



## **Agenda for Personnel Committee Tuesday, 15th April, 2025, 10.00 am**

### **Members of Personnel Committee**

Councillors: E Rylance (Chair), J Loudoun (Vice-Chair), P Arnott, A Bailey, B Bailey, K Blakey, J Brown, M Chapman, T Dumper, P Hayward, D Haggerty, N Hookway, M Martin, T McCollum and E Wragg

**Venue:** Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

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(or group number 01395 517546)  
2 April 2025

This meeting is being recorded for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the [East Devon District Council Youtube Channel](#)

- 1 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2025 (Pages 3 - 6)  
To agree the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of interest  
Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)
- 4 Public speaking
- 5 Matters of urgency  
Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online
- 6 Confidential/exempt item(s)  
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.
- 7 **Carers and Special Care Leave Policy** (Pages 7 - 24)
- 8 **People Data** (Pages 25 - 34)
- 9 **HR Update** (Pages 35 - 39)

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Personnel Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 14 January 2025**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.06 am and ended at 11.12 am

#### **9 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 were confirmed as a true record.

#### **10 Declarations of interest**

None.

#### **11 Public speaking**

None.

#### **12 Matters of urgency**

None.

#### **13 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

None.

#### **14 Pay Policy Statement**

The committee are required under the Constitution to consider and make recommendation to Council on the Pay Policy Statement, required for review on an annual basis.

The statement had been reviewed but no changes in wording to the previous year (other than the year the statement related to) were required.

The committee were also updated on the 2024/25 national pay negotiations that had now completed and been implemented.

**RECOMMENDED to Council** that the Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 be adopted.

#### **15 HR Policy updates**

The HR policy review report sought approval for a new Probation Policy, and approval for revised Notice Provisions and Use of Temporary Workers and Volunteers policy.

##### **Probation Policy**

Current arrangements were not covered by a formal policy. The policy before the committee set out:

- That all employees (regardless of continuous local government service) should be subject to a probationary period;

- Expected government changes on employment rights are likely to include a statutory probationary period and the policy will be amended as and when such legislation is updated.

### **Notice provisions**

The minimum notice period that employees are required to give during a probationary period in the current provisions does not match the National Joint Council (LJC) Conditions of Service. The provisions were therefore presented for approval with changes to match (minimum being one month) and other wider provisions updated following review.

### **Use of Temporary Workers Policy**

Review of the policy had resulted in changes put forward to the committee for approval, covering:

- Clarification on the checks required;
- Minimum expectations for managers and temporary workers in respect to compliance with data protection, health and safety, equality, diversity and inclusion, whistleblowing and safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Additional service specific policy and training requirements.

### **Volunteers Policy**

Review of the existing policy included recommendations from a recent audit. The changes included:

- Greater clarity on volunteering supervisor's responsibilities;
- Mandatory training and policy awareness for volunteers;
- Additional documentation that provides a checklist for supervisors, engagement letter template and guidance in production.

The committee were updated on the response from UNISON who considered the proposals at a recent Staff Joint Forum, and were content with the changes put forward.

Further work with updating Managers on the changes will take place following approval by the committee.

### **RESOLVED**

1. **That the Probation Policy be approved;**
2. **That changes to minimum notice periods be approved;**
3. **That the revised Use of Temporary Workers and Volunteers policy be approved.**

## **16 People Data**

The committee received the regular update on key people data up to  
Data highlighted included:

- Implemented structural changes including the fourth directorate of Place;
- Headcount had increased from 552 in April 2024 to 566 by end of October 2024, within budget;
- Market supplement numbers had also increased as expected and previously reported to the committee, due to failed attempts to recruit to specific posts;
- Vacancies were at 32 compared to 44 in April 2024; in comparison to headcount, there had been a decrease from 7.97% to 5.65% in October 2024 with a decrease in the number of days to fill posts down to an average of 61.85 days;
- Sickness levels were still high, but leaving out long term sickness data, the short term sickness levels had reduced.

The committee discussed the positive aspects of the data provided. The Corporate Lead for HR and her team were thanked for the work which had directly impacted on the data and resulted in improvements.

Concern was voiced for the impact on staff as the devolution agenda progressed. The committee would still be able to keep a watching brief on the people data as a standing item on the committee's agenda; the Chief Executive also assured the committee that business continued as usual to deliver to the District's residents, and the vast majority of those roles would still be required in any new unitary authority.

The committee noted the data update.

## 17 **Driving at Work Policy**

The report set out for the committee outlined amendments to the Driving at Work Policy in order to meet safety requirements. The policy was first put in place in 2017 and is regularly reviewed to meet updated legal requirements and current operational procedures. The key changes were highlighted to the committee, including:

- Fleet vehicles
- Driver conduct
- Fitness to drive
- Alcohol and drugs
- Smoking and vaping
- Mobile phones and electronic devices
- Actions following a road traffic accident
- Journey planning
- Risk assessment

The committee offered some minor changes for clarify to the policy, including:

- Additional working in relation to mobile phone use when safely parked includes "with ignition off";
- "make or take calls" to clarify when mobile is being used in hand rather than hands free in the vehicle.

The committee also asked for clarification on the preferred fuel provider which was not available at the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the updated Driving at Work Policy be approved.

## 18 **Grow Our Own Update - verbal update**

Gemma Roberts, HR Operations Service Manager, updated the committee on the work under the Grow Our Own initiative.

In the period April to December 2024, the highlights were 20 apprentices, 1 graduate and 4 work experience individuals, with more detail set out to the committee.

Plans for 2025 covered:

- Finalising bid for salary funding from the dedicated Grow Our Own budget;
- Corporate Work Experience Programme Planning for Summer 2025;
- Development of promotional material;
- Supported Internship aimed at assisting a young person with learning disabilities to develop skills and confidence to gain employment;
- Work in partnership with the Deaf Academy to offer meaningful work experience;

- Engage with Devon County Council's Local Offer for Care Experienced Young People.

The committee expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken to date and the planned work for the coming year. In response to a question, it was confirmed that contact was made with all secondary schools in the district in respect of the offer from the service. It was also confirmed that the LGA had a long established scheme for promoting some local government roles in finance to university graduates. The service could look at other specialist areas to specifically promote to undergraduates.

The committee noted the report.

## 19 **Appreciation for departing Corporate Lead - HR and Payroll**

The Chair and Committee voiced their appreciation and thanks for the work of Jo Fellows, who was now departing the role.

The Vice Chair spoke on her stability and sensibility during the last few years, and outlined some of the many achievements she had been directly involved in. These included the recruitment for four directors and two CEOs; as well as the pay award arrangements that had put the Council on a competitive advantage to recruit; and the work with apprentices. The committee showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present:**

E Rylance (Chair)  
J Loudoun (Vice-Chair)  
P Arnott  
K Blakey  
T Dumper  
P Hayward  
T McCollum

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health  
Jeremy Pritchard, Principal Environmental Health & Safety Officer  
Agnieszka Grzegorzczuk  
Gemma Roberts  
Joanna Fellows, Corporate Lead - HR and Payroll  
Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer  
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

#### **Councillor apologies:**

A Bailey  
B Bailey  
J Brown  
N Hookway  
M Martin  
E Wragg

Chair .....

Date: .....



Report to: **Personnel Committee**

Date of Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Carers and Special Leave Policy

### Report summary:

To seek Personnel Committee approval to a new Carers and Special Leave Policy, following introduction of the Carer's Leave Act. We have reviewed how this will be implemented at East Devon District Council and reviewed interdependencies with other policies, which has resulted in the creation of a combined Carers and Special Leave Policy. This policy was approved by ELT on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

### Recommendation:

- To approve the new Carers and Special Leave Policy.

### Reason for recommendation:

To ensure the Council has a policy which meets legislation, alongside consideration of the Councils Strategic Priorities, commitment to the workforce and financial implications.

Officer: Gemma Roberts, Interim Corporate Lead – Human Resources.

[Gemma.roberts@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.roberts@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

The policy provides clarity and consistency in the Council's approach and has been developed to take account of equality, diversity and inclusion requirements. An Impact assessment (attached) has been completed.

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; The policies provide clarity and consistency in the Council's approach and regular review will ensure it remains within legal and good practice requirements.

**Links to background information** Click here to enter links to background information; appendices online; and previous reports. These must link to an electronic document. Do not include any confidential or exempt information.

**Link to [Council Plan](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ A supported and engaged community
  - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
  - ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
  - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
- 

**Report in full**

**1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The UK Carer's Leave Act was effective in the UK from April 2024 and provides employees with the right to one week of unpaid leave per year to care for someone with long term care need. This can include a family member or any other dependant who relies on the employee for support.
- 1.2 The Act aims to support employees in managing their work life balance while fulfilling essential caregiving duties and is available from the first day of employment.
- 1.3 There has been a delay in implementing a formal policy at EDDC for a variety of reasons. In this interim period HR have worked with managers, where needed, to ensure the new legislation is followed.

**2.0 Current Position**

- 2.1 At EDDC there is currently a provision for special care leave which is incorporated into the compassionate leave and special care leave policy. This is not a statutory provision, but the local agreement has provided for special care leave to be paid for up to three days and provides flexibility for employees to take time off for emergencies and is different to time off for dependants which is unpaid. The policy states that time off is for when a dependant requires special care due to very serious or terminal illness or where a dependant requires significant post-operative care and is unable to be left alone.
- 2.2 Whilst both leave provisions support caregiving, special care leave differs to the Carers Leave Act in that care leave specifically grants employees one week of unpaid leave annually and focuses on planned and foreseeable caregiving needs for a dependant or someone who relies on them for care such as an elderly neighbour.



### **3.0 Implementation of Carers Leave at EDDC**

- 3.1 A new policy has been created which includes the provision for special care leave and is presented to Personnel Committee for consideration and approval.
- 3.2 ELT considered how to implement the new carers leave requirement, while balancing employee support and wellbeing, business need and budget restrictions. The outcome of which resulted in a new policy being drafted which includes;
- An entitlement to carers leave of five days, as per legislation but to go beyond legislation and provide the leave as paid.
  - Continue with an entitlement to special care leave of three days but for this to be unpaid.
- 3.3 These balance the factors highlighted at 3.1, while going beyond legislation, demonstrating the organisational commitment to staff and those with long term caring responsibilities.
- 3.4 The policy clearly sets out the parameters to entitlement and requesting leave.
- 3.5 The policy also outlines other types of provision available to employees to assist with caring responsibilities and achieve a work life balance.
- 3.6 UNISON are being consulted on this policy and their feedback will be shared with members at committee.
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### **Financial implications:**

*These changes will have a potential impact on budget. It is not possible to determine the number of carers in the organisation, but UK statistics estimate 9% of the UK workforce are balancing caring and work responsibilities, which translates to around 50 EDDC employees. Based on this percentage and using an average salary of the current workforce existing cost for special care leave would be estimated at £19,000, extending paid leave to 5 days could see potential increase in cost of £12,000.*

### **Legal implications:**

Carer's leave was introduced in April 2024, the aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance to managers and employees of their entitlement and to show our commitment to supporting carers as well as ensuring we are legally compliant.



# Equality Impact Assessment

*Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes and other resources, available on the [intranet](#)*



<b>Version</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>23 January 2025</b>
<b>Description of what is being impact assessed</b>			
<p>Carer's Leave Policy incorporating Special Care Leave</p> <p>EDDC acknowledges that the number of carers is increasing in the UK. The Carers Leave policy outlines the criteria as set out in the Carers Leave Act 2023 for taking leave and the internal supports available and external agencies that may be able to assist by providing advice and information. The policy also directs employees to the Special Care Leave Policy which provides an alternative leave arrangement for to help employees to balance work and caring responsibilities in the event of a serious or terminal illness or recovery from an operation. The policy is inclusive of all employees across the organisation who might at some point be met with caring responsibilities. The policy aims to treat everyone fairly, regardless of any protected characteristic. It seeks to ensure there are no barriers to anyone accessing these supports and making use of the policy.</p>			
<b>Evidence</b>			
<b>What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?</b>			
<p><i>Further information is available at <a href="#">Equality data</a> and will be added to</i></p>			
<b>Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?</b>			
<p>The policy has been written as a result of Statutory Legislation and is a day one right for employees.</p>			

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Analysis of impact on protected groups				
<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. The Council also has a legal duty to have due regard to armed forces personnel when carrying out healthcare, housing and education functions. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, assess the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.</p>				
Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy applies equally to all employees and is accessible regardless of age. We anticipate that a significant proportion of carers in EDDC may be older workers again due to the demographic of our employees, but caring responsibilities can come at any age. The policy is accessible to everyone</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The impact is likely to be positive as it supports employees to care for dependants who have disabilities or life-limiting conditions. It also recognises the impact caring responsibilities can have on the health of our employees and provides supports.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy applies equally to all employees and is accessible regardless of sexual orientation.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This policy is applicable to all employees and is accessible regardless of marital status or civil partnership and no significant negative impact is identified.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This policy is applicable to all employees and is accessible regardless of pregnancy or maternity status and no significant negative impact is identified.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data from the 2021 census indicates that individuals from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Gypsy or Irish Travellers communities are more likely to have caring responsibilities, however this policy is applicable to all employees and is accessible regardless of race and ethnicity and no significant negative impact is identified.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This policy is applicable to all employees and is accessible regardless of Religion or belief and no significant negative impact is identified.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This policy is applicable to all employees regardless of sex. Based on data from 2021 census which indicates that women are more likely to take on caring responsibilities, with 10.4% of women caring compared to 7.6% men, we anticipate that a significant proportion of carers in EDDC maybe female but this policy is accessible to everyone equally regardless of sex.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Policy applies equally to all employees and is accessible regardless of gender identities.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This policy is Likely to be positive as it will supports employees with veteran dependants to provide caring responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
<b>Other, e.g. carers, care leavers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy is likely to be positive as it allows for paid Carer's leave and is above statutory legislation requirements to reduce financial strain on employees who are already under pressure.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Negative outcomes action plan</b> Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.				
Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.</b>				

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome



<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Sarah Vincent</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>13 March 2025</b>
<b>Approved by:</b>	<i>Should be reviewed by the relevant Assistant Director/Director and signed off</i>
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>To be reviewed by:</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	

***Ensure that a final copy of this impact assessment is sent to HR as per the equality impact assessment guidance.***

Issue details	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Carers and Special Care Leave Policy</b>
<b>Version number</b>	<b>Version 1.0</b>
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	<b>Corporate Lead HR</b>
<b>Authorisation by:</b>	<b>ELT/Personnel Committee</b>
<b>Authorisation date:</b>	<b>2025</b>

History of most recent Policy Changes – Must be completed			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Origin of change (eg change in legislation)</b>
01/04/25	Whole Document	New policy to reflect the statutory right to Carer's leave and also incorporates Special Care Leave.	Legislation

# Carer's Leave

## East Devon District Council

### **1 Why has the council introduced this policy?**

- 1.1 East Devon District Council recognises the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work and their own wellbeing. This policy sets out the statutory right of employees to carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long term care need.
- 1.2 The Carer's Leave Act grants employees to take up to 1 week of unpaid leave per year, however we are committed to ensuring that employees are supported and employees are not financially disadvantaged by taking time off work to balance their caring responsibilities, therefore we have committed to pay full pay for statutory carer's leave.
- 1.3 This policy applies to employees employed by East Devon District Council. It does not apply to agency workers, contractors, consultants or any self employed individuals working for the Council.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend it any time.

### **2 What is the council's policy?**

#### **2.1 Definition of a carer**

- 2.1.1 East Devon District Council defines carers as any employee who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, needs their help to live independently.
- 2.1.2 Carers might find it difficult to distinguish their caring role from the personal relationship they have with the individual they are caring for, be it a relationship with a spouse, civil partner, child, parent or friend. Therefore, some employees may not immediately identify themselves as a carer.
- 2.1.3 The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including but not limited to:
- help with personal care,
  - help with mobility,
  - managing medication,
  - practical household tasks,
  - emotional support; and
  - help with financial matters or administration

### **3. Requesting support**

- 3.1 The council recognise that caring can be unpredictable and emotionally upsetting. An employee may acquire caring responsibilities overnight or caring responsibilities may develop over time.
- 3.2 Caring is a subject that not everyone finds it easy to talk about. However, employees should be as open as possible about any particular issues they are experiencing to ensure they are provided with the right level of support.
- 3.3, Employees are encouraged to speak to their line manager about their caring responsibilities to explore how their manager can help them with any challenges they are facing. If for any reason they are unable to approach their line manager, they can speak to another appropriate manager or their Trade Union representative.
- 3.4 Any information disclosed by the employee during discussions with their line manager will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

#### **4. Entitlement to carer's leave**

- 4.1 Whatever the employee's length of service, they have a statutory right to take carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need.
- 4.2 In the context of the legislation and definition of statutory carer's leave, a person is a dependant of an employee if they:
- are a spouse, civil partner, child or parent of the employee,
  - live in the same household as the employee, otherwise than by reason of being the employee's boarder, employee, lodger or tenant or,
  - any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee to provide or arrange care.
- 4.3 A dependant has a long-term care need if they:
- have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months,
  - have a condition that amounts to a disability under the Equality Act 2010, or
  - require care for a reason connected to their old age.
- 4.4 This statutory right to carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where the child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

#### **5. Amount of carer's leave that can be taken**

- 5.1 The amount of carer's leave that an employee can take is up to one week in any 12-month rolling period.
- 5.2 A week of carer's leave is the same duration as the employee's normal working week, meaning that a full-time employee is entitled to five days' carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period. If the employee is contracted to work four days per week, they will be entitled to four days of carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period, and so on.

5.3 Employees can take the leave in one continuous block, as individual days, or as half days.

5.4 If an employee is caring for more than one dependant, they do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

## **6. Employees with irregular working patterns**

6.1 Where employees have irregular working patterns, they can work out how much carer's leave they are eligible for by calculating the leave as follows:

- Add up the total number of hours worked in the previous 12 months.
- Divide that total by 52 (or however many weeks since they started the job if they've been in the job less than a year).

If an employee wants to take carers leave in their first week of employment, they should use the amount they are expected to work in a week, as the amount of leave they can take.

## **7. Pay during carer's leave**

7.1 You will continue to be paid your normal rate of pay while taking carer's leave under this policy.

7.2 All other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue. Pension contributions will continue to be paid and continuity of service will remain unaffected.

## **8. Request to take carer's leave**

8.1 If an employee wishes to request a period of carer's leave, they should submit their request to their line manager using the Carer's leave authorisation form.

8.2 Employee's must submit their request to their line manager giving as much notice as possible so that their manager can plan for their absence. In any event, the employee should give notice in advance that is either twice the number of working days they wish to take as carer's leave, or three days, whichever is earlier.

8.3 Employees do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs. However, all carer's leave must be approved in advance by the employee's line manager.

8.4 Once approved, the line manager should submit the authorisation form to payroll so that iTrent records can be updated.

## **9. Postponing carer's leave**

9.1 Manager's cannot refuse a carer's leave request but can ask the employee to take it at a different time. They can only do this if the employee's absence would cause serious disruption to the service/organisation.

9.2 If a decision is taken to postpone the employee's leave, the line manager will consult with the employee to find an alternative leave period, within one month of the carer's leave period originally requested.

- 9.3 The line manager will write to the employee via email or letter within seven days of receiving their request, clarifying the reason for the postponement and the revised dates on which the carer's leave can be taken.

**10. Cancelling carer's leave**

- 10.1 Employees can cancel their carer's leave and take it at a different time as long as they let their line manager know before their leave has started and advise payroll.
- 10.2 Employees cannot cancel any carer's leave that has already begun.

**11. Returning to work after carer's leave**

- 11.1 Following a period of carer's leave, the employee has the right to resume working in the same job as before, on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than the terms that would have applied had they not been absent. Their continuity of employment is not affected.

**12. Special Care Leave**

- 12.1 In addition to care leavers, employees will be eligible to up to 3 day's unpaid leave in one year (January to December) where a dependant requires special care due to very serious or terminal illness. This leave may also be taken where a dependant requires significant post-operative care and is unable to be left alone.
- 12.2 Special Care Leave is planned and pre-arranged and is therefore distinct from time off to deal with an emergency for the care of a dependant which is outlined in the Time Off for Dependants Policy.
- 12.3 Further leave without pay may be granted at the discretion of the Line manager.
- 12.5 Special Care Leave should be requested and authorised using the Authorised Absence Form.

**13. Other types of support**

- 13.1 The statutory right to carer's leave is intended to be for planned and foreseen caring commitments. However, if an employee needs to take time off to manage an unexpected or sudden problem relating to a dependant or, make any necessary longer-term caring arrangements, other policies as shown below, may better support employees to manage their caring responsibilities alongside their work commitments:

- Annual Leave, Other leave and Unpaid Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Time off for dependants Policy
- Compassionate, Parental Bereavement & Special Care Leave
- Sabbatical Leave
- Worksmart 22+ Policy
- Flexible Working Request policy

- 13.2 East Devon District Council's Employee Assistance Programme offers confidential, impartial advice and support online and over the phone, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They are staffed by a team of qualified Counsellors and Information Specialists, who are experienced in helping people deal with all kinds of practical and emotional issues

for example, work life balance and life events, relationships and family issues, childcare information, elder care information. Please visit the intranet for further information.

#### **14. External sources of help**

- 14.1 There are various organisations that provide help and support to carers, including:
- 14.2 [Carers UK](#), which provides help and advice for carers on employment rights, benefits and tax credits, assessments, and other practical matters for carers;
- 14.3 the [NHS website](#), which provides a wealth of information and advice for carers;
- 14.4 [Grace Care Consulting](#), which provides advice and support on care, special needs and neurodiversity; all needs and neurodiversity.
- 14.5 [Age UK](#) and [Independent Age](#), which offer information and support to anyone providing informal unpaid care to an older person through a range of local services;
- 14.6 [Contact a Family](#), which provides support, advice and information to families with disabled children; and
- 14.7 [Carers Trust](#), which works with other organisations to provide access for carers to breaks, information, advice, education, training and employment opportunities

#### **15. Policy compliance and Misuse**

- 15.1 Any abuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

#### **16 Policy Administration**

##### **16.1 Appendices and other relevant information**

Appendix 1 - Carer's leave authorisation form.

##### **16.2 Links related Policies/Strategies, Procedures and Legislation**

Legislation which links to this policy is [Carer's leave Act 2023](#)

#### **17. Data Protection**

- 17.1 We will process any personal data collected in accordance with our [Council's Data Protection Policy](#). Data collected from the point at which we become aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

#### **18. Policy consultation**

- 18.1 This policy has been reviewed and approved by ELT, Personnel Committee and UNISON.

#### **19 Policy review**

- 19.1 Corporate Lead – Human Resources is responsible for the policy and will be reviewed April 2028 or in line with legislation changes.





Report to: **Personnel Committee**

Date of Meeting: 15th April 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## People Data Report

### Report summary:

This report provides key data on the workforce, to support policy decision making and an overview of workforce matters.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

### Recommendation:

That the Committee note the content of the report.

### Reason for recommendation:

To support policy decision making and an overview of workforce matters.

Officer: Gemma Roberts, Interim Corporate Lead – Human Resources.  
Gemma.Roberts@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- ☐ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information** [211130 People Data Proposals Report for Personnel Cttee FINAL.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)

**Link to** [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ A supported and engaged community
  - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
  - ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
  - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
- 

## Report in full

1. This report provides a regular update on key people data, as agreed by Committee in November 2021, and aims to inform policy decisions and to provide an overview of workforce matters. Analysis is summarised below, with the full data at Appendix 1.
2. The latest report reflects the data available from the HR system up to the end of February 2025 unless otherwise stated.
3. Particular areas to note from the people data are:
  - 3.1 Headcount has decreased by 6 from 566 in October to 560 at the end of February 2025 and is at the lowest level since June 24 when it was 553, we continue to remain within budgeted FTE.
  - 3.2 Market supplement numbers have reduced by 1 since the last reporting period in October 2024, from 23 to 22. We have recently completed the annual market supplement review, and it is anticipated that Market Supplements will remain at or around this level for the next financial year. Market Supplements are for specific roles where recruitment and retention is challenging because market forces dictate salary levels. Market Supplements are subject to annual review.
  - 3.3 Vacancies recruiting and not recruiting are at 29 compared to 32 in October. 2 of these are 2 new apprenticeships that we are recruiting for in Executive Support to assist our Senior Leadership Team. Appointments have been made to 5 of these vacancies and have either since started or start dates have been agreed in the forthcoming weeks. Interviews are scheduled for a further 8 posts and we are awaiting decisions, so in effect there are only 13 vacancies where there is currently no potential outcome. When considering the overall vacancy number against headcount, vacancies have decreased from 5.65% in October to 5.17% and is significantly lower than the highest level of 10.49% reported in October 2022.
  - 3.4 The average time taken to fill vacancies fluctuates over time and has slightly increased since the last reporting period from 61.85 days to 67.83 days in February 2025. Some of this increase may be attributed to the Christmas break when recruitment tends to pause. Benchmarking data indicates that c100 days is around the average time taken by organisations to fill posts. As previously reported, we have reviewed the recruitment process to streamline and have encouraged managers to deal with vacancies much earlier which has had a positive impact.
  - 3.5 The number of agency workers has increased by 1 when it was 24 in October 2024 compared to 25 in February 25. The increase is due to backfilling for permanent employee who is currently absent through ill health. Overall, the number of agency workers have reduced significantly over the last 12 months due to permanent recruitment of posts that were being backfilled whilst active recruitment took place.

- 3.6 As previously reported in October, the voluntary turnover rate had begun to increase. The cumulative voluntary turnover rate at the end of February 2025 was 11.56% and at this point is higher than the end of 2023/24 year outcome of 8.89% and is forecast to be 12.61% at the end of March 25. Up to the end of February 25 we have had 52 voluntary leavers. A detailed analysis will be provided within the end of year people data annual report and will most likely highlight that observations so far include the main reasons include career moves, with 14 accepting a post elsewhere and 6 for career advancement, while 4 have left during a formal process. Notably only 1 has left for a better salary and 1 mentioned poor working relationships. The forecast for non-voluntary turnover has increased from 1.27% since October to 2.13% this is due to 4 dismissals and 3 end of fixed term contracts.
- 3.7 The current forecast for the end of year 2024/25 average number of days lost per FTE is similar to the 10.05 days outcome which was reported at the end of 2023/24 and is higher than our absence target of 8.5 days. Benchmarking data suggests that comparable councils are also experiencing similar levels, further analysis and benchmarking will be undertaken for the full annual leave report. The report is expected to highlight that biggest factor contributing to the current absence levels are the number of long term cases (more than 2 months) of which there were 19 to date, 6 of which are still absent. The most common reason for long term absence is currently showing as "Other Muscular Skeletal issues". If long term cases were extrapolated from the overall absence levels, our absence would be less than 8.5 days at around 6 days.
- 3.8 Of note with regard to sickness absence, is the following:
- Cold/Flu is still the most cited reason for short term absence, followed by phased returns.
  - Covid related absence has returned to similar low level patterns previously reported since the spike in July 2024 of 67.27 days and the spike in June the previous year when it was 50.52 days. There was no Covid absence reported in February which is the first time since we have been monitoring this. We can hypothesise that Covid is more prevalent in the summer months than in winter, although Cold and Flu may be masking this.
  - The absence reason Personal stress has replaced "other muscular skeletal issues" which was the top reason for medium term absence previously. Hospital treatment has now emerged into the top 3 replacing the previous "stomach, kidney, liver and digestion".
  - As has previously been reported, cases of medium- and long-term absence because of personal stress, anxiety and fatigue remain a feature and we continue to promote the wide range of mental health support available through the Council's Happy Healthy Here offer. We are also pro-actively offering regular updates and one to ones with senior leaders to alleviate concerns that may emerge as a result of Local Government Re-organisation about job security and the impact this might have on their mental health.

- Finance have seen an increase in their absence levels mostly due to 3 cases of long term absence, these cases are being actively managed and supported.

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**Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications in the recommendations.

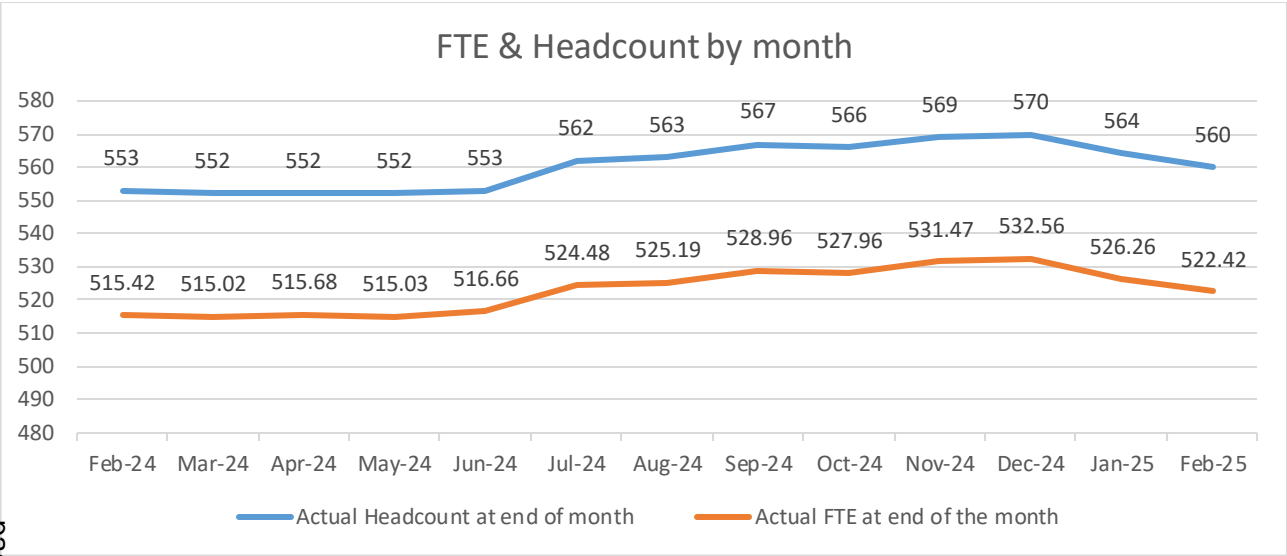
**Legal implications:**

There are no specific legal implications requiring comment.

# East Devon District Council People Data

Data as at: 28.02.25

## Headcount



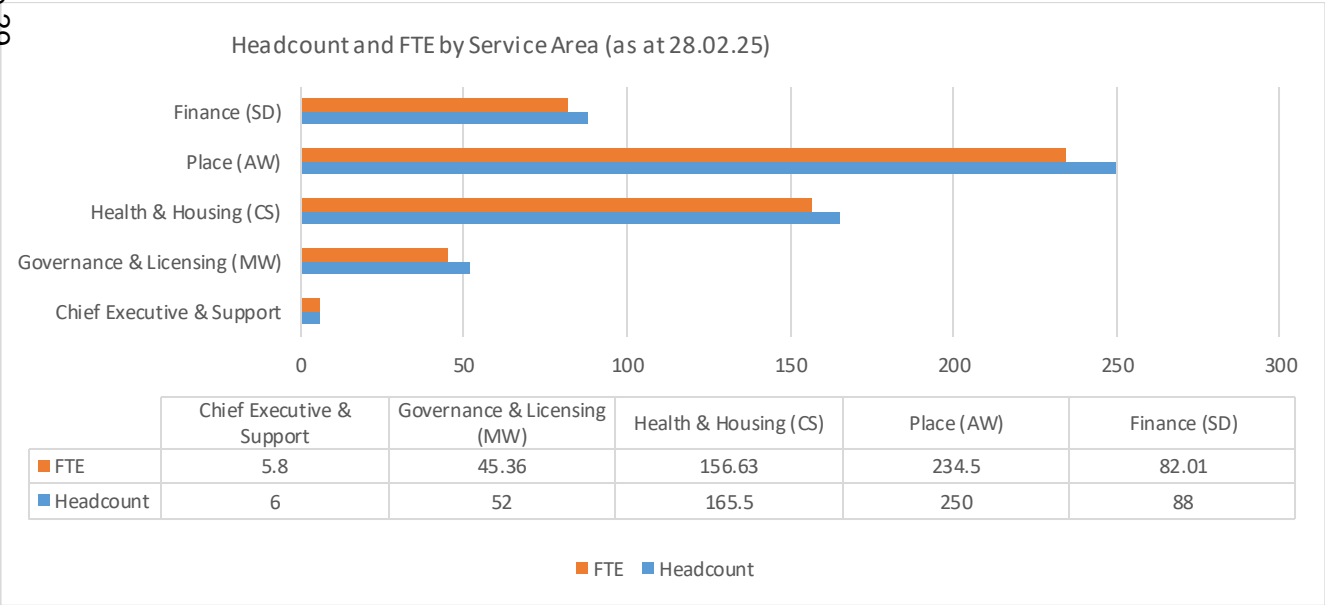
Actual Headcount:	560
Full Time Equivalent (FTE):	522.42
Budgeted FTE for 2024/25:	565.4

*This data incorporates permanent, fixed term and apprentice employees. It excludes casuals, agency workers and contractors.*

*Headcount is the actual number of employees.*

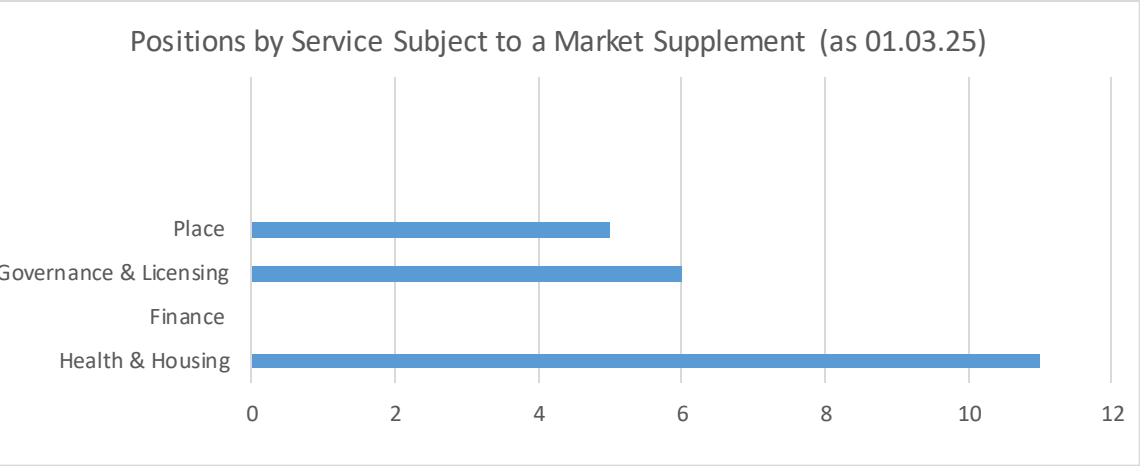
*Full Time Equivalent (FTE) measures employees in a way that makes them comparable although they may work a different number of hours per week. The unit is obtained by comparing an employee's average number of hours worked to the average number of full time hours. A full-time person is therefore counted as 1 FTE, while a part-time worker is a proportion of 1 FTE. For example, a part-timer employed for 18.5 hours a week where full-time work consists of 37 hours, is counted as 0.5 FTE.*

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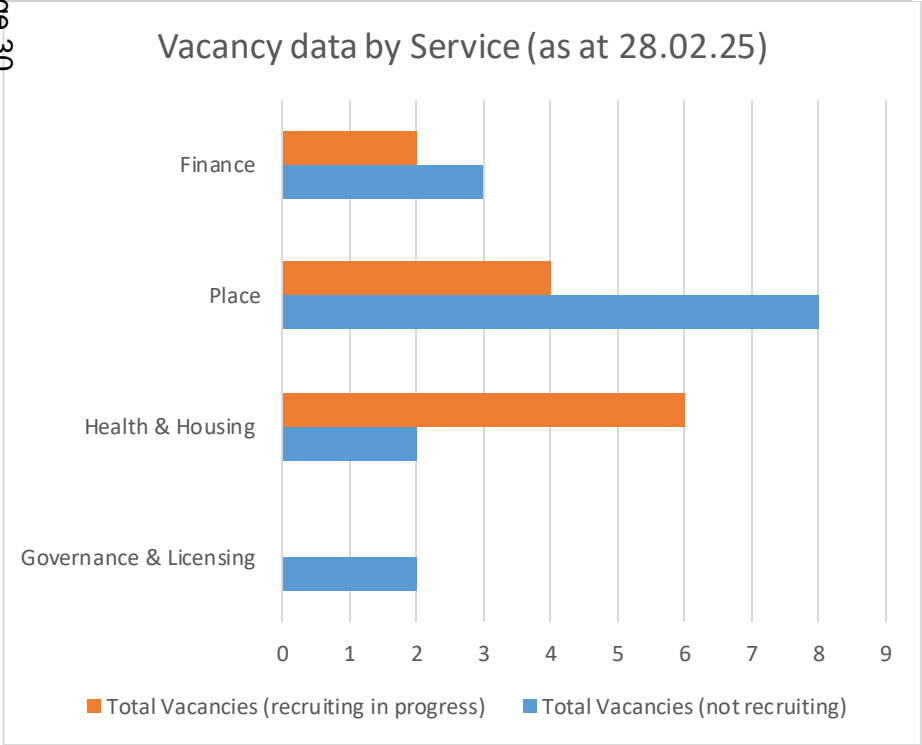


# Vacancies, Agency Workers, Market Supplements

	This month (28.02.25)	Last reporting period (31.10.24)
Total Vacancies for EDDC (Recruiting in Progress & Not Recruiting)	29 (5.17%)	32 (5.65%)
Total number of Market Supplements	22	23
Average length of time a Recruiting in Progress vacancy is vacant	67.83	61.85
Total Positions filled by Agency	25	24



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**Last Reporting Period** – this was 31 October 2025, as reported to Personnel Committee in January 2025.

**NOT Recruiting Vacancies** - Vacancies that are not currently part of the recruiting process, where a valid Authority to Recruit is in place or the position has been vacant for less than 1 month. This may be because they are on hold or recruitment is being prepared.

**Recruiting in Progress** - Vacancies being recruited to.

**Average length of time a vacancy is vacant** – this counts the number of calendar days a Recruiting in Progress Vacancy has been vacant. The count is from either when the post became vacant or when a new post was added to the HR system. It is only possible to calculate this figure for the Council as a whole due to HR system capabilities.

**Agency** - The number of posts that are currently filled by Agency Workers. The numbers by Service or costs are not held centrally in the HR system but HR and Finance are currently working on improvements to where data is held.

**Market Supplement** – An additional payment made in excess of the job evaluated grade because of recruitment issues linked to market pressures, as per the Market Supplement Policy. Based on the number of people rather than vacant positions that may attract a market supplement.

Turnover

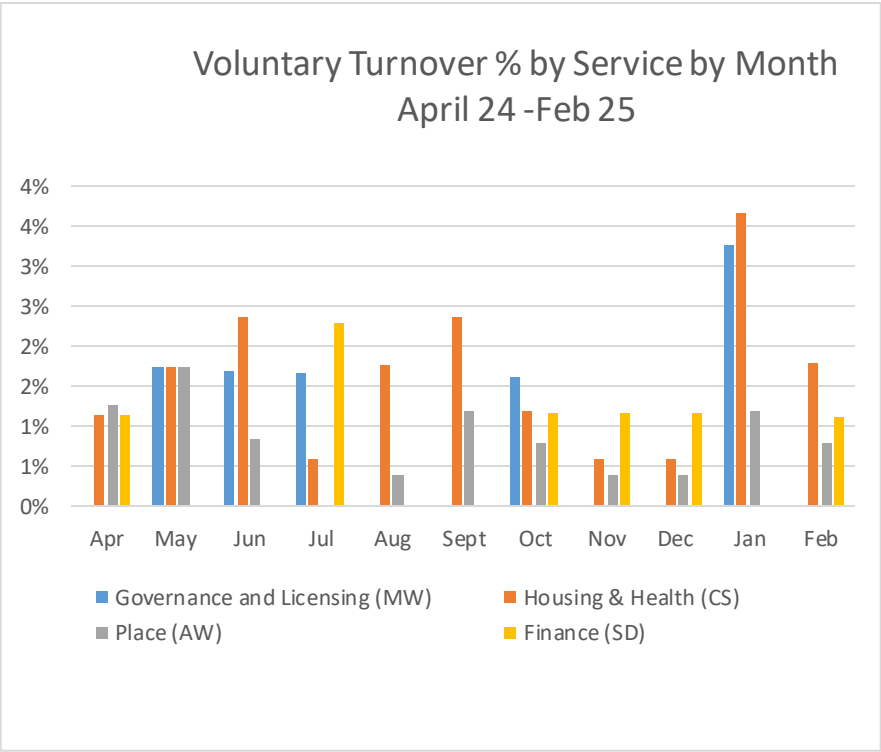
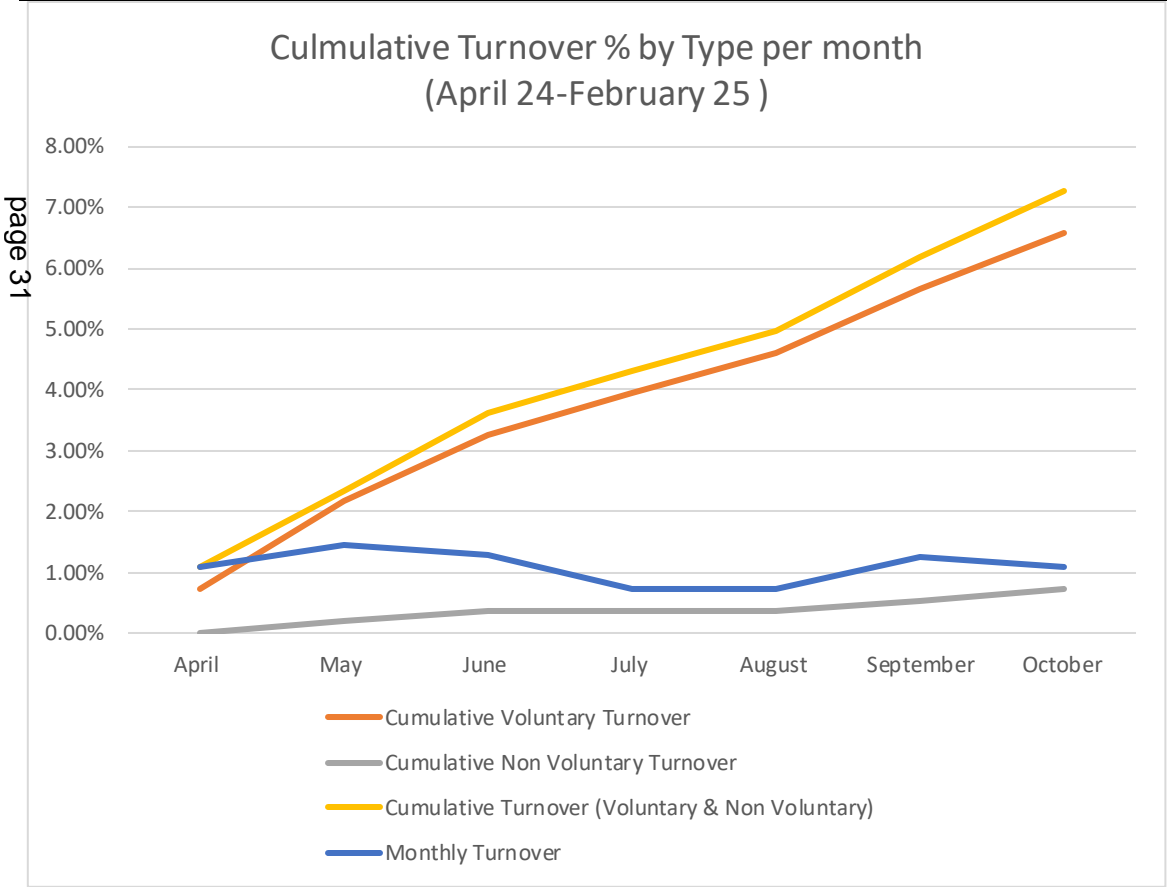
Cumulative Voluntary Turnover as at 28.02.25	Projected Voluntary Turnover to 31.03.25	Cumulative Non-Voluntary Turnover as at 28.02.25	Projected Non Voluntary Turnover to 31.03.25	Cumulative Turnover (Voluntary & Non-Voluntary)	Projected Turnover (Voluntary & Non Voluntary) To 31.03.25
11.56%	12.61%	1.96%	2.13%	13.52%	14.74%

Employee turnover is measured by the percentage of leavers during a period and is shown as a cumulative month on month trend.

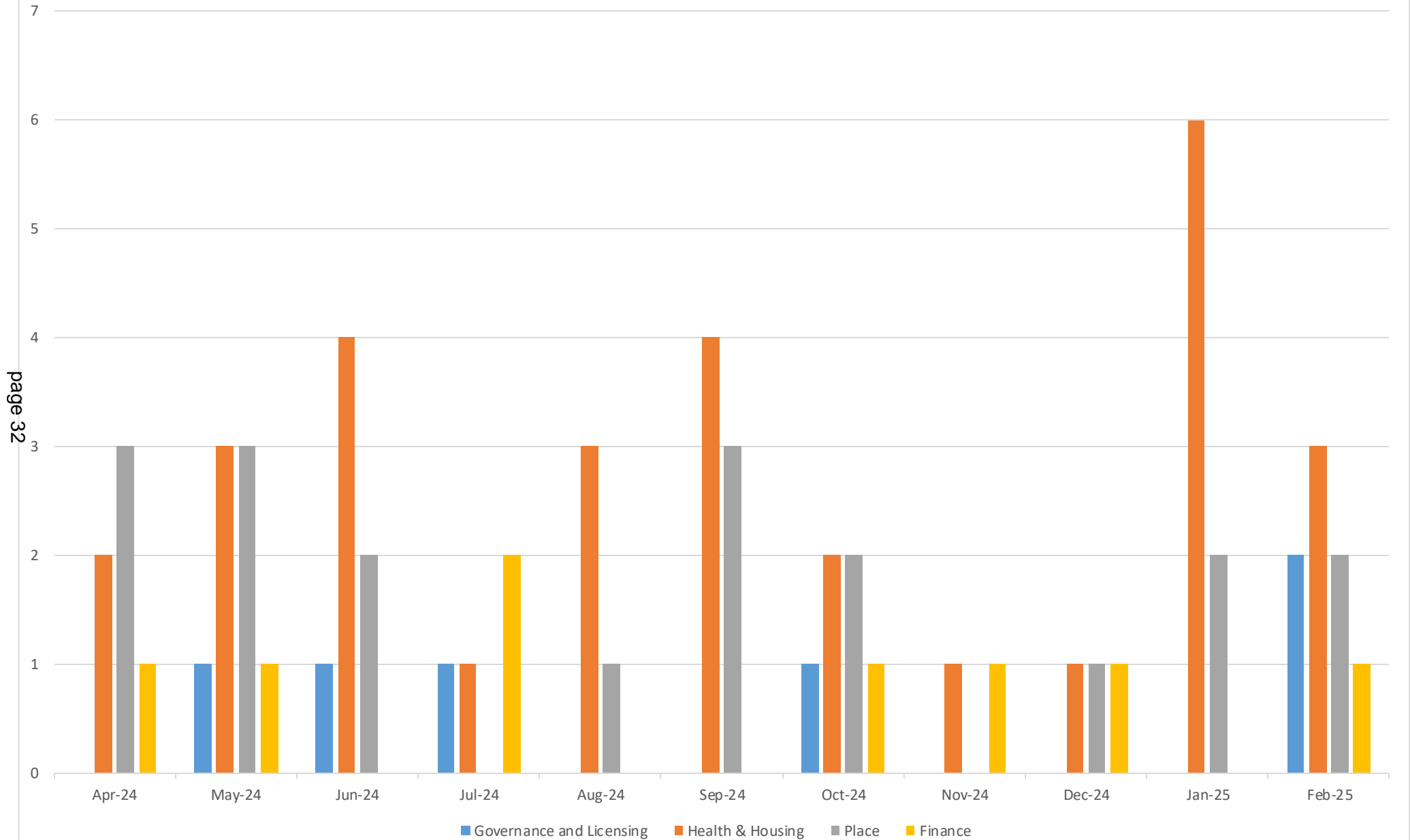
Voluntary turnover only includes resignations.

Non-voluntary Turnover includes dismissals, redundancy, end of fixed term contracts, and ill health retirement.

Projected turnover figures are estimates for the whole year based on information to date, this figure will fluctuate and stabilise as we progress through the fiscal year.



Actual Leavers by Service for the period  
April 24 to February 25

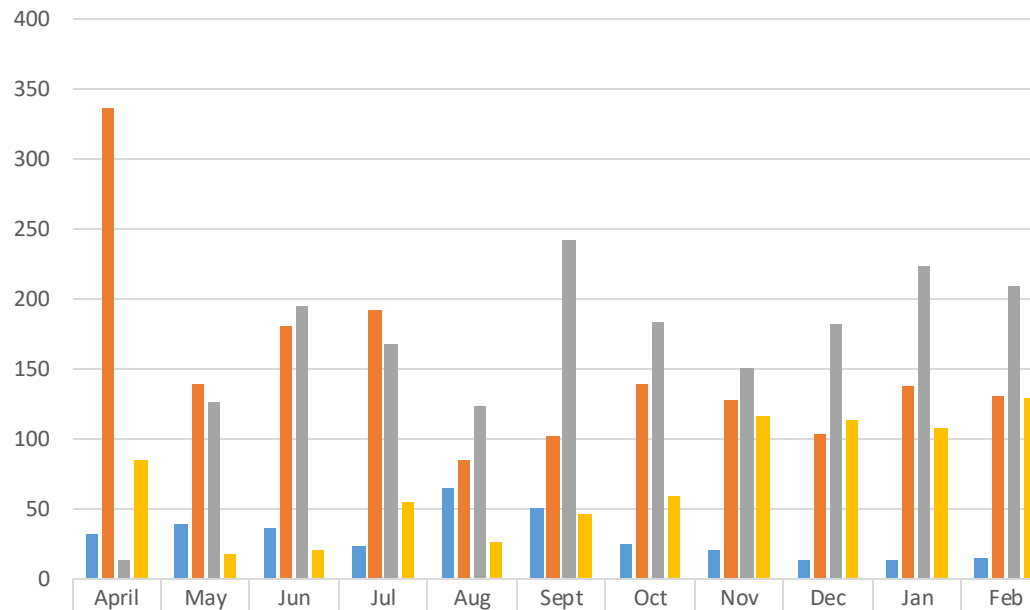




## Sickness Absence

Working days lost per FTE (Apr 24 to February 25)	Working days lost per FTE (Apr 23 to February 24)	Working days lost per FTE for last Reporting Period (October 2024)	This reporting period (February 2025)
9.21 days( (0.83)	8.95 days (0.81)	0.80 days	0.83 days

Total FTE working days lost per service (April 24-Feb 25)



### Top 3 reasons for absence

Short term  
(<8 days)

1. Cold/Flu
2. Phased Return
3. Stomach, Kidney, Liver, Digestion

Medium term  
(>8 days, <2 months)

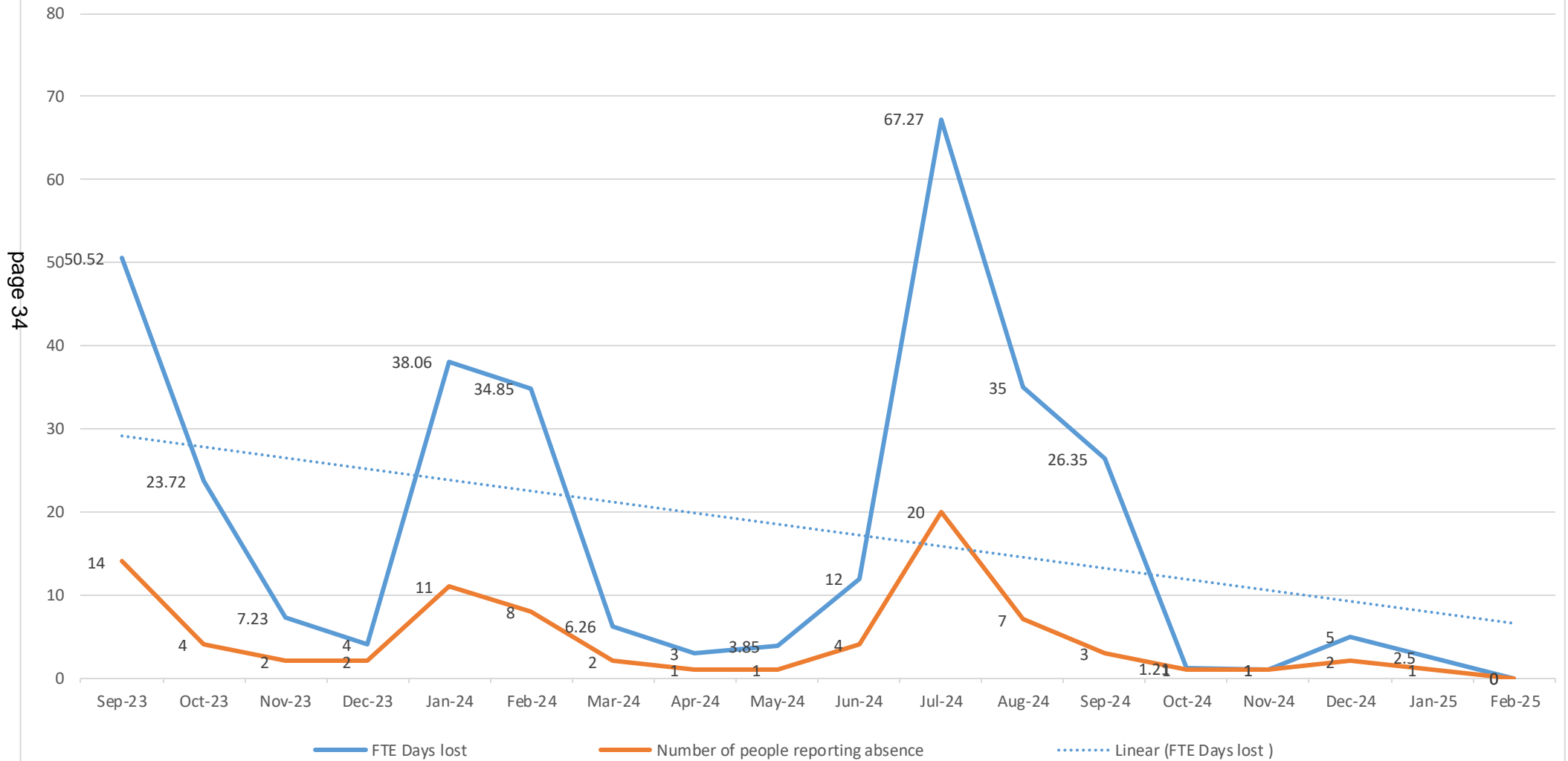
1. Personal stress, anxiety, fatigue
2. Other Muscular -Skeletal Problems
3. Hospital Treatment

Long term  
(>2 months)

1. Other Muscular-Skeletal Problems
2. Neurological Headaches/migraines
3. Stress/Depression/Anxiety (Personal)

*\*Based on current information the projected figure for end of year absence per FTE is currently 10.04 days per FTE, the annual target is 8.5 days per FTE*

# FTE days lost to Covid-19 (Positive Test) September 23 -February 25



Report to: **Personnel Committee**

Date of Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## HR Update

### Report summary:

This report provides an overview on some key areas of activity currently taking place within Human Resources. It also highlights where papers or policies are likely to come to Personnel Committee in the future.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

### Recommendation:

- To note the content of this update.

### Reason for recommendation:

To ensure the Council has a policy which meets legislation, alongside consideration of the Councils Strategic Priorities, commitment to the workforce and financial implications.

Officer: Gemma Roberts, Interim Corporate Lead – Human Resources.

[Gemma.roberts@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Gemma.roberts@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☒ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Finance and Assets
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

Various elements of this update will have an equalities impact, which will be picked up in the relevant section.

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; .

**Links to background information** n/a

## Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ A supported and engaged community
  - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
  - ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
  - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
- 

## Report in full

### 1.0 Team Update

Jo Fellows, Corporate Lead for HR left EDDC in January. This resulted in a review of the current HR structure and the following changes were implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> February.

- The Executive Support Team moved under the line management of the Chief Executive.
- The Payroll Team moved under the line management of Finance (except for the HR Support Officers who remain within HR – see below).
- The National Management Trainee moved under the line management of the Performance Team.
- Gemma Roberts, the current HR Operations Service Manager is acting up as Corporate Lead – Human Resources for a period of up to 12 months, with her HR Operations Service Manager role covered by Sue Cockayne. HR Support will be line managed by Sarah Vincent, HR Advisor.

A structure chart detailing these changes is available at appendix 1.

### 2.0 Pay Award

In March we completed the Local Government Association Pay Survey and attended the South West Pay Briefing. National negotiations will be ongoing and the below staff communication was included in Stay Connected on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

#### Pay Award for 2025/26

We want to keep you informed about the latest developments in the National Pay for 2025/26. The Trade Unions (Unison, GMB and Unite) have submitted their pay claim, which includes;

- **Salary Increase:** A consolidated pay rise of at least £3,000 for all NJC employees.
- **Minimum Hourly Rate:** A clear plan to achieve a minimum pay rate of £15 per hour.
- **Annual Leave:** An additional day of annual leave for all staff.
- **Working Hours:** A reduction in the standard working week by two hours, with no loss of pay.

#### What Happens Next?

The National Employers are currently consulting with local authorities through online regional pay briefings. Our Corporate Lead for HR, alongside Portfolio Holder Councillor John Loudoun attended the South West Briefing last Thursday. The feedback gathered from these sessions will inform the response to the pay claim.

As you may know from previous years, these negotiations can take time. If a final agreement is not reached by 1<sup>st</sup> April (which is highly likely), as in previous years, backpay will be arranged once the 2025/26 pay award is confirmed. We'll continue to keep you updated via Stay Connected as negotiations progress.

### 3.0 Review of Out of Hours Arrangements

Work continues on the review of out of hours arrangements across the Council. Two reports have been presented to ELT and good progress has been made, including a draft policy being created. Specific team requirements are currently being considered and proposals will be presented to cabinet in relation to associated financial cost, discussions will begin with UNISON and the policy will be brought to the next Personnel Committee for consideration.

#### 4.0 People Strategy

Work has begun on the development of a People Strategy. Considering Local Government Re-organisation (LGR), the strategy will be focused and aim to support the workforce in getting ready for LGR, ensuring people are in the best possible place for the transition. There will also be a focus on retaining our best people and creating an environment where people can grow and thrive. Despite LGR ELT felt it is important to develop a strategy, demonstrating our commitment to the workforce and understanding that they are our most important asset.

#### 5.0 People Survey

A staff survey has previously been discussed at Personnel Committee, as part of the development of the People Strategy, it is proposed we move to Pulse Surveys. This will allow the organisation to continuing understand how the workforce are feeling given the ever changing environment. In addition, it is hoped pulse surveys will encourage greater engagement and completion. The induction of pulse surveys will form part of the People Strategy action plan.

#### 6.0 Work Experience

It is that time of year when HR begin to consider plan for a work experience programme. The programme will reflect last years and look to engage young people in the work of the Council. In addition, ELT have committed to offering meaningful work experience placements to student from the Deaf Academy. We are currently seeking opportunities and working with the academy to set up our first round of placements. This will be different to our summer offer and placements may take place throughout the year.

#### 7.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

The action plan was presented at Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> April for noting. Work will now begin to implement the plan. It is proposed that Edith Stokes, our EDI Adviser will attend the next Personnel Committee to provide an update on progress.

#### 8.0 Supporting Care Experienced Young People

We recently advertised two apprentice opportunities and, for the first time actively partnered with Devon County Council (DCC) to engage care experienced young people. Our HR team met with DCC to explore ways we can provide better support, and we're currently developing informative materials to help professionals showcase the career opportunities here at East Devon District Council. Building on our commitment, the Corporate Lead for HR is preparing an Awareness Session to deliver at May Senior Leadership Team meeting to reinforce our role as Corporate Parents. Following this, we're excited to welcome young people themselves to deliver their impactful Total Respect workshop in June/July, ensuring their voices and experiences shape how we move forward.



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#### Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications at this stage from the recommendations in the report. There are possible implications arising from the outcome of the pay award and the out of hours review but members will be updated specifically on these going forward.

**Legal implications:**

There are no significant legal implications arising from this report.

# Human Resources – Team Changes – Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025

