1-2)
- Support the further development of our technology with training & development programmes that enable and encourage working in a flatter hierarchy
- Create greater resilience through developing flexibility into how we deploy our people (years 1-2)





# Employee Engagement & Wellbeing

Engaging our people is key to enabling effective two-way communications and supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff

## Where are we now?

In 2019, our employer net promoter score shifted from -36 (in 2018) to -8 (a vast improvement given that most organisations are pleased with a score of 0). We have further built on rising engagement levels by undertaking a Best Companies Pulse survey (in 2020) and developing and implementing an improvement plan in response to survey results. The Pulse Survey indicated that, as a council, we had ‘very good’ engagement levels, with some areas that scored ‘outstanding’ and a handful of teams with ‘world-class’ levels of engagement. In March 2021 we undertook the full Best Companies Survey and were advised in May 2021 that we had been awarded ‘2 stars’ for outstanding employee engagement and had been placed 4th on the Not for Profit Best Companies in the UK and 57th on the Best Companies to work for in the South East. By looking at the research-based 8 factors of employee engagement that Best Companies use we are able to use our 2021 survey results to design and deliver highly targeted interventions to continue to improve employee engagement and all the benefits that brings – better customer service, lower sickness absence, happier employees and greater innovation.

In addition, the staff recognition scheme continues to be supported and reflects our behaviours plus our reward scheme, F&H Rewards, continues to be developed. We know from our survey results that our staff are proud to work here, feel supported and recognised and feel able to speak up.

We have a range of Health and Wellbeing initiatives for our people, ranging from traditional but important benefits such as an Employee Assistance Programme as well as developing more innovative and pro-active “virtual kitchens” and forums. Our management development programme has wellbeing as a constant theme and our flexible working culture has supported the work / life balance of our people.

## What will we do in the future?

- Build on the outcomes from the Times Top 100 Best Companies (Not for Profit) survey (years 1-2)
- Review and develop internal and external services available to staff to support their mental health and wellbeing (year 1)
- Work towards the government backed Mental Health At Work Commitment standards (longer term)
- Explore the opportunity to become a 'mindful employer' (longer term)
- Introduce an internal mental health first aid support network (years 1-2)
- Include mental health awareness as part of the corporate training programme (<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>) (years 1—2)
- Support employees' financial health through the provision of appropriate advice and benefits on our rewards platform (years 1-2)
- Continue to review and develop the staff benefits package in order to provide attractive features that help people feel valued
- Develop a scheme to allow employees to purchase additional annual leave (longer term)
- Promote coaching as a means to contribute to wellbeing in supporting people to achieve work/life balance, address loss of confidence and adjust to changing circumstances
- Refresh our approach to corporate and team inductions to welcome new employees including induction videos available before starting employment, accessible induction booklets and a new starter forum (year 1)
- Explore the opportunities within iTrent to further enhance our onboarding processes (years 1-2)
- Reiterate our commitment to developing strong working relationships with our recognised trade unions by signing new facilities agreements (years 1-2)
- Monitor the effectiveness of our volunteering policy and identify opportunities for volunteering that can be promoted across the council (years 1-2)
- Build on our flexible working culture to create greater options and opportunities for enhance work / life balance for our people
- Support managers to continue making FHDC a fun place to work where innovation is encouraged and collaboration with others becomes the norm

- Promote a healthy workplace and support our people to achieve a work-life balance that takes account of individual circumstances and life choices
- Recognise and value engagement and celebrate successes & achievements wherever found
- Ensure meaningful effective communications and more direct engagement with our staff on matters that affect them
- Continue to work in partnership with our trade unions and staff representatives to develop and evolve our approaches to staff engagement
- Continue to develop our reward and recognition offer for our people and teams to recognise exemplary behaviours
- Enable more social events to encourage & facilitate a vibrant culture
- Maintain open and honest dialogue with staff, seeking views, ideas and commentary and keeping them informed via a range of engagement surveys and pulse checks using the most appropriate channels

# Recruitment and retention

Attracting, recruiting and retaining the best people is key to the future of the council and we will therefore develop creative approaches to attracting and retaining talented and capable people across all of our service areas.

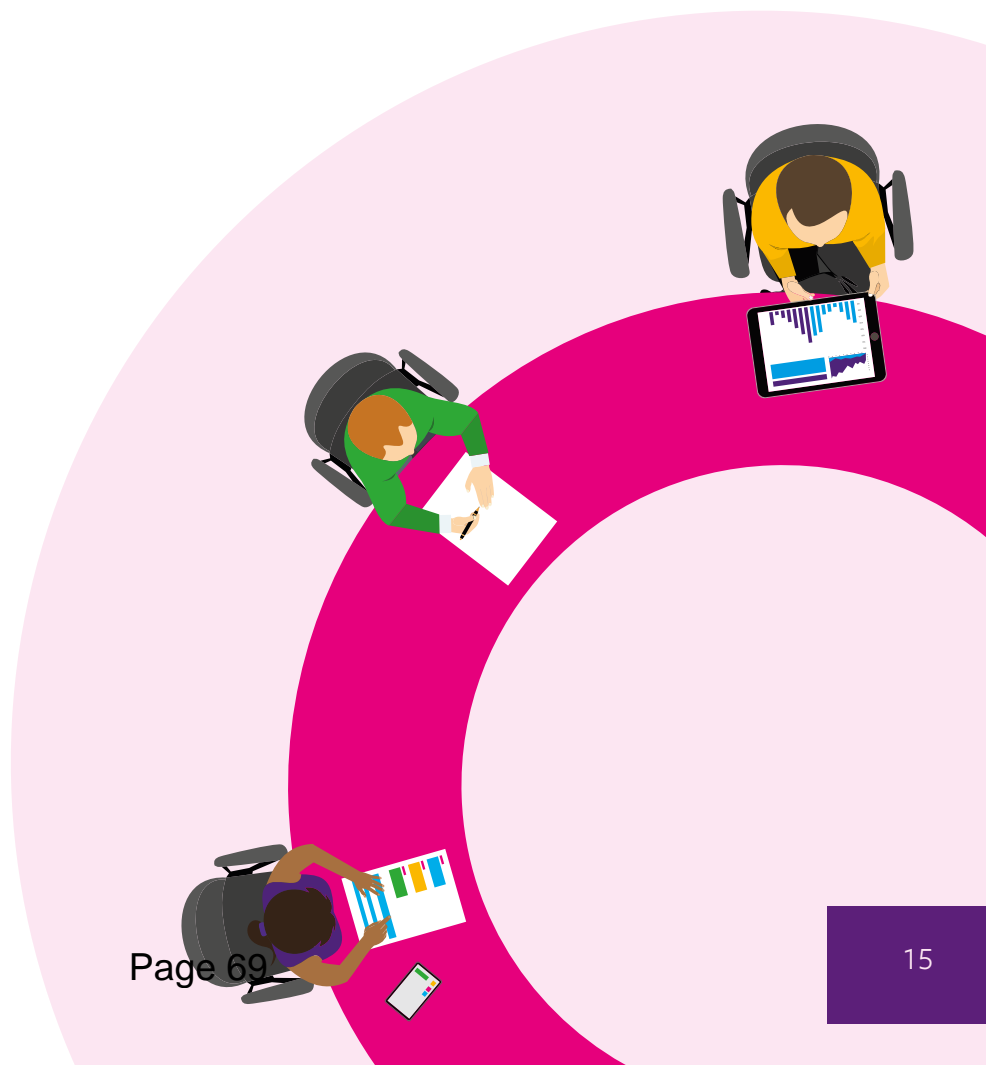
## Where are we now?

The council has previously used traditional recruitment and selection approaches with an ad hoc approach to using social media and a lack of engaging internet presence to attract applicants. Since the pandemic however we have moved to virtual interviewing in the vast majority of instances and in addition moved to a more competency based approach to interviews which will further develop over time. In recent years we have encouraged internal secondments above external recruitment which has led to a relatively low level of turnover (8.54% voluntary turnover in 2019/20).

## What will we do in the future?

- Review and update the recruitment and selection processes to reflect a modern flexible organisation, enabling the selection and retention of talented people with the right attitudes and skills that align with our digital strategy and customer strategy ambitions (year 1)
- Build our employer brand to reflect the organisation we are aiming to become
- Develop a range of selection and development methods which link to our values and behaviours as well as assessing knowledge, skills and experience (years 1-2)
- Continue to simplify transactional processes within the recruitment and selection activities (year 1)

- Establish effective and impactful on-boarding processes to welcome new employees that reflect our modern way of working (years 1-2)
- Consider opportunities to promote council careers in local schools, colleges and universities
- Review our strategic approach to apprenticeships and explore opportunities for ‘career trials’ where young people can undertake rotational posts across a number of teams (longer term)
- Continue to investigate and develop digital and remote recruitment and selection methods (years 1-2)
- Design innovative ways to recruit traditionally ‘hard to fill’ roles in conjunction with area specialists, including identifying development pathways
- Create flexibility within our pay and reward mechanisms to become more attractive and competitive in our recruitment
- Develop the capability of our recruiting managers (year 1)
- Develop clear succession plans for professional and strategic progression (year 1)
- Continue to develop and promote our approaches to agile smarter working
- Identify secondments as potential development opportunities, both inside and outside of the council, to aid retention of our people



# Learning and development

The core strength of the council is in our people and therefore training, developing and supporting our people is absolutely crucial.

## Where are we now?

There is currently a comprehensive offer to all our people via e-learning, technical and soft skills sessions, targeted management development with formal ILM and City & Guilds qualifications plus managers and aspiring managers studying the ILM L3 Diploma for Managers.

## What will we do in the future?

- Recognise the changing skill requirements and develop people to meet the changing needs of our authority
- Ensure our people are best placed to take advantage of the career progression opportunities that arise
- Support employees with a development programme that reflects the behavioural framework and supports the corporate plan priorities (years 1-2)
- Investigate a 360-degree assessment process / system to support individual development (years 1-2)
- 360-degree assessments to be undertaken by all managers (longer term)
- Increase the number of e-learning and remote learning opportunities whilst retaining a balance of face to face learning opportunities once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted (years 1-2)
- Help and support staff to understand the choices they can make to reduce carbon usage and use more sustainable options in order to support the council's Carbon Action Plan by providing appropriate training (longer term)
- Encourage our leaders to attend action learning sets to support their coaching and problem-solving skills, as well as create peer support networks.

- Develop career pathways to enable long-term development, progression and succession planning
- Review, evaluate and refresh our approach to leadership and management programmes ensuring they reflect our values and behaviours
- Develop the management capabilities of our leaders and managers
- Develop a pool of coaches and mentors to nurture talent and support performance (years 1-2)
- Support the sharing of knowledge and ideas through cross-functional teams (years 1-2)
- Ensure that our people have access to training that enables them to meet the expected standards in their roles by identifying learning needs gaps (years 1-2)
- Continue to introduce and embed the behavioural framework (years 1-2)
- Explore and implement options that align with the apprenticeship levy which will enable us to sponsor people through formal qualifications
- Identify suitable entry points and develop our approach to apprentices and trainees to ensure that we identify and develop talent at an early stage, maximising the use of the apprenticeship levy
- Provide our people with appropriate learning and development opportunities encompassing commercial awareness, innovation, digital awareness, procurement, commissioning of services and partnership working
- Produce an annual learning and development offer that outlines the opportunities available to our people to support them in the personal and professional development
- Produce an annual training plan that reflects our corporate priorities
- Review the central and departmental training budgets to ensure appropriate budget allocation
- Provide appropriate training and development opportunities for our elected members and identify opportunities for co-training with officers which reflect the service ambitions and guiding principles of our Corporate Plan (longer term)

# Performance

With an ambitious corporate plan and its associated priorities, ensuring our people are driven to perform to the best of their abilities will be key to our organisational success with high performing teams.

## Where are we now?

We have had a traditional approach to appraisals which are not valued by some managers and their teams; in addition, the culture of feedback varies between service areas. Some service areas are naturally very target and metric led which provides clear information relating to performance. Over the last 18 months the focus shifted towards behavioural assessments to support our transformation programme and now looking forwards the intention is to provide managers with the skills to bring appraisals and behavioural reviews together into 1-2-1 discussions and annual performance reviews which will focus on outputs.

## What will we do in the future?

- Ensure performance management including the competency framework is embedded throughout the council (years 1-2)
- Build capability for manager confidence and competence in developing staff and managing performance in line with our behavioural framework and the need for an agile and technologically-minded workforce (years 1-2)
- Continue to develop the behavioural framework based on agile / smarter working and the council's values (years 1-2)
- Develop our performance management culture, process and systems that meets the needs of a modern, flexible and agile workforce and promotes regular high performance in line with our values and behavioural framework by encouraging regular developmental and performance conversations focussed on outcomes



- Drive a high performance team culture in which individual development and career aspirations are supported and aligned to our behaviours
- Ensure that our approach to appraisal, reward, recognition and promotion is fair, transparent, accessible and understood by all
- Develop a contemporary performance management framework, integrating our behaviours, which recognises high performers and also provides challenge and support

# Reward and recognition

Attracting, recruiting and retaining the best people is key to the future of the council and in order to both recruit and retain we must therefore ensure that we have the mechanisms in place to recognise and reward our people appropriately

## Where are we now?

Incremental progression through the pay grade is automatic with sporadic use of honorarium, acting up payments and market supplements. Many roles have not been formally evaluated for a number of years. The recognition scheme has forged a clear link to the corporate values. However there is a perception that our annual leave and some salaries are not competitive enough to match private sector companies or other local authorities

## What will we do in the future?

- Develop a new pay and reward document that centralises all relevant information in one easily accessible place (year 1)
- Align our pay and reward offer, promoting it to current staff and ensuring it is a key part of our approach to recruitment and retention (year 1)
- Develop a strategic approach to succession planning in order to identify and develop our leaders of the future (years 1-2)
- Clear development pathways identified for staff with the capability to move into a people management role for the first time (years 1-2)
- Embed our approach to recognition, including the new Employee of the Year Award (years 1-2)
- Ensure our remuneration strategies recognise performance and rewards positive behaviours
- Develop our approach to reward and recognition to ensure that it is flexible and fair but supports the council's strategic aims whilst rewarding the highest performers

- Align our recognition scheme with the behaviours in order to recognise our people who demonstrate exemplary behaviours and values in their work (years 1-2)
- Continually review and enhance the range of flexible benefits available to our people
- Enhance our approach to job evaluation system with detailed local conventions (year 1)



# REVIEW OF THE PEOPLE STRATEGY

The People Strategy will be reviewed annually by the Chief HR Officer in conjunction with the Director of Corporate Services and the Chief Executive. Progress against agreed actions will also be reviewed quarterly at meetings of the Continuous Improvement Board.



One Team		Engaging communication	
I communicate clearly, tailoring my approach to suit the audience so that I can engage, influence and persuade people.			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating clearly and concisely</li> <li>• Adapting tone of communication to suit people of all levels</li> <li>• Giving the right level and quantity of information to suit the audience</li> <li>• Explaining things in straightforward language</li> <li>• Gaining credibility through an open and honest approach</li> <li>• Showing enthusiasm and passion for the subject</li> <li>• Checking that others have understood what has been said or written</li> <li>• Showing a polite and professional style to external people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly articulating the key points of an argument</li> <li>• Using a range of different approaches to influence and meet different people's needs</li> <li>• Being open to new ways of communicating</li> <li>• Having the influencing skills to challenge stakeholders successfully</li> <li>• Motivating colleagues, creating positive energy</li> <li>• Talking positively about the Council</li> <li>• Influencing by putting a strong, reasoned case</li> <li>• Using different communication channels effectively (e.g. email, phone, in person)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspiring belief and buy-in in the team or audience around any situation</li> <li>• Role-modelling good communications via different channels</li> <li>• Talking to people at their level, not yours</li> <li>• Distilling complexity into clear, core messages</li> <li>• Communicating effectively at all levels of the organisation or externally</li> <li>• Adapting tone and style to suit whatever arises in conversation</li> <li>• Understanding the political context of communications</li> <li>• Influencing across the matrix without authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presenting clearly and with impact</li> <li>• Setting up good communication systems, e.g. establishing email etiquette</li> <li>• Negotiating confidently, with credibility and conviction</li> <li>• Setting expectations of ways to communicate</li> <li>• Leading the way on using different media/channels to communicate effectively</li> <li>• Inspiring individuals, groups or teams to gain buy-in and build momentum</li> <li>• Navigating the politics of different stakeholders wisely</li> <li>• Ensuring the Council is represented positively to internal and external audiences</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Being hard to understand (e.g. not enough detail or too wordy); Over-relying on one form of communication (e.g. email); Using jargon inappropriately; Using the same style without adapting even when it's not working; Imposing /forcing a view; Dishonesty; Misjudging the tone of communication (e.g. too formal, or using bad language); Failing to enthuse, motivate or inspire; Letting negativity drain engagement; Missing the subtle messages.</p>			



<b>One team</b>		<b>Working together</b>	
		I get to know people in order to support, share information, work across boundaries and act in the best interests of the whole organisation.	
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being kind; looking out for others and offering help</li> <li>• Building rapport easily; having an open, approachable manner</li> <li>• Being friendly; making an effort to get to know people</li> <li>• Sharing information freely and promptly</li> <li>• Showing appreciation, saying 'thank you'</li> <li>• Inviting people's ideas and considering their points of view</li> <li>• Being considerate and managing your impact on other people</li> <li>• Asking for help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteering for activities so as to share out workload fairly</li> <li>• Being willing to find a compromise</li> <li>• Letting people know what's going on</li> <li>• Making people feel included and valued</li> <li>• Supporting agreed outcomes</li> <li>• Being tolerant and considerate of people's pressures</li> <li>• Taking a real interest in the team's welfare</li> <li>• Addressing concerns through constructive conversation</li> <li>• Getting to know people beyond your immediate team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking the team's opinions into account and providing appropriate feedback</li> <li>• Sharing plans with others early enough so activities are aligned</li> <li>• Making time to get to know your team, their needs and interests</li> <li>• Supporting your team, e.g. sharing credit or taking collective responsibility for problems</li> <li>• Having crucial conversations promptly and constructively</li> <li>• Being proactive in reaching out to other teams</li> <li>• Developing a network of positive working relationships internally and externally</li> <li>• Creating an environment where people feel able to ask for help or offer ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being visible and available</li> <li>• Making time to get to know staff, teams and what they do</li> <li>• Supporting staff wellbeing</li> <li>• Creating systems to ensure the right people get the right communication at the right time</li> <li>• Acting in the best interests of the organisation (e.g. aware of reputation)</li> <li>• Building collaborations, e.g. joint ventures, partnerships</li> <li>• Creating a one-team culture that breaks down silos and fosters joined-up working</li> <li>• Understanding the agendas of a wide range of stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Being rude, arrogant or argumentative; Playing people off against each other; Back-stabbing; Gossiping or rumour-spreading; Being selfish; Isolating yourself; Holding onto information; Being uncontactable; Blaming others; Ignoring others' struggles; Being unhelpful; Taking credit unfairly; Being grumpy or unapproachable; Dismissing others' ideas; Being tactless; Reinforcing silos.</p>			

Customer First		Understanding others	
		I find out other people's needs and perspectives with openness, showing my understanding through empathy, listening and respect.	
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering feedback and other information to understand customer needs</li> <li>• Giving people space to talk</li> <li>• Showing you are listening through body language, tone and thoughtful answers</li> <li>• Being open-minded to other points of view</li> <li>• Empathising with others' concerns or difficulties</li> <li>• Acting on what you have heard</li> <li>• Showing respect and courtesy; treating people consistently and fairly, regardless of background</li> <li>• Acting in the best interests of the customer/stakeholder where appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being interested in other people's views</li> <li>• Creating an atmosphere where people feel it's ok to talk</li> <li>• Being objective to listen to a range of viewpoints</li> <li>• Ensuring that actions and decisions are suitable for all customers/stakeholders</li> <li>• Using emotional intelligence to understand and empathise with a wide range of people</li> <li>• Being patient and considerate when people struggle</li> <li>• Honouring confidentiality in conversations</li> <li>• Taking personal responsibility to understand and represent customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating all team members fairly and equally</li> <li>• Making time to gather and listen to staff ideas and concerns</li> <li>• Driving a non-judgemental culture where people feel able to raise any issue</li> <li>• Letting people feel that they have a voice and can influence decisions</li> <li>• Embracing diversity</li> <li>• Being proactive in capturing customer/stakeholder insight</li> <li>• Taking care to fully understand stakeholder requirements</li> <li>• Designing services and processes around the needs of the customer</li> <li>• Having regular check-ins with team members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing understanding of different team's challenges when shaping organisational change</li> <li>• Setting systems and expectations of regular check-ins with staff to understand their needs</li> <li>• Defining data capture requirements to ensure sound customer / stakeholder insight</li> <li>• Role-modelling an impartial and objective approach to dealing with emotive issues</li> <li>• Understanding the needs of the local community</li> <li>• Creating a culture where diversity and difference are celebrated</li> <li>• Ensuring equality of access to services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Being judgemental; Taking a one-size fits all approach; Lying; Being stubborn and closed-minded to other views; Talking over people; Showing favouritism; Seeing customers as a burden; Not seeing the demands or challenges facing someone; Ignoring people's feelings; Making others feel unimportant; Focusing on number regardless of human impact; Not listening if it's not what you wanted to hear; Using stereotypes.</p>			

Customer First		Integrity and ownership I take responsibility to do what is right, being proactive and working hard to get good outcomes and follow through on commitments.	
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being dedicated and working hard to see things through</li> <li>• Going the extra mile to get things done well</li> <li>• Being able to work on your own initiative</li> <li>• Being proactive; spotting something needs doing and doing it</li> <li>• Taking responsibility even when it goes beyond your job description</li> <li>• Being reliable; following through on promises</li> <li>• Putting self forward to get involved</li> <li>• Speaking up when you have an idea or challenge</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading by example, acting as you say</li> <li>• Role-modelling the courage to tackle difficult issues</li> <li>• Offering to take some of the load without waiting to be asked</li> <li>• Using initiative to take the next step or decision</li> <li>• Encouraging a culture where people have a sense of ownership to resolve issues</li> <li>• Being honest in fulfilling corporate objectives</li> <li>• Acting robustly to uphold and enforce ethical behaviour and decisions</li> <li>• Ensuring initiatives maintain momentum and are seen through</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Needing close supervision; Needing to be told what to do; Being scared to make a decision; Hiding behind other staff; Avoiding difficult issues; Clock-watching;; Not getting things done; Having a can't-be-bothered attitude; Leaving it for someone else; Passing the buck; Cutting corners; Missing deadlines or details; Not acting in the face of problems or ethical breaches.</p>			



Thinking Ahead		Reasoned thinking I use the right range of information to create sound, commercially informed solutions.		
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being logical; able to explain what you are doing and why</li> <li>• Seeking out relevant information, data and views</li> <li>• Making decisions on the basis of a good mix of solid information</li> <li>• Making sure information is correct and representative</li> <li>• Choosing priorities having thought about their impact</li> <li>• Seeing potential problems and acting to pre-empt them</li> <li>• Finding a solution to a customer's/stakeholder's problem</li> <li>• Understanding the value of your time and using it wisely</li> <li>• Making decisions in a timely way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing what data / information is relevant to gather</li> <li>• Thinking about the cost implications of actions or decisions</li> <li>• Being aware of the constraints around a decision</li> <li>• Making sound decisions at pace</li> <li>• Being able to reconcile different instructions</li> <li>• Thinking ahead to prevent future problems</li> <li>• Recognising trends and patterns in information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the key priorities in what needs to be done</li> <li>• Thinking through the business case; outlining risks, reasoning and likely returns</li> <li>• Finding ways to reduce costs or generate revenue</li> <li>• Recognising impacts beyond your area and into the longer-term</li> <li>• Tackling the causes, not just the symptoms</li> <li>• Supporting team members in going through robust decision making</li> <li>• Educating people about commercial awareness in their job</li> <li>• Using judgement when faced with ambiguous, missing or conflicting information</li> <li>• Understanding and managing the risks in a decision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting a clear strategic vision for the team / department</li> <li>• Always factoring in value for money</li> <li>• Ensuring clarity on core goals</li> <li>• Identifying and pursuing current and future commercial opportunities</li> <li>• Showing ownership and accountability for Council resources</li> <li>• Undertaking considered financial planning</li> <li>• Showing good awareness of the wider context for decisions (internally and externally)</li> <li>• Drawing on regional, national and global trends</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Procrastinating; Making ill-considered decisions; Failing to change mind in light of new information; Making risky decisions without facts; Missing wider or longer-term impacts; Letting short-term pressure outweigh long-term impacts; Being a bottle-neck by making all decisions involve you; Struggling to make sense of information; Is unrealistic; Ignores cost implications</p>				

<b>Thinking Ahead</b>		<b>Always improving</b>	
		I look for better ways to do things, challenging the current state and being creative to find new and efficient approaches.	
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coming forward with solutions to problems</li> <li>• Looking for ways to improve own performance</li> <li>• Creating usable ideas</li> <li>• Finding ways to make things work more efficiently</li> <li>• Questioning current approaches</li> <li>• Getting involved with and embracing change; making suggestions</li> <li>• Embracing new technology</li> <li>• Being prepared to try, fail, learn and adapt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spotting opportunities for improvements</li> <li>• Turning ideas into reality</li> <li>• Driving efficiencies, e.g. avoiding duplication</li> <li>• Helping to shape change</li> <li>• Being brave enough to experiment and explore what is possible</li> <li>• Making the most of new technology to improve things</li> <li>• Challenging the norm</li> <li>• Being open to new and flexible ways of working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking for best practice to improve service delivery</li> <li>• Improving procedures and systems</li> <li>• Getting the team together to brainstorm ideas</li> <li>• Understanding digital delivery</li> <li>• Proactively seeking out new and better ways, internally or externally</li> <li>• Encouraging and stimulating ideas, being supportive of suggestions</li> <li>• Making it ok for people to fail and learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating enthusiasm for and involvement in change</li> <li>• Championing continuous improvement of service design</li> <li>• Thinking about technical solutions as core</li> <li>• Driving a continuous improvement culture</li> <li>• Breaking down barriers to efficient work practices</li> <li>• Adapting to changing organisational priorities and needs</li> <li>• Taking considered risks to drive improvements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Being too scared to try a new approach or technology; Presenting barriers rather than solutions; Creating change for change's sake; Settling for what you already have; Closing down challenges to ways of thinking; Blaming failure without embracing learning; Sticking to rigid ways of working; Focusing on problems not solutions; Being defensive when there is a problem with the service.</p>			

Performance Counts		Making time count	
I manage time well, organising work so everyone has clear expectations and we make good use of resources.			
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking responsibility to ask for what you need</li> <li>• Managing time and workload to get things done</li> <li>• Planning ahead to ensure priorities are taken care of</li> <li>• Managing expectations so people know what to expect when</li> <li>• Working accurately</li> <li>• Being able to focus to get things done</li> <li>• Being realistic and practical about how to get things done with finite resource</li> <li>• Sticking to regulatory guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing challenging but achievable targets</li> <li>• Making plans flexible to cope with the unexpected</li> <li>• Recognising where to liaise with others because your work impacts on each other's delivery</li> <li>• Managing resource to meet the needs of the team</li> <li>• Giving clear instructions so people know what is needed</li> <li>• Making use of others' skills and expertise to get things done</li> <li>• Keeping track of multiple activities</li> <li>• Being firm within the terms of policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balancing workload across the team</li> <li>• Setting challenging targets, clear goals, guidelines and principles</li> <li>• Helping the team to prioritise activities</li> <li>• Delegating and empowering team members to work self-sufficiently</li> <li>• Using good project management skills</li> <li>• Pulling together skills and resources to get things done</li> <li>• Monitoring performance and acting on it</li> <li>• Tracking the benefits of actions / decisions</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating structures with clear responsibilities so people know who is accountable for what</li> <li>• Ensuring that activities happen at the right level in the organisation</li> <li>• Forward planning to take account of likely developments</li> <li>• Showing good understanding of service delivery</li> <li>• Looking for ways to pool resources for joint outcomes</li> <li>• Establishing systems and processes to track and measure performance</li> <li>• Ensuring initiatives maintain momentum and are seen through</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Micro-managing; Wasting people's time; Setting unrealistic targets; Over-promising; Setting unrealistic targets; Getting involved with the wrong activities; Missing deadlines; Constantly fire-fighting; Giving inconsistent messages; Constantly changing the goal-posts; Not delegating tasks that should be left to others; Trying to do everything yourself; Failing to manage your impact on other people's priorities.</p>			

Performance Counts		Constantly building skills	
		I continually build on my strengths, weaknesses and new areas to learn, and I share feedback and knowledge to help others develop.	
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking for opportunities to learn and develop</li> <li>• Engaging with opportunities for training or learning new skills</li> <li>• Keeping up to date in your area</li> <li>• Continually building up your knowledge</li> <li>• Learning from mistakes and experience</li> <li>• Taking feedback constructively and acting on it</li> <li>• Sharing knowledge to help colleagues learn and develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging and recognising others' good work</li> <li>• Giving constructive feedback</li> <li>• Making time to try out and develop new skills</li> <li>• Putting yourself forward for activities that will grow and stretch your skills</li> <li>• Showing expertise in your area</li> <li>• Thinking about your own learning and development</li> <li>• Showing self-awareness about your strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Acknowledging and using others' expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating opportunities for people to learn, e.g. delegating or setting stretching targets</li> <li>• Empowering people to try things out and learn from mistakes</li> <li>• Making time to talk about development with people</li> <li>• Being proactive in addressing gaps in skills, knowledge or performance for self and others</li> <li>• Actively seeking feedback</li> <li>• Understanding and using the varied skills in the team</li> <li>• Encouraging cross-skilling to promote learning</li> <li>• Keeping skills and knowledge current in the team</li> <li>• Developing coaching skills to support the giving of feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a culture of constant learning, e.g. stretching people, challenging underperformance, reviewing and learning</li> <li>• Promoting the sharing of knowledge and expertise internally and externally</li> <li>• Using well-honed coaching skills</li> <li>• Investing time and resource in attracting, retaining and nurturing talent</li> <li>• Drawing on external expertise / experience where appropriate</li> <li>• Creating a sense of progression for staff</li> <li>• Planning ahead to ensure the right skills and knowledge for the future</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Thinking of learning solely in terms of training courses; Creating a fear of failure that stops people trying; Having blind-spots; Making the same mistakes over again; Lacking current knowledge; Being unwilling to learn or improve; Not providing adequate training; Not understanding their area; Allowing key skills or knowledge to get lost</p>			

Performance Counts		Positive mindset	
		I show a can-do attitude, adapting to change and keeping going through difficulties with resilience and a professional approach.	
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrating a positive approach at all times</li> <li>• Treating the same person or task positively each time you come to it</li> <li>• Showing enthusiasm for work</li> <li>• Embracing a challenge or change</li> <li>• Being willing to adapt and take on new skills</li> <li>• Showing the flexibility to change plans where needed</li> <li>• Being able to manage your own wellbeing</li> <li>• Conducting yourself in a professional manner at all times</li> <li>• Staying calm under pressure</li> <li>• Accepting the final decision with good grace</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being open to new ways of working and new delivery models</li> <li>• Supporting the wellbeing of the team</li> <li>• Promoting the positives of change</li> <li>• Showing belief in the team, recognising strengths &amp; weaknesses and celebrating success</li> <li>• Role-modelling the tenacity to keep going despite setbacks</li> <li>• Giving a constructive lead in a crisis</li> <li>• Being willing to move through the journey to meet organisational goals</li> <li>• Maintaining energy and resilience in the face of challenges</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Negative behaviours:</b> Taking things personally; Constant negativity; Making a drama out of a problem; Being unwilling to change and adapt; Unable to control emotions; Losing your temper; Being stuck in your ways; Being unable to move on; Bringing the rest of the team down; Performing badly under pressure; Being always sceptical or cynical; Being inflexible; Saying 'no' by default.</p>			

This page is intentionally left blank

## Folkestone & Hythe District Council

### Agile Working Framework

*'work is something we do, not somewhere we go'*

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 The council continues to recognise the need to develop and encourage modern working practices to enable employees to maximise their performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the business, whilst maintaining high levels of customer service and a good work life balance.

1.2 The Covid-19 pandemic saw an unplanned overnight change for office based staff from being office-based with regular periods of working from home to becoming home-based agile workers. The last 12 months have clearly demonstrated the benefits of agile working in balancing work and home life whilst continuing to deliver high quality services to our residents.

The continued expectations set out in this document for agile working support the principles contained in the Corporate Plan 2021-2030 to continually adapt and improve whilst providing high quality service. In addition, linking with our Carbon Action Plan, over the last 12 months we have also identified a clear reduction in our carbon footprint and emissions, primarily due to the immediate change from many officers travelling to the office most days of the week to there being no daily commute which in turn has also led to a reduction in the costs associated with running a large office.

1.3 During the pandemic whilst the civic offices were closed we have continued to listen and engage with staff and based on a significant volume of feedback there is a considerable evidence base to further support the advantages that come from agile working making it a permanent feature in the way in which we operate.

#### 2 Scope

2.1 This framework applies to all office based employees at any level within Folkestone & Hythe District Council. The nature and extent of agile working will vary according to the job role demands and as flexibility is at its core, it is difficult to apply a rigid set of rules around it.

2.2 The framework supports the sharing of office facilities and therefore no employee will have an office or workstation for their exclusive use. The office space available will prioritise the following uses:

- Meeting customers and partners with scheduled appointments;
- 1-2-1s and team meetings;
- Collaboration space;
- Training space; and
- To support an individual's wellbeing.

## Appendix D

A booking system will be in place to assist managers reserve available space.

- 2.3 The ability to work in an agile manner is dependent on the following:
- The requirements and suitability of the role
  - The service(s) being delivered
  - The welfare of the employee

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1 Agile Working:

Agile working is the term used to describe how the council is empowering its employees to work flexibly from any location, whether it be a council building, within the community and partner / client sites or by varying degrees of home working and hot-desking.

Agile working isn't about home working, it's about being where you need to be to do your job most efficiently and effectively.

Agile working provides staff with more options with regards to where, when and how they undertake their roles by introducing an element of choice and allows staff to influence how they carry out their role by promoting varying levels of flexibility within the workplace. It is based on the concept that working is something we do rather than somewhere we go to.

Agile working is a flexible arrangement and therefore does not require a formal change to terms and conditions. It can be used in a number of ways – as a short term fix for a specific situation, a medium term arrangement for example during school summer holidays, or as a long term work-based methodology where teams always work on an agile basis.

#### 3.2 Flexible Working:

Flexible working has been around for a long time and is now most commonly used in the context of working arrangements between employee and employer following a formal request to work flexibly as allowed by employment legislation. This requires a formal, more permanent change to working hours and would lead to a change in contract, for example an employee can formally request to reduce from full time working hours to 30 hours per week to enable caring responsibilities.

All employees have the legal right to request flexible working, not just parents and carers, as long as they have worked for the council for at least 26 weeks. A separate procedure applies to any requests for flexible working.

#### 3.3 Hybrid Meetings:



Hybrid meetings describe meetings whereby some participants may be in one location (for example, a room at the civic centre) and others choose to join using technology from other locations.

The council is keen to promote this style of meeting rather than unnecessarily encouraging presence in the office.

#### **4. Principles of Agile Working**

- 4.1 Agile working is about taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to modernising working practices and is based on the following principles:
- Work takes place at the most effective location and at the most effective time
  - Managing performance focuses on customer service and results rather than presence
  - Flexibility becomes the norm rather than the exception
  - Employees have more choice about where and when they work, subject to business considerations
  - Space is allocated to activities, not to individuals and not on the basis of seniority
  - There is effective and appropriate use of technology
  - Employees have the opportunity to lead balanced and healthy lives
  - Business continuity can be maintained during severe weather conditions or travel disruption
  - Work has less impact on the environment
  - We trust everyone to do a great job
- 4.2 Working arrangements should always be agreed between the manager and employee to ensure that the arrangements are beneficial to the customer, the council and the employee. However, managers are encouraged to enable staff to maximise agile working opportunities.

To mitigate against unintended legal consequences for the council regarding work locations, the expectation is that our workforce will reside in the UK. Where alternative arrangements are sought, they will be considered by the manager and HR on an individual basis.

#### **4.3 Manager's Responsibilities**

- Ensuring that they comply with this framework and apply it effectively, fairly and consistently within their areas of responsibility;
- Ensuring that all employees are made aware of this framework and their responsibilities in relation to them;
- Ensuring that they discharge their duties in relation to health & safety for any employees who they are responsible for, including health & safety assessments, providing required equipment and acting on any areas of concern;
- Having joint responsibility with employees to come to an agreement on working in an agile way;

## Appendix D

- Being flexible, open and constructive in relation to discussions and agreements about agile working whilst remaining focussed on the needs of the service;
- Agreeing appropriate contact arrangements for employees ensuring that they meet on a monthly 1-2-1 basis and hold team meetings regularly;
- Ensuring that defined performance objectives are set, focussing on customer service and results, and reviewed in line with performance management processes;
- Fostering a culture of trust in employees to carry out their jobs whilst working in an agile way.

### 4.4 Employee's Responsibilities

- Working within this framework in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate way;
- Having joint responsibility with managers to come to an agreement on working in an agile way that remains focussed on the needs of the service;
- Having a responsibility to comply with health & safety requirements and participate in / undertake appropriate risk assessments, carry out necessary actions to minimise risk and maintain a safe working environment reporting any hazards to their line manager and including reporting any defects that arise in the equipment provided;
- Ensuring that they can be contacted during their working hours by colleagues and customers (where appropriate) and ensuring that electronic diaries are up to date clearly showing their availability;
- Ensuring workspaces / offices are left in a clean and tidy condition after use;
- Actively engaging in personal development plans, review meetings and 1-2-1s as well as team meetings.

## 5. **Expenses and Personal Costs**

5.1 Printing is actively discouraged, but if there is a need to print anything it is expected that employees will generally use council facilities to minimise personal costs. This is particularly relevant for bulk printing or postage as this should be completed using the central print function at the council.

5.2 Employees working from their home will need to use their own broadband facilities and will not be reimbursed for doing so. It works on the same principle as getting to an office base – it's the individuals' expense. The same applies to increased energy costs arising from home working.

It is possible to claim tax relief for additional household costs if you are working from home on a regular basis. Please visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for further information or click on this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

## 6. **Office Base**

- 6.1 Very few posts will ever be designated as 'home based' and it is expected that it will only apply where the employee never needs to visit an office base or go into the community to work. The vast majority of employees will be given an office base to meet with colleagues and this base should be used for any travel claims.
- 6.2 It is important that all employees manage their travel and limit it in order to achieve the environmental benefits of agile working and hybrid meetings. Video conferencing is to be used in preference to travelling to meetings where feasible and appropriate considering the needs of the business.

## **7. Workspace and Equipment**

- 7.1 Employees will be provided with the relevant equipment to enable them to carry out their job effectively.
- 7.2 Employees who have been provided with specialist equipment in the office as a result of workplace assessments, e.g. footrests, specialist chairs, keyboards etc. will not be provided with further such equipment to enable them to work from home. The equipment should be located where the employee will be spending the majority of their working time.
- 7.3 It is important that we respect the agile workspace and have regard for colleagues who could be sitting at the same space either later the same day or the next day. A 'clear desk' should be maintained and all employees should ensure that the workspace or office is left in a clean condition and that items moved or adjusted are returned to their original position.

## **8. Communication and Contact**

- 8.1 All employees are provided with laptops with access to Skype so there is no reason why working remotely should be any different to working in the office. Agile working still means employees must be contactable in exactly the same way as if they were in the office.
- 8.2 Arrangements should be made for effective communication to be maintained between employees, line managers and colleagues. Regular formal and informal contact needs to be considered, however these do not need to be face to face. It is essential for regular team meetings to be held in order to develop and maintain relationships however the whole team does not necessarily have to be in the same location.
- 8.3 Electronic diaries are to be used fully at all times and they should be open for colleagues to view. Employees should ensure that all their contact details are up to date, including the publication of mobile phone numbers. This will help to ensure that employees are contactable during their working hours and also helps the council to ensure the health and safety of its workforce.

## Appendix D

<b>Document Control</b>			
<b>Date effective from</b>	July 2021	<b>Owner</b>	Chief HR Officer
<b>Approval Date</b>	June 2021	<b>Approval By</b>	Continuous Improvement Board
<b>Review Date</b>	Next review to take place in July 2022 and then every three years (or earlier where there is a change in the applicable law or business requirement)		

<b>Version Control</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Type of Change</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revisions from previous issues</b>
1.0	New Framework	April 2021	First version of a new framework
1.1	Amended sections	May 2021	Second version of the draft framework
2.0	Minor amendments	July 2021	Approved version for publication
		December 2021	No updates following first review