

Public Document Pack



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Bill Cullen MBA (ISM), BA(Hons) MRTPI
Chief Executive

Date: 04 November 2024

**To: Members of the Ethical Governance and
Personnel Committee**

Cllr A Pendlebury (Chair)
Cllr SL Bray (Vice-Chair)
Cllr MB Cartwright
Cllr MA Cook
Cllr MJ Crooks

Cllr WJ Crooks
Cllr CE Green
Cllr C Harris
Cllr KWP Lynch

Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

Dear member,

There will be a meeting of the **ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** in the De Montfort Suite, Hinckley Hub on **TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2024 at 6.30 pm** and your attendance is required.

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Owen'.

Rebecca Owen
Democratic Services Manager

Fire Evacuation Procedures

- On hearing the fire alarm, leave the building **at once** quickly and calmly by the nearest escape route (indicated by green signs).
- *There are two escape routes from the Council Chamber – at the side and rear. Leave via the door closest to you.*
- Proceed to **Willowbank Road car park**, accessed from Rugby Road then Willowbank Road.
- **Do not** use the lifts.
- **Do not** stop to collect belongings.

Recording of meetings

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Members of the public, members of the press and councillors are hereby informed that, in attending the meeting, you may be captured on film. If you have a particular problem with this, please contact us so we can discuss how we may accommodate you at the meeting.

Use of mobile phones

To minimise disturbance to others attending the meeting, please switch off your phone or other mobile device or turn it onto silent or vibrate mode.

Thank you

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

2. ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

To be advised of any additional items of business which the Chair decides by reason of special circumstances shall be taken as matters of urgency at this meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive verbally from members any disclosures which they are required to make in accordance with the Council's code of conduct or in pursuance of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. **This is in addition to the need for such disclosure to be also given when the relevant matter is reached on the agenda.**

4. QUESTIONS

To hear any questions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.

5. RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING (Pages 1 - 18)

To present the updated Right to Request Flexible Working and Hybrid Working policies.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS POLICY (Pages 19 - 28)

To present an update to the Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions policy.

7. PEOPLE STRATEGY (Pages 29 - 48)

To present the updated People Strategy 2024 to 2028.

This report was considered and endorsed by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 31 October 2024.

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DECIDES HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH AS MATTERS OF URGENCY

As announced under item 3.

9. MATTERS FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED

To consider the passing of a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the public from the undermentioned items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 10 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act.

10. COMPLAINTS UPDATE

To update on any code of conduct complaints not already on the agenda for this meeting.

11. **COMPLAINT 2024/25 (Pages 49 - 72)**

Complaint about a borough councillor.

12. **COMPLAINT 2024/26 (Pages 73 - 80)**

Complaint about a parish councillor.



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Ethical Governance and
Personnel Committee

12 November 2024

Wards affected:

All

Right to Request Flexible Working - Statutory changes

Report of Director Corporate and Streetscene Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present the updated Right to Request Flexible Working and Hybrid Working Policy.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the policies are approved.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Government published the updated Flexible Working Regulations 2024 which provides for changes to the rules on statutory flexible working requests.

The main changes are:

- employees can make a flexible working request from the first day of employment (previously an employee was required to have completed 26 weeks' continuous service)
- employees can make two requests in a 12-month period (previously this was one request)
- employees are no longer required to outline the effect that their request may have on the council and how the effect could be dealt with and
- a reduction in the time within which the employer must notify the employee of its decision to two months.

- 3.2 The changes mainly affect the Right to Request Flexible Working Policy and this has been updated to reflect the statutory changes. This policy is primarily used when an employee wants to change their working hours or pattern.
- 3.3 The Hybrid Working Policy has also been updated as it is a link policy to the Right to Flexible Working Policy and makes reference to the 26-week continuous service period, which has now been removed.
- 3.4 There was a commitment by senior management in October 2022 to review the Hybrid Working Policy twelve months after implementation. The changes made form part of that review.
- 3.5 The council is a flexible working employer and has historically operated flexible working for many years which have been above and beyond the statutory requirements. The council uses both policies as a tool to attract and retain staff, however all requests are managed to ensure there is no detrimental impact on service delivery. It is envisaged that the statutory changes will have minimal effect.
- 4. **Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules**
 - 4.1 Open session.
- 5. **Financial implications [IB]**
 - 5.1 None.
- 6. **Legal implications [ST]**
 - 6.1 As set out in the report.
- 7. **Corporate Plan implications**
 - 7.1 The application of this policy supports the corporate aim People.
- 8. **Consultation**
 - 8.1 The trade unions have been consulted and no responses were received.
- 9. **Risk implications**
 - 9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
 - 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Increase in flexible working applications – which could impact upon capacity	The operation of the Hybrid policy and the flexibility it provides will mitigate against this risk	Julie Stay

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 The majority of flexible working applications are made by female members of our workforce which represent over 50% of our workforce. By applying the new regulations consistently across the council ensures that females are not indirectly discriminated against.

11. Climate implications

- 11.1 None.

12. Corporate implications

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
- Community safety implications
 - Environmental implications
 - ICT implications
 - Asset management implications
 - Procurement implications
 - Human resources implications
 - Planning implications
 - Data protection implications
 - Voluntary sector

Background papers: None.

Contact officer: Julie Stay, 01455 255688
Executive member: Councillor S Bray

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Right to Request Flexible Working Policy

Version Number	Version 3
Date Produced	October 2024
Approved by EGPC	12 November 2024
Previous version date	Version 2 – October 2022

RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The council recognises the contribution of all its employees and understands that, at some time in their working lives, employees may wish to work more flexibly. All employees have the statutory right to make two flexible working requests in every 12 month period. Flexible working is about reviewing employees' working patterns or location to see whether it is possible to implement different arrangements. Any arrangements must, however, always consider the need for the council to achieve its core business purpose as efficiently as is possible.

A request for flexible working can be a request to **permanently** change:

- ✓ The number of hours the employee works
- ✓ The times at which the employee is required to work
- ✓ Where the employee works, usually a request to work fully or partly from home.

The request could include shorter working hours, shorter working week, compressed hours, annualised hours and job sharing. Employees should be aware that if they request and are granted flexible working, this represents a **permanent** variation to their contract of employment. In certain circumstances, however, the organisation may agree to the change on a trial basis. If an employee's circumstances subsequently change in relation to the need for flexible working, there is no statutory right for a return to the terms and conditions that applied prior to flexible working being granted.

This policy should not be confused with the Hybrid Working Policy which allows staff, if their job role permits, to work from home or alternative locations where the employment contract does not change.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on handling the statutory right to request flexible working.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council employees.

EQUALITIES

The council's commitment to equality of opportunity will be always be observed during the operation of this policy. This will ensure that employees are treated fairly and without discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

PROCEDURE

Eligibility

To be eligible to make a request for flexible working, a person must satisfy the following conditions. They must:

- ✓ Be an employee
- ✓ Not have made more than one other application to work flexibly during the previous 12 months.

Making a request

An application for flexible working must be in writing and include the following information.

1. The date of the application.
2. The change to working conditions the employee is seeking and when they would like this change to come into effect.
3. A statement that it is a statutory request, and when they have made a previous application for flexible working.
4. If your request relates to something covered by discrimination law (Equality Act 2010), for example to make a 'reasonable adjustment' for a disability you may have.
5. The application should be signed and dated.

Meeting and discussion

7. Following receipt of a valid written request for flexible working, the employee's line manager will arrange a meeting with them to discuss their request and will consider the request reasonably within a reasonable timetable.
8. All requests will be decided, including any appeal, within two months of first receipt of the request, unless an extension of time is agreed.
9. The employee has the right to be accompanied at any meeting set up to discuss their flexible working request by a trade union representative or work colleague.
10. The employee's request will be considered carefully weighing the benefits of the requested changes in working conditions against any adverse business impact of implementing the requested changes.
11. Once the employee's manager has decided on the request, the employee will be informed of this in writing as soon as is reasonably possible.
12. If the request is successful, or subject to certain modifications, the manager will discuss with the employee how and when the changes might best be implemented.

Determining the application

When determining whether the request can be accommodated, the manager will need to carefully consider what the benefits will be to the employee and/or the council and weigh these against any potential adverse impacts. Any concerns the manager may have should be explored with the employee and their response to these issues obtained. It may also be appropriate to discuss alternative arrangements which could be accommodated or the possibility of either trialling or agreeing to the request on a temporary basis. It is recommended that the trial period should be approximately three months.

There may be occasions where a manager receives several flexible working requests close together, the manager is not required to make a value judgement as to which request is most deserving and should consider each case on its merits, looking at the business case for granting the request and the possible impact of refusing it. Where it is not possible to agree all requests, the manager may wish to ask each employee whether any compromise could be made before coming to a decision. Advice is available from Human Resources.

If several employees already work flexibly and agreeing to a further request would have a negative impact, the manager may ask if anyone would be willing to change their working arrangements so that a new request could be accommodated.

Agreeing to the request

If the request is agreed, then the employment contract needs to be changed. Please inform Human Resources and the relevant paperwork will be drafted.

Rejection of the request

If the request for flexible working is declined, it will be for one or more of the following reasons (as set out in the legislation).

- ✓ A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- ✓ The burden of additional costs
- ✓ An inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- ✓ An inability to recruit additional staff
- ✓ A detrimental impact on quality
- ✓ A detrimental impact on performance
- ✓ Insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
- ✓ A planned structural change to the business

When considering whether to decline a request it is important that managers remember that this should only be done where there is evidence available to support this decision. This evidence will need to be provided as part of the appeal process. Advice is available from Human Resources on the potential risks of declining a request.

The employee should be advised of the outcome in writing as soon as possible and a copy retained on their personal file. Human Resources will draft a letter stating the business reasons above and a detailed explanation as to how these apply to the employee's request. The employee should also be offered a right to appeal.

Appeal

An employee can appeal against a decision to refuse their request for flexible working. Any appeal should be submitted to the HR Manager, in writing, within 10 working days of receiving the decision letter and should include grounds of appeal (i.e. the request has been refused for a reason outside the business reasons above or the decision was made on incorrect information). The appeal must be heard and concluded within three months of the date on which the employee submitted their flexible working application, unless an extension has been agreed with the employee and confirmed in writing including reasons for the delay.

Appeals will be heard by the next level of management and a HR representative. The decision maker will either:

- Uphold the original decision to decline the request. The outcome letter should include the grounds/reasoning on which this decision was reached.
- Overturn the original decision to decline the request. This may result in the implementation of the employee's original request or an alternative which can be accommodated by both parties. The outcome letter should include details of the new working arrangements.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. If the employee is unable to attend on the arranged date, an alternative should be proposed.

If an agreement cannot be reached through the appeal process and you want to take further action, please refer to the council's Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

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Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Hybrid Working Policy

Version Number	Version 2
Date Produced	October 2024
Approved by EGPC	12 November 2024
Previous version date	Version 1 – October 2022

HYBRID WORKING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Hybrid working is a form of flexible working that allows employees to split their time between attending the workplace and working remotely (typically from home or another location).

There are many benefits associated with hybrid working such as:

- ✓ Efficiency - better use of space, reduced property estate to manage going forward, and the creation of flexible spaces
- ✓ Productivity – teams working closer together to stay connected and to share knowledge. It can also mean potentially extended hours for services and reduced absenteeism as people can make more choices about where and when they work.
- ✓ Sustainability - reduced carbon footprint – fewer reasons to travel
- ✓ Business continuity - reduced disruption from weather, security, or any future pandemic.
- ✓ Incentives – more appealing when recruiting and retaining employees, reduced training costs
- ✓ Work life flexibility – reduced commute time, more choice and greater trust between employer and employee.

Many employees have shown during the coronavirus pandemic that they can continue to effectively perform while working remotely and have already indicated that they do not want to return to less flexible pre-pandemic working arrangements. This rapid adoption of a new working culture provides an opportunity for the council to permanently implement hybrid working to successfully transform the organisation, contributing to overall performance as well as supporting employees to achieve a positive work-life balance.

PURPOSE

The objectives of our new way of working is to develop promote different ways of working that can support:

- Delivery of our services and
- Employee well-being through a better work-life balance

This policy sets out the council's approach to hybrid working and provide managers with a framework for implementing new ways of working and managing a workforce with reduced office accommodation.

Please note that legislative requirements in relation to statutory right to request flexible working still exists. This applies to those who wish to make a formal request to contractually change their working hours or location on a *permanent basis* under the statutory scheme. Please refer to the Statutory Right to Request Flexible Working Policy for more details.

For most employees, who either wish to alter their working pattern which does not constitute a contractual change or where revised working arrangements are informally agreed with their line manager, this will not constitute a formal statutory request.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council employees.

PRINCIPLES

In order to implement the new operating model, the following principles will be adopted.

- ✓ Customers are to be at the focus of our new working arrangements. The council's workplaces will be set up to better support collaboration, productivity, wellbeing and customer service.
- ✓ Workspace is prioritised for activities, not individuals - flexibility is the norm and fixed desks are kept to a minimum for operational or wellbeing reasons.
- ✓ Employees should work in the most appropriate location for the task they are doing rather than being at a council office by default
- ✓ Employees will be encouraged to work as flexibly as possible whilst always remaining contactable, using a mix of workplaces (offices, working from home, remote working) to best meet service and customer needs, and support staff wellbeing.
- ✓ Employees will be given the equipment they need to support working in a more flexible but affordable way
- ✓ To shift towards a digital first culture that makes the most of the efficiencies hybrid working offers.
- ✓ Ensure a team working culture is in place when developing a hybrid culture to maintain staff development and wellbeing
- ✓ Ensure that new employees to the council are embedded in the organisation through regular contact
- ✓ Face to face contact with customers to be on a prearranged basis.
- ✓ Productivity and performance to be maintained and managed appropriately.

EQUALITIES

The council's commitment to equality of opportunity will be always observed during the operation of this policy. This will ensure that employees are treated fairly and without discrimination on the grounds age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR HYBRID WORKING

Employees may work from various locations including:

Main Office Base – this is where an employee works at the office, which is their main base according to their contract.

Home working – this refers to an arrangement whereby employees work from home on an agreed basis, with the expectation that the employee will attend the office as necessary.

Remote working – this is defined as an informal facility whereby employees carry out work that would normally have been completed at a traditional office, for example an alternative site.

The number of days per week each employee spends attending the council offices will vary depending on:

- Their individual circumstances (home environment may not be suitable)
- The nature of their role (may not be suitable for remote working)
- What is happening within their role and team at any particular time (i.e. team days)
- The needs of the council including the space available at council locations

Workforce flexibility

Given the degree of flexibility that the council's hybrid working arrangements will provide for its employees, it is expected our workforce will also be flexible. Employees may be required to attend the council offices on particular days at the request of their line manager for example: training, face to face meetings (if it is agreed that this is best conducted in person) or if there are capability issues and the employee is on an improvement plan.

Similarly, there may be circumstances in which employees are requested to work remotely or to work from other workplaces as reasonably required, for instance:

- Operational needs, for example if the council has too many employees attending the council offices
- Emergency planning arrangements such as in response to a flood/fire at the building or for public health reasons due to a pandemic

In such cases employees will be given as much notice as possible.

Working hours and terms and conditions of employment

The terms and conditions and policies that apply to employees working remotely from home will be unchanged from those that they would apply in the workplace, unless a variation to contract is issued which states otherwise.

Under this policy working hours are unchanged and are set out within the employment contract.

Workspaces at the council

The new operating model will see a reduction in workstations being made available at the main office base. Moving forwards teams will be located within 'zones'. The council will operate a hot-desking arrangement whereby staff will be able to book desks via a booking system. At the end of each day employees should ensure that the hot desk is left empty, clean and tidy. The council will provide personal storage lockers for staff, on request.

Some staff may be allocated a permanent desk if their home environment is not suitable and following approval of their line manager.

Technology and equipment

To assist employees working remotely, the council will provide as a minimum:

- Laptop with built in camera & speakers
- Teams compatible duo or mono wired headset

- Wired keyboard (for home use)
- Wired optical mouse (for home use)
- Laptop riser (for home use)
- Desk and chair (if required as part of a DSE/risk assessment)
- Suitable laptop bag

There may be some variances to this, but this will only be on a business need and where supported by an individual risk assessment which everyone will be invited to complete for their working arrangements.

In an event where technical issues are experienced which prevents the employee from working from home or in a remote location, the manager must be informed. The manager will need to establish the extent of the system failure, the impact on the service and decide on the appropriate course of action. In some circumstances, employees may be required to work at the main office.

Health and Safety

The council is liable if the employee suffers an accident or ill health as a result of working from home, however the Health and Safety at Work Act also places obligations on the employee to 'take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons ...' which in this instance, would include those within the household.

The council has limited control over the home therefore to manage the risk employees will complete a homeworking self-assessment which is reviewed every 12 months or sooner if there are any changes. The self-assessment may cover, but is not limited to:

- lone working
- desk area
- display screen
- fire and electrical safety
- stress & welfare
- manual handling
- slip, trips and falls
- security

The assessment will identify any risks and what the manager, working with the employee, can do to mitigate against them. Employees must notify their line manager if:

- You feel any discomfort due to working remotely (such as back pain)
- You believe there are any work-related health and safety hazards
- Any work-related accidents occur in your home

Managers will escalate the matter to the Health and Safety Officer to address what action can be taken.

Data Protection

Employees who are working remotely are responsible for keeping information associated with the council secure at all times and are under a duty to:

- *Practise good computer security* – employees working from home operate through the council's systems so that personal and customer data is adequately protected.

Employees should not send emails to personal email addresses or print documents at home using personal printers. Any printing should be carried out at the council offices.

- *Be mindful when holding confidential/sensitive conversations* – employees may be sharing home working space with other family members or friends or working in public locations. Try to hold conversations where they are less likely to hear you and try and use headphones if possible. Never have confidential conversations in public.
- *Ensure work related information is safeguarded*
 - Employees should position laptops so that others cannot see the screen
 - Never leave laptops unattended in remote locations
 - Keep all hard copies of work-related documentation secure, including keeping documents locked away at all times except when in use
 - Any data/print outs that need to be destroyed should be done so securely

Communication

Hybrid working is based on effective communication and is critical to its success. Communication needs to be managed to ensure good information flow, increase knowledge gaps and enable effective team working.

Team based communication

Communication within hybrid teams needs to be intentional as ad-hoc conversations (where a lot of informal learning and knowledge sharing generally takes place) may be reduced. To redress this, all members of the team should be consulted and encouraged to establish agreed principles of communication such as:

- *Regular team meetings* -. teams can meet either physically, virtually (or both) to ensure that communication is inclusive for everyone.
- *Designated team days* - ideally this could be in the office or located in a mutually convenient location
- *Social gatherings* – this may work for some teams, eating out, coffee breaks etc
- *Group chats* – enabled through various social media channels such as Whatsapp

Individual communication

Managers can maintain contact such as:

- *Regular 1:1 meetings* – mutual dialogue allows managers to pick up successes or any performance issues as well as talking about wellbeing and personal development. This can be done via video call, telephone or face to face.
- *Agree check in procedures* – managers may wish to agree in advance the frequency and method for checking in with employees on a daily basis. Managers should make themselves available by telephone to employees to respond to any questions in a timely manner.
- *Employee wellbeing* – just because employees are not physically present, it doesn't mean that they are no longer part of the team. Keeping in touch with remote workers is important so that they feel informed and included.

The employer has a duty of care to the employee. It is therefore important, given the reduction in office presence that the manager watches out for signs that the employee is unhappy, demotivated or feeling isolated.

Managing Performance and Output

Hybrid working requires a good level of communication, organisation, trust and working together in order to ensure that arrangements put in place do not have an impact upon the quality of work or targets that the service is required to meet. Having an adaptable management style will ensure managers take advantage of opportunities to improve the services offered and support employees with different work arrangements. Managers cannot expect to gain flexibility of employees and then to manage in a strict and rigid way.

The new way of working for managers will provide more focus on managing 'outputs' as opposed to 'presenteeism'. Managing remotely should not be any different when managing staff in a traditional office location. Managing performance is integral to the manager's workload and regular one to ones should take place using mutually agreed methods. Please refer to the 'Managing Performance – Guidance for staff' for more details.

The capability process remains in place to tackle poor performance and if there is a performance issue then this should be discussed with the employee, ideally during a face-to-face meeting. Please speak to HR for support regarding this.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF HYBRID WORKING

Lone Working

As a remote worker employees should follow Lone Working Arrangements located on the intranet and ensure that colleagues know where and when to expect them to be a particular location.

Reasonable Adjustments

Managers should be mindful about employees having a registered disability under the Equalities Act 2020 for which reasonable adjustments should be put in place/or need to be put in place in order for the employee to be able to carry out their duties without them being disadvantaged. This is particularly important when allocating fixed desks.

In most circumstances, managers will already be aware of the employee's disability and any adjustments that have been put into place where relevant.

Where managers are not already aware of an existing disability that has been declared it may be necessary to refer to occupational health /and or carry out a health and safety risk assessment.

Managers should contact Human Resources for advice.

Financial Assistance

Additional costs such as energy costs, broadband and furniture not approved by the council will be met by the employee and not paid by the council. In many cases costs are offset by the reduction in commuting costs.

Employees may be able to claim tax relief for any household expenses incurred as a result of working from home, provided the expenses are solely work related. To claim tax relief, see the Government's guide www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home.

Insurance

Council owned equipment

Items of equipment belonging to the council will be covered by the council's insurance whilst they are in the employee's home and when in transit. Employees must take reasonable care of council owned equipment when taken away from council premises. Employees may wish to contact their home insurance company regarding the nature and extent of the use of their home for work purposes, as home working may have an impact upon the employee's home insurance policy.

Employees working from home are covered by the council's Employer Liability Scheme.

Travel

Employees should always consider the most efficient mean of travel in terms of time and efficiency to meet the council's green agenda.

The designated council location as set out in the contract of employment contract is considered the employee's work base.

*Ordinary commuting is usually travel between an employee's home and their normal place of work, and/or the return journey for which mileage is not claimable. Any mileage claimed in the course of work duties must be reduced by the length of the *ordinary commute journey (known as the lessor rule for tax purposes).

The total mileage can be claimed for journeys relating to approved training, that are in excess of the commute journey.



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Ethical Governance and
Personnel Committee

12 November 2024

Wards affected:

All wards

Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy

Report of Director Corporate and Streetscene Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present an updated version of the Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy for this council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Following a review of the pension discretions it is recommended to:
1. Approve the Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy.
 2. Approve that the existing discretions currently in place remain unchanged.
 3. Adopt the policy template as required by the Leicestershire Pension Scheme Administrator, Leicestershire County Council.

3. Background to the report

- 3.1 The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) regulations include several areas where pension scheme employers have discretionary powers regarding pension benefits. Under the regulations, employers are required to publish and keep under review a policy to explain how they will apply certain discretions, should a request be made by a pension scheme member (an employee or former employee). This allows employers flexibility in managing some issues relating to pensions benefits of their scheme members, although exercising these discretions can have immediate costs that would need to be funded.

- 3.2 There are four main categories where there is a statutory requirement to have a published policy. These categories are briefly explained below:

Additional Pension

There is an option for pension scheme members to purchase additional pension to boost their pension benefit at retirement. This discretion allows for employers to consider whether to help scheme members who are buying additional pension and share the cost with them.

Waiving of Early Retirement Reductions

When scheme members elect to retire before their normal pension age (65 years) their pension payment will be reduced; the employers can exercise discretion to waive these reductions in part or in full.

Switching on the 'Rule of 85'

This is a complicated rule and only applicable to scheme members who were in the LGPS before 1 October 2006. They must meet 85 years with their length of service and age. Ordinarily if a scheme member has met the rule of 85 and is retiring and drawing their pension after 60 years of age it applies automatically. However, if they meet the 85-year rule and are between the age of 55-59 the employer has the discretion to 'switch on' the rule of 85, however this will come at a cost to the employer.

Flexible Retirement

If an employee aged 55 or over reduces their hours or moves to a less senior position, they may start receiving their pension even though they are still working. This is flexible retirement. To achieve this then this discretion must be exercised by the employer. Under the council's policy this is only agreed by the employer if there is no additional cost to the council.

- 3.3 There are additional discretions that are not mandatory, but it is advised to adopt such discretions to ensure good practice, and these are set out in the last section of the policy.
- 3.4 The council's discretions policy does not in the main support these discretions and would only consider in exceptional circumstances, save the discretion relating to flexible retirement. This is due to financial costs which the council would have to immediately fund.
- 3.5 The council's current discretionary policy was last reviewed in 2019. Leicestershire County Council, as the scheme administrator, has recommended that all scheme employers, when reviewing their discretions, complete a standardised template to ensure good governance and that all local employers are consistent in their approach.

- 3.6 The attached template sets out the councils existing discretions and to mitigate against any future budgetary impact, it is recommended that these remain unchanged. Once approved, the discretions will be published on the council's website and submitted to Leicestershire County Council.
4. **Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules**
- 4.1 Open session.
5. **Financial implications [DW]**
- 5.1 No payments have been made for at least 20 years. Therefore it is proposed that no funding is set aside to fund payments. If a discretionary payment were endorsed the cost would require approval in accordance with financial procedure rules. Depending on the age and service of the employee these costs could be significant.
6. **Legal implications [ST]**
- 6.1 None.
7. **Corporate Plan implications**
- 7.1 None.
8. **Consultation**
- 8.1 N/A
9. **Risk implications**
- 9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:
- None
10. **Knowing your community – equality and rural implications**
- 10.1 Adopting a discretions policy will ensure transparency and consistency for all scheme members.

11. Climate implications

11.1 N/A.

12. Corporate implications

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers: none

Contact officer: Julie Stay, 01455 255688

Executive member: Councillor S Bray

Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy

Employer name:

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Membership Category	Discretion Number	Discretion	Regulation reference	Our guidance reference	Example Employer* discretions policy	Adopt example? Yes/No	Discretion if not adopting example (attach additional sheet if required)
Additional Pension							
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	1	Whether, how much, and in what circumstances to contribute to a shared cost APC scheme.	R16(2)(e) & R16(4)(d)	1.1	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	2	Whether, at full cost to the Scheme employer, to grant extra annual pension, up to the LGPS additional pension limit (reviewed annually), to an active member or within 6 months of leaving to a member whose employment was terminated on the grounds of redundancy or business efficiency.	R31	1.2	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally grant any additional pension to an active member or within 6 months of ceasing to be an active member by reason of redundancy or business efficiency but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	

Waiving of Early Retirement Reductions

Actives & Post 14 Leavers	3	Whether to waive, in whole or in part, actuarial reduction on benefits which a member voluntarily draws before normal pension age.	R30(8)	2.1	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	4	Whether to waive, in whole or in part, actuarial reduction on benefits paid on flexible retirement.	R30(8)	4 and/or 2.1	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	5	Whether to waive any actuarial reduction on pre and/or post April 2014 benefits paid early on compassionate grounds.	TP3(1), TPSch 2, paras 2(1)	2.2	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	
Leavers between 2008 and 2014	6	Whether to waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to deferred benefits paid early.	B30(5), TPSch 2, para 2(1)	2.2	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	

Leavers between 1998 and 2008 plus Councillors	7	Waive, on compassionate grounds, the actuarial reduction applied to deferred benefits paid early.	31(5) & TPSch 2, para 2(1)	2.2	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	
Switching on the 'Rule of 85'							
Actives & Post 14 Leavers	8	Whether to "switch on" the 85 year rule for a member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.	TPSch 2, paras 1(2) and 2(2)	3	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	
Leavers between 2008 and 2014	9	Whether to "switch on" the 85 year rule for a deferred member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.	TPSch 2, paras 1(2) and 1(1)(c)	3	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	
Leavers between 1998 and 2008 plus Councillors	10	Whether to "switch on" the 85 year rule for a deferred member voluntarily drawing benefits on or after age 55 and before age 60.	TPSch 2, para 1(2) & 1(1)(f) & R60	3	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it under exceptional circumstances, considering the business case and foreseeable costs to the employer.	Yes	

Flexible Retirement

Actives & Post 14 Leavers	11	Whether all or some benefits can be paid if an employee over 55 reduces their hours or grade (flexible retirement).	R30(6) & TP11(2)	4	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has agreed to release pension where there is no cost and not to waive any reduction. Members must reduce their hours by a minimum of 40% and/or reduce their grade. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council may however allow the release of pension where there is a cost or waive reduction in a potential redundancy situation, where a reduction may occur through redeployment, or in other exceptional circumstance supported by a business case.	Yes	
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Non-Mandatory Discretions

Active Members	12	Whether to extend the 12 month limit a member has in which to elect to transfer other pension rights into the LGPS. This must be with the agreement of the Administering Authority	R100 (6)		Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it where extenuating circumstances apply, including where evidence exists that either an election was made within 12 months but this was not received by Leicestershire Pension Fund or evidence exists that the member was not aware of the 12 month limit due to maladministration.	Yes	
Active Members	13	Whether to extend the 12 month limit a member has in which to elect not to aggregate their deferred benefits with their new LGPS employment	R22 (7) and (8)		Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will not normally exercise this discretion but may consider it where extenuating circumstances apply, including where evidence exists that either an election was made within 12 months but this was not received by Leicestershire Pension Fund or evidence exists that the member was not aware of the 12 month limit due to maladministration.	Yes	
Active Members	14	Whether to determine which contribution band is allocated on joining the scheme and at each April. It also determines the circumstances when an employee's band may be reviewed	R9		Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will base pay on actual pay in April plus previous year's overtime, and re-band upon a pay award and all contractual changes, but not ad-hoc hours changes.	Yes	
		Name:			Signature:		
		Job title:			Date:		

* Where an employer chooses to adopt the same discretion as "Example Employer", it will be deemed that any decisions will be made by the relevant decision maker(s). For example, by the employer's governing body, director(s), cabinet, committee, or appointed person(s).

Please note that where an employer does not wish to adopt "Example Employer" discretions, it is possible to have discretions to review each case on a "case-by-case basis", however please be aware of the extra work involved in reviewing each case individually and the risk of setting precedents.

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Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Scrutiny Commission 31 October 2024

Ethical Governance and
Personnel Committee 12 November 2024

Wards affected: All

People Strategy 2024 - 2028

Report of Director Corporate and Streetscene Services

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present the updated People Strategy 2024 - 2028

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the updated People Strategy is approved.

3. Background to the report

3.1 As a large local public sector employer, employing over 450 staff and delivering a diverse range of services, it is important that the council has an up-to-date People Strategy and action plan. This is to ensure that we have skilled and motivated staff to deliver services to our communities, and that the council is fit for the future in a highly competitive market. Further to this, we want all staff to feel supported and to be able to work effectively with their colleagues in line with our staff values, to ensure better outcomes for the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth.

3.2 Our corporate plan for 2024 to 2028 sets out our vision in creating great places to live, work and enjoy and has three strategic aims:

People: Helping people to stay safe, healthy, active, and in employment

Places: Creating clean, sustainable and attractive places to live, visit and work in

Prosperity: Encouraging sustainable commercial economic and housing growth, as well as attracting businesses, improving skills and supporting regeneration

This People Strategy aligns to the council's corporate plan supporting all three aims, and directly supporting the aim 'People'.

- 3.3 The strategy was developed after considering the national and local context, feedback from staff surveys, pulse surveys and workforce data. The action plan, contained within the strategy provides a clear framework as to how each theme will be delivered to support improved performance and employee wellbeing across our workforce.

- 3.4 To deliver this vision, the People Strategy has three distinct themes set out below:

1) Attract and retain a skilled, motivated and diverse workforce

We recognise and understand that it is important to promote what local government has to offer and once attracted, continue to invest in our staff so they stay.

2) Encourage a positive working environment so that wellbeing is supported, and staff feel 'psychologically safe'

Positive and effective leadership based on trust creates a shared purpose and helps people to become engaged, perform their best and be happy in the job that they do.

3) Have a workforce that is adaptable and resilient to change

Change is inevitable. We need to ensure we keep pace with ongoing change by adapting and improving our corporate and HR processes, culture and policies to further embed our effective new way of working.

- 3.5 This is an evolving strategy that will be reviewed during the next four years to adapt to any strategic changes, including any challenges and opportunities. Updates on the action plan will be reported to SLT on a regular basis. We also have general staff survey planned for early 2025. This will allow us to track and monitor employee feedback in key areas such as management, wellbeing and the way we work.

4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 4.1 Open session.

5. Financial implications [IB]

- 5.1 None currently identified. If additional resource requirements arise because of this strategy, these will need approval in accordance with the Council's financial procedure rules.

6. Legal implications [ST]

- 6.1 None.

7. Corporate Plan implications

- 7.1 The strategy directly aligns to the Corporate Plan and the aim 'People'.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The strategy is out to consultation with the recognised trade unions and this will conclude on 30 October. Initial feedback from UNISON and GMB has been positive.

9. Risk implications

- 9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:
- None

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 All projects as identified with the action plan will be impact assessed at the time of delivery of the project, if relevant.

11. Climate implications

- 11.1 Theme 3 within the action plan "Review our Travel Policy to support the climate change strategy and the promotion of active travel" directly contributes to the delivery of the council's Climate Change Action Plan.
- 11.2 It is envisaged that the new policy review will deliver reduced co2 emissions.

12. Corporate implications

12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers: none.

Contact officer: Julie Stay, 01455 255688

Executive member: Councillor S Bray

PEOPLE STRATEGY 2024 – 2028

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH: A PLACE OF OPPORTUNITY



INTRODUCTION

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council needs a suitably skilled, motivated and engaged workforce that meets the changing needs of our residents as we continue to work through challenging times.

Recruiting and retaining our staff has never been more of a priority given the significant movement in the jobs market because of the pandemic and Brexit. With the introduction of hybrid working, our staff have adapted to new ways of working while responding to ongoing and increasing customer demand.

Managing our diverse age profiles for both our workforce and customers is challenging given different needs and expectations. This is against a backdrop of an ongoing and unstable financial landscape, which will have an impact on service delivery.

While there are clearly challenges it's important to reflect on our achievements since our last People Strategy.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Hybrid Working Policy - to support our new ways of working

Innovation – partnering with the private sector to deal with employment

Working with us – showcasing Local Government careers in schools.

Developed an apprenticeship case study career video, showcasing council progression at HBBC

Increasing the number of apprenticeships across all areas of the council

Modernisation of the recruitment portal simplifying the applicant's journey

Hosted joint job fairs

Implemented health and wellbeing initiatives

Embedded our Statutory Safety Committee

'Be-Inspired' Coaching programme for managers

Management Development Programme

Periodic wellbeing and council wide staff surveys

Achieved Disability Confident 'Leader' status

Supported care leavers

Refreshed Benefits/rewards portal

Refreshed Disciplinary, Grievance and Capability policy

Refreshed the Employee Code of Conduct

New Employee Assistance Programme Provider

CORPORATE PLAN

Our corporate plan for 2024 to 2028 sets out our vision in creating great places to live, work and enjoy and has three strategic aims:



PEOPLE:

Helping people to stay safe, healthy, active, and in employment



PLACES:

Creating clean, sustainable and attractive places to live, visit and work in

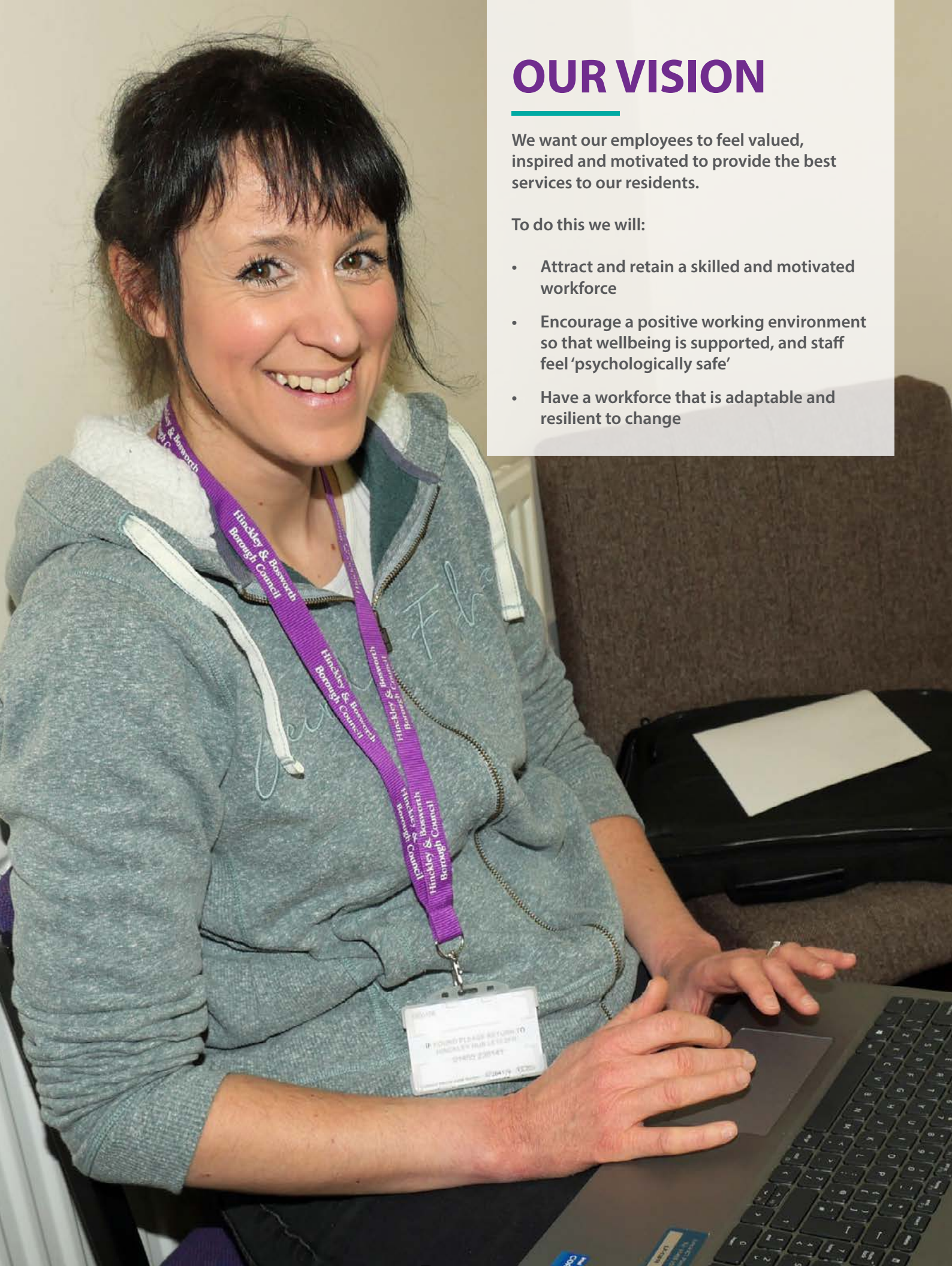


PROSPERITY:

Encouraging sustainable commercial economic and housing growth, as well as attracting businesses, improving skills and supporting regeneration

This People Strategy aligns to the council's corporate plan supporting all three aims, and directly supporting the aim 'People'.





OUR VISION

We want our employees to feel valued, inspired and motivated to provide the best services to our residents.

To do this we will:

- Attract and retain a skilled and motivated workforce
- Encourage a positive working environment so that wellbeing is supported, and staff feel 'psychologically safe'
- Have a workforce that is adaptable and resilient to change

OUR STAFF VALUES

Our values and behaviours were developed with a staff working group and are still as relevant now as they were then. The values are underpinned by flexibility and respect. We believe that, while performance and results are important in how we deliver our services, it's our employees and how we work with each other that makes the difference.

Good working relationships and positivity have a huge impact on customer service, productivity and job satisfaction, as well as our health and wellbeing.

BEING YOUR BEST

- Look for a positive outcome in every situation
- Develop a 'can do' attitude
- Take pride in what you do
- Be open, honest and positive in your interaction with others
- Be open to others' ideas and ways of working
- Be considerate and see issues from the other person's point of view
- Keep-up-to-date and know your subject
- Admit mistakes and importantly, learn from them
- Be flexible in your job role and be willing to develop your skills, knowledge and ability
- Take responsibility and be accountable for your own actions

CUSTOMER FOCUS

- Make the customer the 'first' priority
- Treat others as you would expect to be treated yourself
- Treat all customers fairly and in a respectful and professional manner
- Listen to your customers to deliver a service that the customer wants
- Be passionate about service delivery and remove obstacles and barriers to delivering service effectively
- Ensure flexible service delivery
- Go the extra mile
- Get it right first time and at the first point of contact
- Don't make promises which you can't deliver
- Ensure you carry through your promises and keep customers updated

TEAM WORKING

- Play to your own and others' strengths
- Be clear about what is expected of you and other team members
- Recognise team members' contributions
- Show respect for colleagues on a personal and professional level
- Look to help others to develop and support them
- Share knowledge and information with other team members
- Be flexible and open to change in how the team performs its work
- Be open to others' ideas
- Celebrate success as a team
- Work with other teams and organisations to deliver service effectively

CHALLENGES AND INFLUENCES

The challenges arising from struggling to recruit and retain staff is a key strategic issue particularly affecting ‘pockets’ of our workforce including roles such as planners, solicitors and environmental health officers.

However, in recent years national influences – such as our departure of the European Union, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the private sector paying more competitively than local government has had a broader impact across the UK as some workers left the market prematurely.

This directly affected our wider service delivery such as Housing and Streetscene Services, resulting in the council developing an innovative partnership with a local employer to provide HGV Drivers to assist with service delivery.

While we are still experiencing gaps in some areas, the general market has now settled, with broader recruitment shortages having now recovered.

However, we still need to develop and retain our new staff and support the staff who have worked through difficult times during high demand and staffing gaps.

Reliance on temporary posts due to short term funding

Age diverse workforce and expectations of ‘Gen Z’

Innovation in employee resourcing

National and local impact of the pandemic

Influence of leaving the EU

Competing with private sector pay

Growing our own workforce

Absence levels

Different ways of working

Ageing population and workforce

Digital strategy

Cost of living crisis

Improving the customer service experience

Rising customer demand levels

Skills shortage within some teams

Competing with neighbouring councils and organisations for talent

Increase on the national living wage

Reduced pool of applicants

Continued transformation and improvements

Reduced central government funding

High interest rates

Good data and intelligence to inform what we do

A full-page background image showing a worker in a high-visibility yellow vest and helmet using a long pole to trim a tree in a residential yard. The worker is standing on a grassy area next to a wooden fence. In the background, there are brick houses and trees under a clear blue sky.

OUR PEOPLE

Given the challenging employment environment, we value a workforce that not only reflects the community we serve, but is rich in diversity, experience and talent. This means we are best equipped to the challenges we face and enables and nurtures our younger staff members. We value and respect each other's opinions and recognise that all staff members have a contribution to make.

WORKFORCE PROFILE



456
Staff members
(including staff on
FTC)

Gender



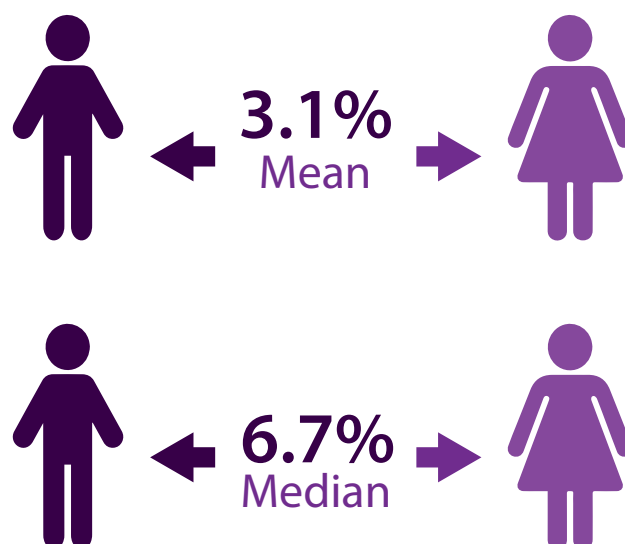
Gender by senior roles



Part time employment



Gender Pay gap



Workforce

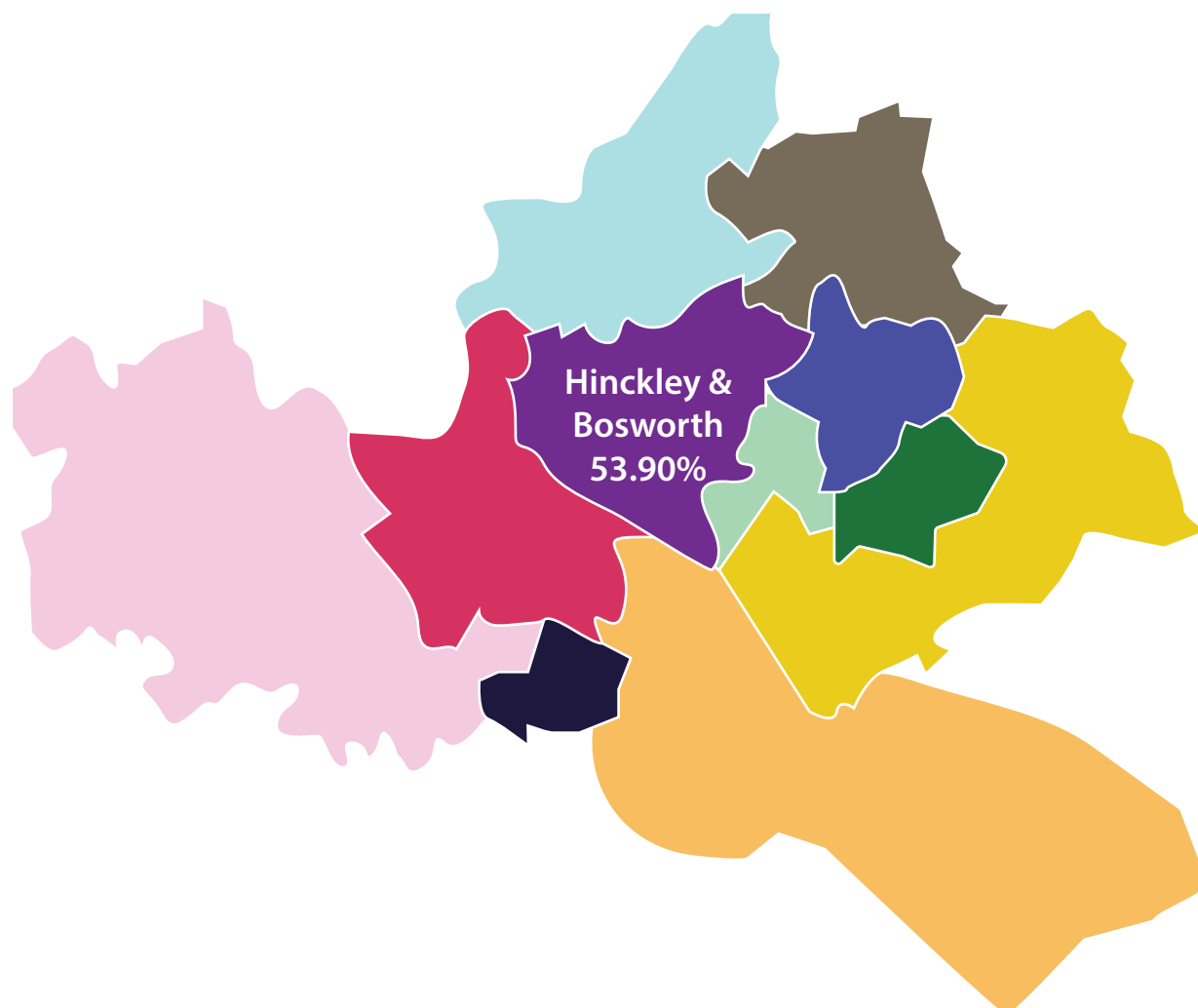


53.9%

of our workforce live in the borough - over half are in the Hinckley area.

Where do our workforce live?

Hinckley & Bosworth	53.90%
Nuneaton and North Warks	9.56%
Blaby	6.25%
Leicester	6.05%
North West Leicestershire	4.68%
Harborough	4.68%
West Midlands	2.92%
Coventry	2.34%
Rugby and Northants	2.15%
Charnwood	1.95%
Oadby and Wigston	0.98%
Other areas in the UK	4.54%



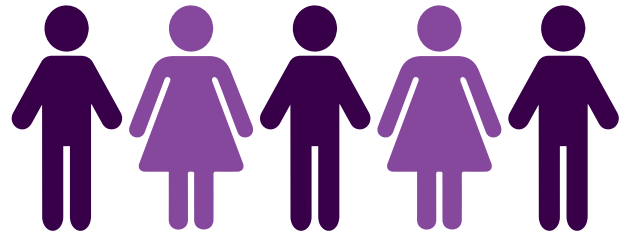
Ethnicity



88%
White

4.6%
BME

Disability



5.295%

of staff have declared a disability. We feel that this is under-reported.

Age



6%
Under 26
years

16%
26-35
years

23%
36-45
years

25%
46-55
years

27%
56-65
years

3%
Over 66
years

Data collection is key to monitoring our workforce. The Corporate Equality Steering Group (CESG) oversees this to ensure that staff in minority strands do not suffer any detriment. We are committed to deliver equality training for all sectors of our workforce and recently updated our grievance procedure. We also do drama-based training to bring examples to life

In the last 20 years the age profile was disproportionately higher at 45 years and above. However, recent data shows that the workforce profile has shifted positively and is more proportionate across the middle three age ranges. This has been influenced by the national employment landscape.

WHAT'S NEXT?



Recruitment is a competitive business. We need to ensure that we are an **Employer of Choice** if we are to do our best for our communities. We also understand how important it is to continue to invest in our staff as the cost of recruitment 'churn' is high.

Last year we invested in a **new recruitment system** which has allowed us to speed up and modernise how we recruit and onboard candidates, which has improved the overall experience as we do not want to deter top talent.

We are also keen to build on the positive work we have done so far in **developing our trainee workforce** and raising our profile in schools. While local government offers generous employment packages such as hybrid working and pensions, we do need to collectively, as a sector, raise our national brand profile in line with other public sector employers. We want to build on this by developing a broader employment brand by adopting the LGA's national recruitment campaign "make a difference work for your local council" to attract prospective candidates.

Since we introduced **hybrid working**, the pace of technical transformation required has been significant. We need to ensure that IT systems match the requirements of both customers and staff and develop our intelligence to assess our staff technical skills.

Equally, good communication across the council for both staff and customers is paramount, and the communication infrastructure needs to be updated to reflect this change. This work will form part of the **Digital Strategy refresh** to understand how we can support our workforce and deliver toolkits and training to support their needs. We also need to ensure that our HR policies and procedures match the pace of change and support our new way of working.

We have done a lot of work at senior level to support employee wellbeing given that the transition to hybrid working may have led to isolation for some staff members. This was identified following a **pulse hybrid working survey**.

Additionally, the last general staff survey carried out in 2022 showed that whilst there was a positive increase in staff perception that their work life balance had improved, they highlighted concerns about ongoing increased stress levels due the cost-of-living crisis which has increased customer demand.

In response, we mandate team days on site to encourage team links as we believe that staying connected is important as an organisation.

We also established a **Wellbeing Group**, led at senior level, surveying staff via a workplace health needs assessment. The outcomes of this survey have allowed us shape and deliver health initiatives to support staff with their physical and mental wellbeing. The group, working with our Cultural Services Team, has championed many initiatives including menopause staff group, health themed wellbeing bi-monthly updates to staff, Health MOT, Art Therapy Group and Pilates. We need to maintain the momentum to continue supporting our staff.

We have successfully delivered a **coaching programme, 'Be Inspired'**. In this, coaching skills were built into the way managers support and develop team members. We know that since the introduction of hybrid working, we need to re-visit our approach to coaching and reconsider how we will further embed coaching within the organisation. This will effectively support and motivate staff working in a challenging and demanding environment.

Our action plan to support the strategy is set out in the next section.

ACTION PLAN



1. Attract and retain a skilled, motivated and diverse workforce

We recognise and understand that it is important to promote what local government has to offer and once attracted, continue to invest in our staff so they stay.

- Continue working with managers to develop solutions to hard-to-recruit posts using innovative ideas to re-model vacancies to further improve our apprenticeship/graduate offering/ growing our own staff
- Continue to support the operation of 'T' Levels throughout the council
- Review fixed term posts where they are high in some teams, this can affect service delivery and morale
- Pay benchmark against service critical roles to inform our market supplement policy
- Implement the national local government brand "Make a difference work for your local council"
- Working with East Midlands Councils and neighbouring local authorities, develop and implement a coordinated approach with local universities and colleges to promote key council professional careers
- Working with regional councils continue to prepare for a new national pay spine
- Review the provision of support provided for employees applying for progression opportunities across the council and local government sector, specifically specialist career 1:1 coaching and workshop activities

ACTION PLAN



2. Support a positive working environment - wellbeing is supported and staff feel 'psychologically safe'

- Implement an employee benefits scheme that supports financial wellbeing.
A psychological safe environment is one that encourages, recognises, and rewards individuals for their contributions and ideas. Positive and effective leadership based on trust creates a shared purpose and helps people to become engaged, perform their best and be happy in the job that they do.
- Review and refresh our coaching approach for senior and middle managers so that they continue to role model a positive working environment
- Review current staff values and behaviours – exploring the development of a joint workforce charter
- Develop and implement management training to build staff awareness of psychological safety within teams, encouraging team connections, belonging and trust
- Continue to measure employee engagement and wellbeing using our regular surveys
- Continue with our positive wellbeing initiatives whilst reviewing and improving our current approach to mental and physical health support
- Ensure that Disability Leader is retained
- Re-visit the use of staff consultative groups so that we seek instant staff feedback about council practices, changes and initiatives

ACTION PLAN



3. A workforce that is adaptable and resilient to change

Change is inevitable . We need to ensure we keep pace with ongoing change by adapting and improving our corporate and HR processes, culture and policies to further embed our effective new way of working.

- Continue to transform and innovate our service delivery models in a challenging funding climate
- Review our flexi scheme and consider trust based time and attendance options
- Review our Travel Policy to support the climate change strategy and the promotion of active travel
- Review our Sickness Absence policy to ensure that managers are empowered to manage short term absence and appropriate interventions are in place to support long term sickness
- Complete the corporate review of customer service contact across the council and update our Customer Service Charter
- Review our corporate communications to staff to utilise Sharepoint
- Digital Strategy refresh - Implement ICT communication and training to support hybrid workers
- Implement our new online training system, which enables managers to manage and escalate outstanding training 'at a glance'
- Improve our self-service portal to adapt to remote working and reduce admin burden to employee and managers
- Review all salary sacrifice options – such as the option to sell and buy holiday.

FREE TREE Collection Point

For more information please visit:

[bury-borough.gov.uk/plantingtrees](https://www.bury-borough.gov.uk/plantingtrees)

MEASURING SUCCESS

This is an evolving strategy that will be reviewed during the next four years to adapt to any strategic changes, including any challenges and opportunities. Updates on the action plan will be reported to Strategic Leadership Team on a regular basis.

A general staff survey is planned for early 2025. This will allow us to track and monitor employee feedback in key areas such as management, wellbeing and the way we work.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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