

Report to: Personnel Committee

Date of Meeting 30th June 2026

Heading/Title: HR Update

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr John Loudoun

Director/Assistant Director: Melanie Wellman

Author and Directorate: Gemma Roberts, Corporate Lead – People & Information Governance, Governance

Contact Details: Gemma.roberts@eastdevon.gov.uk

Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

1. Background

This report provides Members with an overview of current HR activity and key developments across the Council, aligned to People Focused, our people strategy and themes of Connect, Grow and Thrive. It highlights progress made, alongside updates on workforce initiatives, policy changes and preparations for Local Government Reorganisation. The report is intended to give Members a high-level view of how the organisation is supporting its workforce.



1.1 Reward & Recognition

The Total Reward Booklet is now live, providing employees with a single, accessible resource outlining the full range of rewards and benefits available to them as part of working at East Devon District Council (EDDC). This includes key information on pay, pensions, leave, wellbeing support, and additional benefits, helping to ensure staff have a clearer understanding of the overall value of their employment package.

The booklet will also act as a useful tool for managers, enabling them to more effectively signpost and discuss the support and benefits available to their teams.

We continue to acknowledge the great work of staff both locally by managers and via weekly bouquets via East Devon – Connected, our staff newsletter.

1.2 Staff led group – How we connect

The staff led group 'how we connect' is in full swing and already coming up with some great ideas on how to support and facilitate connection across the organisation. They are looking to plan a monthly walk, utilising our amazing Happy, Healthy, Here initiative and a summer picnic lunch. It is great to see our people taking ownership and moving this forward, with peer-to-peer events, which we hope will encourage engagement.

1.3 Coffee & Connect

We continue to hold Coffee & Connect sessions, we held a Walk and Talk led by Simon Davey, Director of Finance as part of Stress Awareness month and have plans to link with the Thelma Hubert Gallery to support people to craft and connect in an alternative EDDC environment.



1.3 Our 'We Grow' Offer

We have now completed our review of our 'we grow' offer (learning and development). Our people are central to everything we do, and the skills, confidence and behaviours they bring shape both our services and workplace experience. The 'we grow' offer 2026–27 sets out a clear and practical approach to supporting this, through a cohesive six pillar learning and development framework. Aligned to People Focused – Connect, Grow & Thrive, Organisational Behaviours and Manager Charter, the offer is accessible, proportionate and grounded in the realities of our work. It complements everyday learning through experience, collaboration and mentoring, helping create a supportive environment where people can grow and do their best work, now and in the future. The 6 pillars are;

1. Mandatory Training – for all
2. Managers mandatory training
3. Management & Leadership development
4. Employee development offer
5. Wellbeing, inclusion & psychological safety
6. Health & Safety

1.4 Development of the Managers Hub

Phase 1 of the Managers Hub is progressing well. The recruitment pages have now been developed and are currently being tested with a small group of managers ahead of wider rollout. Work has also commenced on a dedicated space for our learning offer.

In addition, to support the launch of the refreshed Performance Excellence Framework (see above), a dedicated space has been created within the hub bringing together tools, guidance and practical resources in one place. This will make it easier for managers to quickly access consistent, up-to-date information, helping to build confidence and improve practice.

1.4 Mentoring Programme Launched

The One Team East Devon mentoring programme has now been successfully launched. The programme has been carefully designed to be deliverable within existing resources and budget, enabling implementation within a realistic timeframe. Its introduction demonstrates a clear "You

Said, We Did” response, reflecting consistent feedback from staff expressing an appetite for mentoring opportunities across the Council.

This initiative will play an important role in supporting employees to connect, grow and thrive, strengthening collaboration, development and knowledge-sharing across the organisation. It is particularly timely as we continue to support our workforce through organisational change and prepare for Local Government Reorganisation, helping to build resilience and capability for the future.

1.5 Grow Our Own

Work Experience

Work Experience Week will take place from 13th July, with eight students from schools across the district attending. The programme offers a structured and engaging introduction to the Council, including site visits, “Speedy Insights” sessions with colleagues from across services, mock interviews, and the opportunity to develop and present their own presentation at the end of the week. This initiative provides valuable early engagement with young people, helping to raise awareness of local government careers and showcasing EDDC as an employer of choice. We look forward to welcoming the students and providing a positive and enriching experience.

Care Experienced Young People

Thelma Hulbert Gallery has successfully secured Arts Council funding to support a placement opportunity for a care-experienced young person and is working in partnership with Devon County Council to identify a young person.

In addition, EDDC has joined a county-wide group facilitated by Devon County Council, focused on improving employment opportunities for vulnerable young people. It is hoped this collaborative work will help to strengthen pathways into employment and demonstrates the Council’s commitment to supporting inclusive opportunities and positive outcomes for young people across Devon.



1.6 Refreshed Performance Excellence Framework

Our refreshed Performance Excellence Framework is launching on 1st July with the first of two managers briefings. The approach aims to create a more consistent, user-friendly and continuous model of performance and development. The updated approach places greater emphasis on regular ‘check-ins’ (re-named from 1-2-1’s) between managers and employees. Alongside an annual Performance Excellence Review, which is an opportunity to reflect and plan. This is an important milestone, but it is now positioned as part of an ongoing cycle rather than a standalone event.

Alongside this, the revised framework places stronger focus on quality of conversation, wellbeing, and career development, supporting managers to take a more coaching-based approach. Guidance, forms and manager resources have been developed to support consistency across the organisation, and to make it easier for both managers and employees to engage meaningfully in the process. The approach aligns with the Council’s People Strategy themes of Connect, Grow, and Thrive, supporting stronger working relationships, continuous development, and a positive

working environment, ultimately contributing to improved performance, engagement, and service delivery.

A tailored approach will be introduced for operational staff to ensure it is fit for purpose, including the introduction of a team-based check-in model. Implementation in these areas will follow the busy summer period.

1.7 Pulse Survey

A pulse survey was launched on 10th June and will run until 1st July. The survey focuses on staff wellbeing and provides an important touchpoint to understand how employees are feeling, building on key themes identified in the last annual survey. The next full annual survey is scheduled for September, ensuring a continued and structured approach to listening to staff feedback and responding to emerging priorities.

1.8 Staff led group – Safe & Supported

The Safe and Supported group has now met, following a similar approach to the 'how we connect' group, to explore how it can best support the organisation. Constructive discussions were held around the group's future focus and ways of working.

While initial membership has been limited, there is an opportunity to build momentum. Planned promotion and wider engagement will aim to encourage broader participation, strengthening the group's impact and ensuring it represents a diverse range of voices across the organisation.

1.9 Change & Resilience workshops

We have delivered a further change and resilience workshop; however, attendance was lower than anticipated. Additional sessions are planned for July and September, with a renewed focus on promotion to encourage greater participation.

Should uptake remain limited, we will review the approach to ensure it continues to meet workforce needs and that resources are being targeted where they will have the greatest impact.

1.10 Other activity

Policy Updates

Changes arising from the Employment Rights Act have required updates to several HR policies. In most cases, these are minor amendments to ensure continued legal compliance, particularly reflecting the introduction of day one rights to certain entitlements. Policies being updated include:

- Compassionate Parental Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Unpaid Parental Leave Policy

In addition, the Council's Probation Policy has been reviewed and updated, and will be presented to Personnel Committee for approval.

Apprenticeship Reform

The Council is responding to national apprenticeship funding reforms being introduced during 2026, which will materially change how levy funding can be used. Key changes include the removal of the 10% government top-up and a reduction in the expiry period for new levy funds from 24 to 12 months from August 2026, alongside restrictions on funding for certain higher-level (Level 7) apprenticeships from January 2026. These reforms reduce overall funding available, limit

flexibility, and increase the need for more active planning, prioritisation and monitoring of apprenticeship activity.

For the Council, the immediate financial position remains broadly stable, with levy income currently supporting existing commitments. However, modelling indicates that whilst short-term risk of levy loss is low, there is potential for funding expiry to emerge from early 2028, coinciding with Local Government Reorganisation and ongoing uncertainty about how levy balances and commitments will transfer to a successor authority. This reinforces the need for stronger governance, clearer prioritisation of apprenticeship investment towards organisational priorities (such as hard-to-fill roles and succession planning), and appropriate approval and monitoring arrangements to ensure levy funding is used effectively and strategically ahead of transition.

Local Government Reorganisation

The latest all-staff briefing on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was held on 1st June, with strong attendance and positive feedback from those who attended. As expected, many colleagues are seeking greater clarity on what LGR will mean for them personally; however, at this stage, there remain uncertainties and we will continue to provide updates as further information becomes available.

Following the staff briefing, two in-person workshops titled “*Coping and Thriving through LGR*” were delivered on 2nd June by Sophie Hosking. These sessions provided a valuable opportunity for colleagues to explore the opportunities, challenges, hopes and concerns associated with LGR. Sophie brought significant expertise, having played a central role in the development and implementation of the Unitary Authority in Cornwall, which added practical insight and credibility to the discussions.

HR has also been supporting the collection of key workforce data as part of LGR preparations, with activity expected to increase in the coming months. In response, consideration is being given to how capacity is prioritised across both business-as-usual activity and organisational development work, ensuring the Council is well positioned to manage the increasing demands associated with LGR.

2 Recommendations/Decision

To note the content of this update.

3 Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

To ensure members of Personnel Committee are up to date with activity taking place across HR.

4 Options

N/A

5 Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure
- A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.

- A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

6 Financial Comments/Implications

There are no direct financial implications in the recommendations.

7 Legal Comments/Implications

There are no direct legal implications in the recommendations.

8 Risk Implications

Not applicable.

9 Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

Equality consideration is embedded within HR practice and where required Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken for relevant work.

10 HR and Workforce Implications

As detailed within main body of report.

11 Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable.

12 Climate Change Implications

Not applicable.

13 Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

Detailed within main body of report, where applicable.

14 Procurement and Social Value implications

Not applicable.

15 Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

Not applicable.

16 Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

Not applicable.

17 Digital and Data

Not applicable.

18 Consultation and Engagement

Not applicable.

19 Communications

Not applicable.

20 Next Steps

Not applicable.

21 Appendices

Not applicable.

22 Background Papers

Not applicable.

Proposed Report Sign Off process

Please make sure you have obtained the relevant sign off and the date completed before submitting your report to Democratic Services.

	Officer Name	Date requested	Date Completed
Legal & Governance	Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer	16/6/2026	
Finance	Section 151 Officer or Deputy S151 Officer	16/6/2026	
Communications	communications@eastdevon.gov.uk		If applicable
Digital and Data	digital@eastdevon.gov.uk		If applicable
Engagement	engagement@eastdevon.gov.uk		If applicable
HR	HR Lead		If applicable
Chief Executive	Chief Executive		If applicable
Director	Relevant Director		Required
Assistant Director(s)	Relevant Assistant Director(s)	N/A	Required
Cabinet Lead Member(s)	Relevant Lead Member (s)		Required
Executive Leadership Team	ELT	16/6/2026	Required
Strategic Leadership Team	SLT		If applicable