Legal and Democratic Services

EPSOM & EWELL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES PANEL

Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 5.00 pm

Place: Remote Meeting

PLEASE NOTE: this will be a 'virtual meeting'.

The link to the meeting is: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7134104640036493584

Webinar ID: 727-937-491

Telephone (listen-only): 0330 221 9922, Telephone Access code: 199-934-720

The members listed below are summoned to attend the Human Resources Panel meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Councillor Peter Webb (Chairman)	Councillor Bernice Froud
Councillor Christine Cleveland	Councillor Colin Keane
Councillor Robert Foote	Councillor Guy Robbins

Yours sincerely

K. Belden

Chief Executive

For further information, please contact Democratic Services, tel: 01372 732000 or democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

Public information

Please note that this meeting will be a 'virtual meeting'

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Information about the terms of reference and membership of this Committee are available on the Council's website. The website also provides copies of agendas, reports and minutes.

Agendas, reports and minutes for the Committee are also available on the free Modern.Gov app for iPad, Android and Windows devices. For further information on how to access information regarding this Committee, please email us at Democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

Exclusion of the Press and the Public
There are no matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Should any such matters arise during the course of discussion of the below items or should the Chairman agree to discuss any other such matters on the grounds of urgency, the Committee will wish to resolve to exclude the press and public by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

Questions from the Public
Questions from the public are not permitted at meetings of the Human Resources Panel. Part 4 of the Council's Constitution sets out which Committees are able to receive public questions, and the procedure for doing so.

AGENDA

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

   Members are asked to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in respect of any item of business to be considered at the meeting.

2. **HUMAN RESOURCES OVERVIEW** (Pages 5 - 46)

   This report provides an overview of Human Resource and Organisational Development activity which supports the Council's wider team wellbeing, providing evidence of good practice and up to date employment policy including the Council's response to the emergency response and ongoing pandemic.

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HUMAN RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Head of Service:	Shona Mason, Head of HR & Organisational Development
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 Staff Communications Survey Results
	Appendix 2 Staff Wellbeing Survey Results
	Appendix 3 Staff Collaborative Working Survey Results
	Appendix 4 Staff COVID Secure Survey Results
	Appendix 5 Sickness Absence 2019-2020
	Appendix 6 COVID Related Sickness Absences to 30 September 2020
	Appendix 7 Remote Working during COVD19 Procedure

Summary

This report provides an overview of Human Resource and Organisational Development activity which supports the Council's wider team wellbeing, providing evidence of good practice and up to date employment policy including the Council's response to the emergency response and ongoing pandemic.

Recommendation (s)

The Panel is asked to:

(1)   The HR Panel receives the report and outlines any particular areas for development or further reporting

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1   Reason for Recommendation

1.1   To continue to ensure that we provide an appropriate and fit for purpose framework and support for our workforce to deliver effective services for our residents, while managing external and internal factors

2   Background

2.1   In order for the HR Panel to consider areas of wellbeing, HR policy and best practice, this report will provide details of the following areas which the HR team have undertaken over the past year in line with the service delivery plan.

2.2   It should be noted that the emergency response and ongoing pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of the HR service who have had to reprioritise and deal with emerging issues as they have arisen over the past ten months.

2.3   Within this overview report the following updates have been provided:

- COVID19 Update – Summary of the impact of the pandemic on staffing and the HR service
- Absence Management and Wellbeing of Staff –Overview of absence management statistics for the period 2019/2020 and COVID related absences up to September 2020
- Job Evaluation – Update on status of the project
- People Framework Phase 3 – Update on status of project
- Brexit – Overview of implications of Brexit on existing workforce
- Workforce Profile - Update on workforce monitoring
- Future priorities – Update on emerging priorities
- Cost of living pay award 2021/2022 – Update on cost of living increase for staff

3   COVID19 Update

3.1   Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic our priority has been the health and wellbeing of our staff.

3.2   In March 2020 the pandemic brought about significant changes to working arrangements, including:
- the requirement for many Council employees to work remotely due to their normal place of work being closed and/or services suspended
- employees being unable to attend work due to school closures/caring responsibilities
- clinically extremely vulnerable employees being advised to shield by the NHS
- employees (or members of their households) in clinically vulnerable groups (i.e. over the age of 70, pregnant, in BAME groups or with underlying medical conditions) being advised not to attend the workplace
- employees being fully or partially redeployed to support the delivery of the emergency response and key Council services
- an increased level of employee absence due to Covid-19 related sickness or self-isolation

3.3   During March, April and May 2020 the HR team worked with managers across the organisation to maintain an accurate daily register of staff who were attending the workplace, working remotely or absent due to sickness, self-isolation or shielding. Workforce data was collated and provided to the Incident Management Team on a weekly basis. This provided an understanding of the significant impact of Covid-19 on our workforce and helped to inform decisions on how services would operate with a reduced level of staffing.

3.4   At the initial stages of the emergency a total 5 borough Council staff came forward to take on key roles in the IMT, 11 staff in the BECC, 13 staff for the Community Hub and 15 staff in the front line response team.

3.5   Further information on Covid-19 related absence is provided in the Absence Management Update section of this report.

3.6   The Coronavirus Act became law on 25 March 2020, bringing with it a significant requirement for the interpretation of emergency legislation and provision of employment law advice, for example, on the use of the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme and the management of our agency and casual workers.

3.7   On a practical level, the HR team provided advice, support and documentation in relation to, for example, proof of key worker status, use of annual leave and the appointment of volunteers. The team also played a key role in facilitating the redeployment of staff to support the emergency response.

3.8   Payroll processes were adapted to accommodate remote working, ensuring that our monthly payroll has continued to run smoothly and the team has worked with our external provider (MHR) to ensure that our HR and payroll system (iTrent) remains compliant with legislative changes. The annual pay review was processed based on the recommendations of managers as end of year My Performance Conversations could not be facilitated.

3.9   During May 2020, with the focus shifting from response to recovery, the HR team took responsibility for the delivery of guidance to support the organisation's recovery and strategic objectives. A workforce roadmap was produced and the team provided guidance on working/managing remotely, wellbeing, equalities and the development of virtual interview processes for the recruitment of key roles.

3.10 A key theme of the workforce roadmap was safely returning staff to the workplace. The HR team worked with the Council's Occupational Health provider (Medwyn) to carry out risk assessments for 58 employees who were identified as having increased vulnerability to infection or poorer outcomes from Covid-19. These assessments identified personal demographics or health conditions which may present a risk to the individual employee. As a result of these assessments, 55 employees were able to safely return to the workplace.

3.11 The table below shows the number of employees who were identified as being in different categories dependent upon personal circumstances:

Category	Number of Staff	Percentage of Workforce
Care for a dependant - working from home	12	3.8%
Care for a dependant - unable to work from home	0	0%
Building or office closure - working from home	86	27.6%
Building or office closure - unable to work from home	0	0%
Redeployed (BECC, Community Hub, Meals at Home, IMT, COVID Secure, Recovery Team, Cemeteries	48	15.2%
Category A - clinically extremely vulnerable Shielding – (NHS advised) unable to work from home	1	0.3%
Category B - clinically vulnerable - working from home	48	15.4%
Category B - clinically vulnerable - unable to work from home	27	8.7%
Redeployed (BECC, Community Hub, Meals at Home, IMT, COVID Secure, Recovery Team, Cemeteries Support, High Street Task Force) *this does not include those employees redeployed within operational services	48	15.2%

3.12   Throughout the pandemic the HR team have continued to support the
       health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce through the:

       • Regular publication of FAQs and guidance for managers and staff
       • Liaison with Public Health England and provision of advice in relation
         to employees who have tested positive
       • Ongoing signposting to wellbeing resources
       • Promotion of the Council's Employee Assistance Programme

3.13   Four of the six members of the HR team were redeployed at various
       intervals to support the emergency response and moved fully or partially
       away from their normal duties to take on these new roles. In addition, the
       Head of HR&OD was one of five key individuals deployed to form the
       Incident Management Team, which focussed completely on the
       emergency response.

3.14   This meant that business as usual for the HR team was significantly
       affected. All recruitment, absence management, disciplinary and
       grievance processes were suspended between March and September
       2020 and key projects, including the rollout of the People Framework and
       the implementation of the job evaluation scheme were delayed.

3.15   The pandemic has resulted in an increased requirement to deal with the
       sensitivities of managing those with health conditions, stress and anxiety,
       bereavement, domestic abuse and isolation. The HR team continue to
       provide confidential advice and support with these more complex
       employment matters.

3.16   It is anticipated that the restrictions imposed by Government will mean
       that it is necessary for remote working to continue longer term, with the
       capacity of offices limited by Covid-secure measures and social distancing
       guidelines. The HR team are working to formalise remote working
       arrangements so that these can be managed within clear parameters.

3.17   Now, more than ever, it is essential that the Council has the right staff in
       place at the right time, with the appropriate skills to support its recovery
       plans. The HR team have recently undertaken a workforce planning
       exercise with Heads of Service and are working to formalise secondment
       arrangements for those staff who have been displaced due to ongoing
       service closures. The team are also preparing to support a potential
       increased level of organisational change over the coming months.

3.18   During the pandemic it has been important to maintain an open dialogue
       with staff to ensure two way communication and provide a mechanism for
       staff to raise any concerns so that they can be addressed. The Staff
       Consultative Group has continued to operate, albeit remotely, to ensure
       that matters are aired and addressed. A number of pulse staff surveys
       were also conducted to obtain feedback about how staff were feeling and
       coping with the ongoing pandemic while working.

3.19   Four pulse surveys were conducted:
- Communications survey in May 2020
- Wellbeing survey in June 2020
- Collaborative working survey in July 2020
- COVID Secure survey in August 2020

3.20   The results of each of the surveys can be found in Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4.

3.21   As a result of the surveys and feedback received the Council has taken on board the feedback when developing policies, procedures and providing support and development opportunities for staff as well as influencing internal communications.

4   Absence Management and Wellbeing of Staff

4.1   Effective absence management involves finding a balance between providing support to help employees with health problems stay in and return to work, and taking consistent and firm action to manage the impact and costs associated with sickness absence.

4.2   Appendix 5 – outlines the Council's approach to absence management between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020.

4.3   In the first quarter of 2020 we saw a high level of Covid-19 related absence (sickness, self-isolation and shielding. Whilst Covid-19 related absence decreased over the summer months, we are now seeing a further increase in line with national trends.

4.4   Appendix 6 – provides an overview of Covid-related absence and outlines how the pandemic has impacted sickness levels and absence management processes.

4.5   Since March 2020 we have also seen an increase in absences related to mental health (stress, depression, anxiety, psychological), which may be linked to the current pandemic situation. A high percentage of current long term sickness absence is attributable to mental health. It is likely that this trend may continue over the coming months as resilience levels deplete.

4.6   Support has been provided via a number of routes namely online and telephone counselling through the Council Employee Assistance program and the Council's Mental Health First Aiders. The team have also sought to provide support and additional information by signposting to other platforms such as Surrey Health and NHS support. There was also on-going engagement with the Staff Consultative Group as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to effective employee relations and to help with the changing requirements placed on staff in this on-going emergency situation.

4.7 The Council's flu vaccination programme was rolled out earlier than usual this year to ensure that as many people as possible were able to take up this offer and 76 employees were issued with a voucher. All employees who were entitled to receive a free flu vaccination from their GP were encouraged to do so.

4.8 Formal absence management processes were resumed from September 2020 and the HR team continue to liaise with managers to address outstanding sickness triggers. Interventions, including ill health retirement and capability, are being explored and progressed for some of our long term sickness cases.

4.9 The revised Absence Management procedure was launched as part of the People Framework on 1 October 2020.

5 Job Evaluation

5.1 As reported at the last HR Panel meeting on 17 December 2019 the HR team had been working with Managers to ensure that all roles within the Council have a new generic role profile which supports the job evaluation process.

5.2 Roles had been grouped into 20 job families in line with the Council's pay structure and managers were asked to complete a generic template for each role within their service.

5.3 Last year the Council commissioned South East Employers to undertake the job evaluation exercise on its behalf due to the volume of roles to be evaluated, the expertise required and to ensure impartiality during the process.

5.4 During quarter three of 2019/20 HR worked with Managers and South East Employers to review the completed role profiles to ensure that they reflect the requirements of the role, there was consistency across the grades and they contained adequate information for the job evaluation.

5.5 South East Employers completed the mapping process against organisational structures, the Council's pay structure and individual evaluations. The mapping process was completed with South East Employers providing their initial assessment in January / February of 2020 just as the pandemic started to take hold.

5.6 Due to the HR team being heavily involved in the Council's emergency response to the pandemic the job evaluation project was deprioritised in February/March 2020 and has been on hold over the past few months. This delay was communicated to staff and as part of the Council's recovery with a revised completion date of December 2020 as outlined in the revised service delivery plans.

5.7 While it was anticipated that this project will be completed by December 2020 with a further lockdown further impacting on the HR team's capacity this may result in a further delay.

5.8 Every effort will be made to complete the project with a view to informing employees of the outcome in early January 2021 although this will depend on the impact of the second lockdown.

6   People Framework – Phase 3

6.1 As reported at the last HR Panel meeting on 17 December 2019 the HR team were working to finalising Phase 1 and 2 ready for ratification at Strategy & Resources Committee.

6.2 The following policies were presented to Strategy & Resources on 30 January 2020 and approved:
- Part 1 Policy Areas/Scope
- Part 2 Who does What - Roles & Responsibilities
- Part 3 Definitions
- Absence Management
- Appeals
- Capability
- Disciplinary
- Employee Pay & Reward
- Grievance
- Hearings
- Induction and Settling In
- Investigations
- Mediation
- Performance Management
- Recruitment & Retention Incentive
- Relocation
- Suspension
- Adoption
- Annual Leave
- Dignity at Work
- Flexible Working
- Maternity
- Ordinary Parental Leave
- Paternity
- Recruitment & Selection
- Safer Recruitment
- Shared Parental Leave
- Special Leave
- Working from Home

6.3   It was envisaged that the new People Framework would be launched and implemented from April 2020. However due to the pandemic the launch of the framework wad delayed until 1 October.

6.4   The pandemic has also impacted on the HR team's ability to complete Phase 3 which includes the following policies:
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Overtime
- Politically Restricted Posts
- Workforce Change

6.5   The above policies in Phase 3 have all been drafted however require some further amendments before being presented to Leadership Team for agreement, presented to Staff Consultative Group for consultation with staff and then finalised for approval at Strategy & Resources. It is anticipated that Phase 3 will be finalised by the end of December 2020 with a view to commencing wider engagement form January 2021.

7   Brexit

7.1   The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020. A transition period is in place until 31 December 2020, during which time there are no practical changes to immigration between the UK and Europe.

7.2   From 1 January 2021, the free movement between the UK and European Economic Area (EEA) will cease and a new immigration system will be implemented in the UK.

7.3   The end of free movement means that EEA nationals who currently work for the Council and who are residing in the UK will be required to apply under the EU settlement scheme for settled or pre-settled status by 30 June 2021.

7.4   In November 2019 we audited our workforce, considering the impact of the end of free movement on EEA nationals working in the UK. The information gathered indicated that c.2.6% of the Council's workforce are EEA nationals.

7.5   We had originally considered asking all employees to bring their passports to work for verification, however, this has not been possible with employees not attending the workplace due to the pandemic. As an alternative, we have relied on our employees self-certifying their nationality, appreciating that the risk of incomplete and inaccurate data is greater under this option.

7.6   During November and December 2020 we will be communicating with all staff regarding the impact of the end of free movement, to ensure that employees understand the actions they need to take. These communications will form part of the annual employee data update.

7.7   The end of free movement will also impact EEA nationals who wish to commence employment with the Council after 31 December 2020. At the time of writing, the Council has not applied for a licence to sponsor migrant workers in the future as it is thought that the costs of obtaining this would be prohibitive.

7.8   Current Government guidance states that there will be no change to how employers check an EEA national's right to work in the UK until 30 June 2021 and that employers will not need to make retrospective right to work checks for existing employees.

7.9   However, as a no deal Brexit now seems likely, we are closely monitoring Government guidance and keeping our right to work checking processes under review to ensure that they remain compliant.

8   Workforce Profile

8.1   The data in this report has been extracted from the Council's HR system (iTrent). The HR team ask employees to review and update their data on an annual basis, with the most recent update being requested in November 2020.

8.2   The workforce profile data provided below is as at 30 September 2020.

8.3   Key findings:

- The headcount as at 30 September 2020 was 307. This remains virtually unchanged from 31 March 2019, where the headcount was 304.

- The table below provides a comparison between the Borough profile 2018/19 and the Council's workforce profile as at 30 September 2020.

Category	EEBC Borough Profile	EEBC Workforce Profile
Ethnicity	14% Ethnic minority group 86% White Background	14% Ethnic minority group 78% White Background 8% Not known
Gender	51% Female 49% Male	49% Female 51% Male
Age	0-14 - 19% 15-24 - 11% 25-34 - 11% 35-44 - 14% 45-54 - 15% 55-64 - 11% 65-74 - 10% 75-84 - 6% >85 - 3%	0-14 - n/a 15-24 -5% 25-34 - 12% 35-44 - 21% 45-54 - 26% 55-64 - 29% 65-74 -7% 75-84 -0% >85 - n/a

- There has been a no real change (7.9% in 2019/20 to 8.1% in 2020/21) in the number of employees who consider themselves to be disabled (as defined by the disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010).

- Turnover for 2019/20 was 9.3% and turnover for April to September 2020 is 3.9% (10.2% 12 months 1Oct19-30Sep20). These figures exclude those employees who left for non-voluntary reasons, i.e. death in service, dismissal, end of fixed-term contract, redundancy, ill health retirement and unsatisfactory probation. Whilst the number of leavers during the pandemic was more static we are starting to see some more movement within the workforce as individuals decide to move on.

- While the above information provides an update to the Panel in terms of workforce profile further more in-depth analysis has not been possible due to the priorities of the pandemic.

9   Future Priorities

9.1   Currently there are a number of emerging priorities that the HR team are working on to support the ongoing pandemic and recovery. These include:
- Enhanced remote working procedures
- Workforce planning to support service reviews
- Virtual recruitment processes
- Virtual induction processes

9.2 The Council had an approved Working from Home procedure which supported staff to work from home on an ad hoc basis. This is now no longer fit for purpose. Initial guidance was provided to staff and managers about remote working during the pandemic however as remote working is likely to be a feature for the foreseeable future the HR team are working with Leadership Team to produce a more robust procedure to ensure expectations are clear moving forward. A draft procedure has been developed and is detailed further in this report. Consultation is taking place with staff during December.

9.3 It is envisaged that over the next few months a number of service reviews will be undertaken to help determine how the Council will plug the £1.3M deficient which has been identified in next year's budget. If there are any significant changes to service provision this may have workforce implications which HR will be required to support with. Workforce planning over the next few months will be important to ensure that the Council is best placed to deliver services in the coming months and years.

9.4 During the past six months the Council has had a recruitment freeze in place with only essential roles being advertised. As we continue to recover from the pandemic we may start to see an increase in our turnover which may result in an increase in the need to recruit. A small number of essential roles have ben advertised over the past 6 months which have also required to be run in a different way to meet social distancing and COVID Secure arrangements. Virtual processes for both recruitment and induction will require further exploration and guidance produced to support with these arrangements.

10 Remote Working during COVID19 Procedure

10.1 As part of the Council's People Framework an approved Working from Home procedure was in place to support employees to work from home on an ad hoc basis as and when agreed by their manager. Occasional home working provided flexibility.

10.2 As a result of the pandemic a large proportion of office based staff have been working from home and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future to support with COVID Secure working arrangements and ongoing government guidance.

10.3 Therefore a procedure has been developed to define parameters and provide clarity for staff and managers in relation to ongoing remote working. This procedure is an interim procedure while the Council takes steps to establish future needs and requirements in terms of agile working. The procedure is outlined in Appendix 7.

10.4 Staff are being consulted on the new procedure and feedback will be received by 6 January 2021..

10.5   The procedure will be presented to Strategy & Resources on 28 January for approval and will form part of the People Framework.

11 Cost of Living Pay Award 21/22

11.1   In line with the Council's approved Employee Pay & Reward Procedure 2020-2024 the cost of living pay award in any given year will be in line with CPI and will not normally be expected to exceed the rate of CPI.

11.2   As outlined in the policy the CPI rate will be taken in the month of September prior to the April when any pay award is implemented.

11.3   Therefore the cost of living pay award for April 2021 will be 0.5% which is based on Sept 2020 CPI rate. The approximate cost of the 0.5% pay award is £50k.

11.4   The current approved budget for the cost of living pay award is 2% at an approximate cost of £200k.

11.5   This will result in a £150k saving from the 2021/22 budget.

12 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

12.1   Impact Assessment

12.1.1 None arising from the contents of this report

12.2   Crime & Disorder

12.2.1 None arising from the contents of this report

12.3   Safeguarding

12.3.1 None arising from the contents of this report

12.4   Dependencies

12.4.1 None arising from the contents of this report

12.5   Other

12.5.1 None arising from the contents of this report

13 Financial Implications

13.1   Financial implications of the cost of living pay award for 2021/22 are detailed in section 11 of this report.

13.2   **Section 151 Officer's comments**: None arising from the contents of this report.

14   Legal Implications

14.1   None for the purposes of this report.

14.2   **Monitoring Officer's comments**: None

15   Policies, Plans & Partnerships

15.1   Council's Key Priorities:

15.2   The following Key Priorities are engaged:

Effective Council.

15.3   **Service Plans**: These matters are included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

15.4   **Climate & Environmental Impact** of recommendations: None arising from the contents of this report.

15.5   **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety** Implications: None arising from the contents of this report.

15.6   **Partnerships**: None

16   Background papers

16.1   The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Human Resources Overview 17 December 2019

Other papers:

- Employee Pay & Reward Procedure 2020-2024

Staff Communications survey during Covid-19 lockdown

Our lives have changed significantly over the last few weeks with so much for us all to adapt to.

With so much change, we wanted to check in with you to see how you're doing. If you could spare a few minutes to take part in our anonymous survey, that would be much appreciated.

It will only take a few minutes and we'll share the response with you in two weeks' time as well as any actions we've identified to help improve future communications.

Please take part and thank you in advance.

Which area of the business do you work in?

3 (3.2%) Chief Executive Office

28 (29.5%) Digital and Service Transformation

7 (7.4%) Financial Services

8 (8.4%) HR & Organisational Development

16 (16.8%) Housing and Community Services

7 (7.4%) Legal and Democratic Services

14 (14.7%) Operational Services

4 (4.2%) Policy, Performance and Governance

2 (2.1%) Property and Regeneration

4 (4.2%) Planning

2 (2.1%) Other

If 'Other', please specify below

2 (100.0%)

During lockdown, what are the biggest challenges you've experienced? (Please tick all that apply)

30 (30.9%) Social distancing

23 (23.7%) Isolation issues

8 (8.2%) Apprehension

34 (35.1%) Remote working

15 (15.5%) Lack of control

30 (30.9%) Emotional and physical wellbeing

50 (51.5%) Limited interactions with colleagues

35 (36.1%) Anxiety

9 (9.3%) Other

23 (23.7%) Access to information needed

25 (25.8%) Sadness

57 (58.8%) Uncertainty

If 'Other', please specify below...

8 (100.0%)

What positives will you take away from your time working during the lockdown? (Please tick all that apply)

68 (69.4%) Our Covid-19 response to support vulnerable residents

64 (65.3%) Teams working to continue to deliver projects and services

73 (74.5%) Positive team morale despite the current situation

48 (49.0%) Less commuting

70 (71.4%) Environment impact, less pollution

43 (43.9%) Work life balance

8 (8.2%) Other

If 'Other', please explain below

8 (100.0%)

What unexpected things have you experienced while working during the lockdown?

61 (100.0%)

How do you most regularly receive information, such as the daily Covid-19 or other important updates? (Please tick all that apply)

97 (99.0%) Email

30 (30.6%) eHub

15 (15.3%) Word of mouth

2 (2.0%) Physical copies (eg a printed version of the Covid-19 update)

3 (3.1%) Other

If 'Other', please specify below...

3 (100.0%)

Have you found the regular Covid-19 staff updates useful?

96 (98.0%) Yes

2 (2.0%) No

If 'No', please explain below

2 (100.0%)

What else would you like to see included in the staff updates?

47 (100.0%)

What other support from the Council do you feel you need at this time?

57 (100.0%)

If you could say one thing to your colleagues across the Council at the moment what will it be?

78 (100.0%)

To complete the survey please click the submit your answers button below. ✓

Staff Survey

We kickstarted our first staff survey a fortnight ago and received an amazing response rate. We'll like to continue this trend by carrying out a series of light touch surveys.

If you could spare a few minutes to take part in our latest anonymous survey, that would be much appreciated. It closes on **Friday 12 June**.

Once the information is analysed, we'll share the findings and any actions taken as a result. Thanking you in advance.

Which area of the business do you work in?

1 (1.2%) Chief Executive Office

24 (29.3%) Digital and Service Transformation

8 (9.8%) Financial Services

4 (4.9%) HR & Organisational Development

11 (13.4%) Housing and Community Services

5 (6.1%) Legal and Democratic Services

17 (20.7%) Operational Services

2 (2.4%) Policy, Performance and Governance

5 (6.1%) Property and Regeneration

4 (4.9%) Planning

1 (1.2%) Other

If 'Other', please specify below

1 (100.0%)

How are you feeling?

21 (25.3%) Very well

56 (67.5%) Fairly well

2 (2.4%) Not very well

3 (3.6%) Not well at all

1 (1.2%) Don't know

If possible, please explain your reason/s for picking the option above

44 (100.0%)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
As an employer, I feel that the council looks after my wellbeing	17 (20.5%)	35 (42.2%)	22 (26.5%)	8 (9.6%)	1 (1.2%)

If possible, please explain your reason/s for picking the option above

32 (100.0%)

What other support do you feel you need at this time?

50 (100.0%)

Since the last survey, has...

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
Your connection to the council's work	14 (17.3%)	62 (76.5%)	5 (6.2%)
Your connection to your team	5 (6.2%)	67 (82.7%)	9 (11.1%)
Your ability to contribute to the work of your service area	16 (19.3%)	65 (78.3%)	2 (2.4%)

To complete the survey please click the submit your answers button below. ✓

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Staff Survey
Number 3
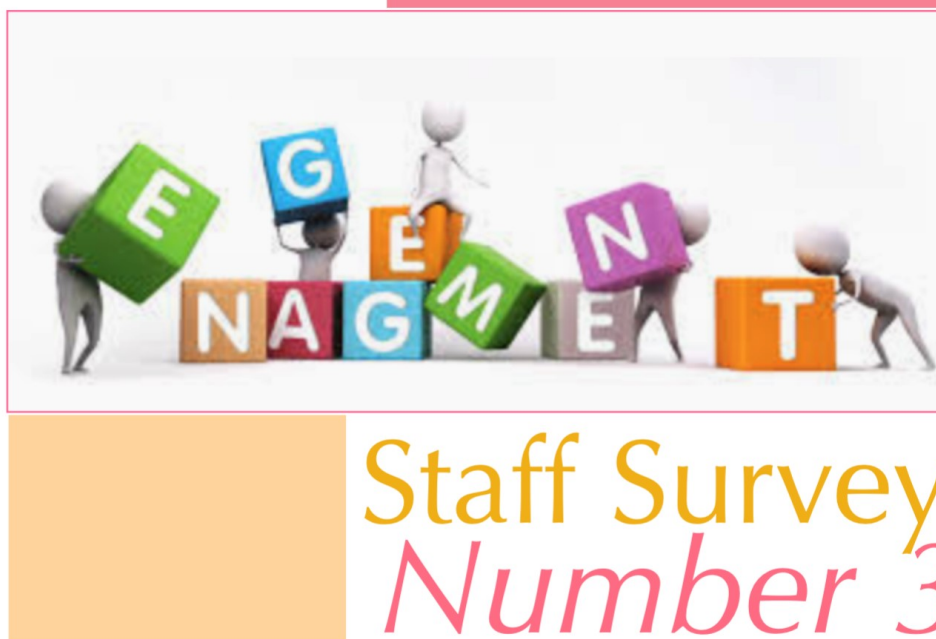
Welcome to our 3rd Staff Survey!

This survey asks three short questions about collaborative working at the council. How easy do you find it collaborating with colleagues? What would make collaboration more simple? Can you share a good story of some great collaboration?

The survey is completely anonymous. The results will be published in a few weeks and will help to continually improve collaboration across EEBC.

Which area of the business do you work in?

0 (0.0%) Chief Executive Office

11 (34.4%) Digital and Service Transformation

0 (0.0%) Financial Services

3 (9.4%) HR & Organisational Development

1 (3.1%) Housing and Community Services

0 (0.0%) Legal and Democratic Services

7 (21.9%) Operational Services

2 (6.3%) Policy, Performance and Governance

3 (9.4%) Property and Regeneration

4 (12.5%) Planning

1 (3.1%) Other

If 'Other', please specify below

1 (100.0%)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I'm able to work with others in my team at the moment	13 (41.9%)	18 (58.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
I'm able to able to work with others in different teams across the organisation at the moment	7 (23.3%)	15 (50.0%)	5 (16.7%)	3 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)
The council encourages collaborative working	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.7%)	9 (30.0%)	2 (6.7%)	1 (3.3%)

If possible, please explain your reason/s for picking the options above

14 (100.0%)

What would help you to work more effectively with your colleagues or other teams?

24 (100.0%)

Can you share an example of how you or your team have worked successfully with others during the current situation below...

18 (100.0%)

Since the last survey, has...

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
Your connection to the council's work	7 (22.6%)	23 (74.2%)	1 (3.2%)
Your connection to your team	8 (25.0%)	20 (62.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Your ability to contribute to the work of your service area	8 (25.8%)	21 (67.7%)	2 (6.5%)

To complete the survey please click the submit your answers button below. ✓

Staff Survey Number 4

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our Staff Survey series so far. This week, we would like to focus on safety and especially the COVID Secure status that we've worked so hard to achieve. As we hope you're aware, the safety of all EEBC staff is the council's top priority.

The responses are completely anonymous and will be shared with Leadership Team to guide any further developments/communications around our COVID-19 status. This survey will be open until **Friday 28 August 2020** and the results will be published as soon as possible after that.

Which area of the business do you work in?

6 (8.6%) Chief Executive Office

22 (31.4%) Digital and Service Transformation

5 (7.1%) Financial Services

7 (10.0%) HR & Organisational Development

6 (8.6%) Housing and Community Services

5 (7.1%) Legal and Democratic Services

9 (12.9%) Operational Services

2 (2.9%) Policy, Performance and Governance

4 (5.7%) Property and Regeneration

2 (2.9%) Planning

2 (2.9%) Other

If 'Other', please specify below

1 (100.0%)

While working since 23 March 2020, have you been:

30 (42.9%) Working solely at home

10 (14.3%) Solely in usual place of work

30 (42.9%) Mixture of both

The council has been working hard to gain 'COVID Secure' status for our buildings and teams. How familiar are you with the requirements of being 'COVID Secure'?

60 (84.5%) Familiar

6 (8.5%) Neither

5 (7.0%) Not familiar

If possible, please explain your reason/s for picking the options above

25 (100.0%)

How confident are you to play your part in helping our buildings and teams remain 'COVID Secure'?

64 (90.1%) Confident

6 (8.5%) Neither

1 (1.4%) Not confident

If possible, please explain your reason/s for picking the options above

20 (100.0%)

Have you had the chance to talk to your manager about how your team and work area can remain 'COVID Secure'?

51 (72.9%) Yes

19 (27.1%) No

Generally, how safe do you feel from the risks of the coronavirus while at work?

45 (63.4%) Safe

19 (26.8%) Neither

7 (9.9%) Not safe

What could the council do to help improve this feeling?

39 (100.0%)

Since the last survey, has...

	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased
Your connection to the council's work	14 (19.7%)	52 (73.2%)	5 (7.0%)
Your connection to your team	19 (26.8%)	46 (64.8%)	6 (8.5%)
Your ability to contribute to the work of your service area	19 (26.8%)	52 (73.2%)	0 (0.0%)

To complete the survey please click the submit your answers button below. ●

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Appendix 5

Sickness Absence 1 April 2019- 31 March 2020

Due to the exceptional circumstances created by the pandemic, all Covid-19 related absence has been excluded from this Annex for the purpose of year-on year comparison. Covid-19 related absence is detailed separately in Appendix B.

In the year to 31 March 2020 there was a significant decrease in sickness absence as shown below:
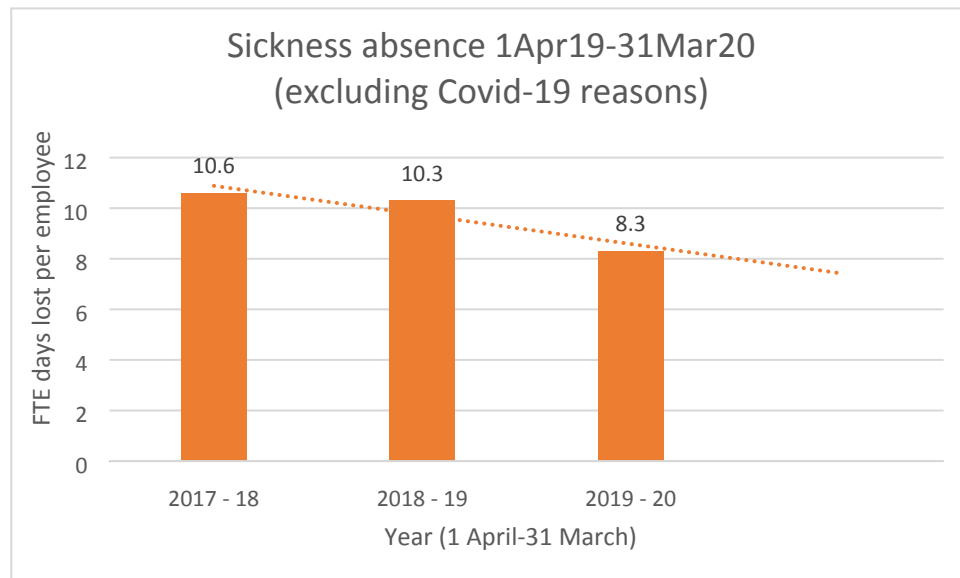
The table below shows the total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) days lost by the Council due to sickness absence over the past 3 years:

Year	Total Number of FTE Days Lost	Long-Term Sickness	Short-Term Sickness
2017 - 18	2868	2062	806
2018 - 19	2853	2229	624
2019 - 20	2355	1582.5	772.5

The level of absence recorded by EEBC for 2019/20 is broadly in line with the CIPD's national average for public sector organisations as identified by the CIPD Health & Wellbeing at Work Report 2020, which is currently 8.0 days.

The table below provides a breakdown of 2019-20 sickness absence by Division:

Division (FTE employees)	% of Total FTE Employees	% of Total Sickness Absence
Chief Executive (7.5)	2.6%	0.7%
Digital & Service Transformation (52.2)	18.2%	17.5%
Financial Services (12.1)	4.2%	1.1%
Housing & Community (29.5)	10.3%	11.6%
HR&OD (9.6)	3.4%	1.6%
Legal & Democratic Services (11.7)	4.1%	7.0%
Operational Services (114.9)	40.1%	47.2%
Planning (15.8)	5.5%	3.5%
Policy, Performance & Governance (7.6)	2.7%	4.5%
Property & Regeneration (25.5)	8.9%	5.3%

Due to the impact of the pandemic, it has not been possible to benchmark our 2019-20 absence levels against those recorded by the other Surrey Authorities.

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 the HR team continued to support managers to proactively manage sickness absence in line with the Council's Attendance Management Procedure.

The Attendance Management Procedure identifies three sickness triggers, where employees who reach a trigger point are invited to a formal meeting to discuss their situation and identify any support needed. The trigger points are as follows:

- 3 occasions within 6 months
- 5 occasions within 12 months
- 10 consecutive days

The HR team worked with employees, managers and Occupational Health (who provide advice relating to the management of employees' medical conditions in a work context) to significantly reduce the number of days lost to long-term absence (defined as absence lasting 10 days or more). 24 sickness cases were referred to Occupational Health during the year.

For the past three years, sickness absence has remained consistently high in two key areas, these being Stress/Depression/Anxiety/Psychological and Back Pain/Sprain/Strain/Musculoskeletal. The graph below shows the percentage of absence attributable to these categories as a percentage of overall sickness absence.

Key reasons for absence
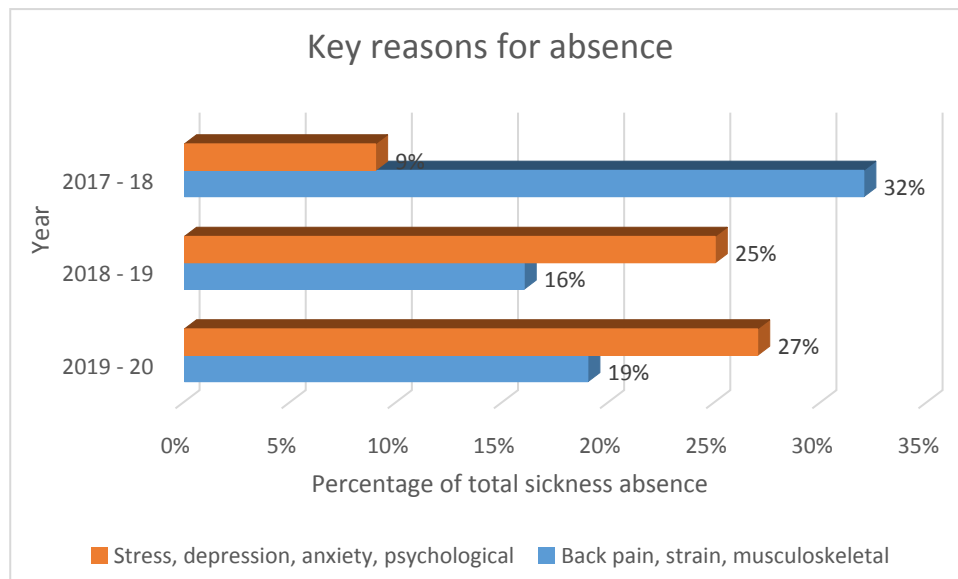
The level of absence relating to musculoskeletal issues is primarily attributable to the Council's manual workforce.

According to the CIPD Health and Wellbeing Report 2020, mental health related absence is the most common cause of long-term sickness absence in UK workplaces, with three fifths of public sector organisations experiencing an increase in reported common mental health conditions in the year to 31 March 2020. 92% of mental health related absences recorded by the Council in 2019-20 were classified as long-term.

During 2019-20 budgetary constraints continued to impact individual workloads as well as the Council's ability to provide wellbeing benefits and initiatives. However, the Council maintained a proactive approach to employee wellbeing and managing sickness absence effectively. In the 12 months preceding the pandemic, the HR team continued to work with managers and Leadership Team on initiatives including:

- Taking a holistic view to supporting the wellbeing of our staff through the design and delivery of the People Framework, aligning our policies and procedures to support the positive trends in managing sickness absence.

- Ongoing quarterly reporting of sickness absence to Leadership Team to ensure effective monitoring, early identification of issues and Leadership Team support for interventions.

- Focus on stress awareness, including the promotion of stress risk assessments as an early intervention and as part of the return to work process.

- Increased openness about mental health and promotion of mental health support, with 9 fully trained mental health first aiders across the Council.

- Facilitation of holistic therapy sessions (Reiki, Crystal Therapy, Indian Head Massage and Neck and Shoulder Massage) as well as Pilates sessions for staff.

- Working with our Employee Assistance Programme provider to promote the support available to staff.

The policy was revised and relaunched on 1 October 2020 as part of the Council's People Framework.

What's new?

- Clarity in scope of policy – links with Settling In, Disciplinary, Performance Management and Capability policies

- Links to My Performance Conversation and note taking during informal meetings where absence related matters are raised

- Consolidation of reasons for absence

- Tools to help managers – Sickness Absence Record Form, Action Log, Reasonable Adjustment Form, etc.

- Informal stage linked to My Performance Conversation

- Trigger points – change from 10 consecutive days to 4 consecutive weeks in line with gov.uk

- Definitions

- Stage 3 Capability Hearing and Appeals procedure aligned with Capability Procedure

What has changed?

- Currently more than 60 reasons for absence in Trent with considerable overlap

- In line with Institute of Medicine/HSE guidelines, these will be consolidated to 16 reasons

- More specific classifications linked to the part of the body affected by the ailment

- Removal of Miscellaneous/Other categories

- More meaningful reporting

- 10 day trigger changed to 4 weeks – aligned with ACAS/CIPD definitions of LTS

Appendix 6

COVID-19 related absence 1 March 2020 – 30 September 2020

The table below shows the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) days lost by the Council due to Covid-19 related absence between 1 March 2020 and 30 September 2020 as defined below:

- **COVID-19 - Sickness**

  Employee has contracted coronavirus and is unable to carry out their role, or a suitable alternative, due to being unwell.

- **COVID-19 - Self isolating (unable to work from home)**

  Employee (or someone in their household) has coronavirus symptoms. Employee is self-isolating, and is unable to carry out their role, or a suitable alternative, from home.

- **COVID-19 – Clinically vulnerable (unable to work from home)**

  Employee (or a member of their household) is in a vulnerable group, i.e. over 70, pregnant or has an underlying medical condition. In line with Government advice, where the employee is unable to work from home and no suitable alternative work is identified, they will remain at home on full pay.

Reason	Total number of FTE days lost
Covid-19 Sickness	286
Covid-19 Self-isolation (unable to work from home)	196
Covid-19 Clinically vulnerable (unable to work from home)	2648
TOTAL	*3130

Whilst the HR team has worked with managers throughout the pandemic to maintain accurate employee attendance records, it should be noted that it has not been possible to capture all Covid-19 related absences.

The level of absence between 1 March 2020 and 30 September 2020 was unprecedented. In addition to Covid-19 related absence, a significant number of employees were moved away from their normal roles to support the Council's emergency response, for example the BECC, Community Hub, Meals at Home, etc. Despite this, the Council continued to deliver priority services with limited impact.

Between 1 April 2020 and 30 September 2020 all formal absence management processes were suspended, with no formal absence management action being taken in respect of Covid-19 related absences. The HR team are currently working with managers to address all outstanding absence triggers retrospectively.

During the pandemic the HR team has continued to provide support, both to individuals on a case-by-case basis and to the organisation as a whole. This has included regular staff communications, updates, and guidance in line with changing Government advice.

Throughout June and July 2020 the HR team worked with the Council's Occupational Health provider (Medwyn) to carry out risk assessments for 58 employees who were identified as having increased vulnerability to infection or poorer outcomes from Covid-19. These assessments identified personal demographics which may present a risk to the individual employee, for example underlying health conditions, age and ethnicity. As a result of these assessments, 55 employees were supported to safely return to the workplace.

In providing support to the organisation during the pandemic there have been many factors for the HR team to consider, including the impact of the lockdown and ongoing restrictions such as social distancing, self-isolation and shielding.

Some employees are fearful about contracting the virus and anxious about family and friends. Some have suffered bereavements, often without the chance to say goodbye or attend funerals.

Many of our employees have continued to work in essential and key roles in a range of challenging circumstances, with some working longer or more irregular hours to allow for effective social distancing. For some staff who were redeployed to support the emergency response, there has also been the requirement to deal with backlogs of "normal" work.

The continuing threat of the virus means that some employees continue to work whilst retaining caring responsibilities, whilst many are dealing with other personal and financial circumstances that may have an impact on their mental health.

There are also fears about job security, particularly where Council services remain suspended and many employees have ongoing concerns around attending the workplace, including using public transport and staying safe in the work environment.

The HR team continue to provide advice and support to the organisation where an employee tests positive, including liaison with Public Health England as necessary and safeguarding the health/dealing with the anxieties of colleagues.

The increase in mental health related absence during 2019-20 noted in Appendix A was recorded pre-Covid-19. The factors outlined above suggest that the pandemic (and measures taken by Government to control it) will have a significant impact on the mental health of our employees. It is very possible that these mental health implications will be felt for many months or even years.

There continue to be significant risks around escalating absence levels, fatigue of staff, concurrent incidents and coping with multiple priorities.

People Framework

Remote Working during Covid-19 Procedure

Version number 1
Date October 2020

Contents

Tracking

Policy Title	Remote Working during Covid-19 Procedure		
LT sign off	25 November 2020		
Committee	HR Panel Strategy & Resources	**Date approved**	15 December 2020 (tbc) 28 January 2021 (tbc)
Review due date	Spring/Summer 2021	**Review completed**	
Service			

Revision History

Revision Date	Revisor	Previous Version	Description of Revision

Document Approvals

Each revision requires the following approvals:

Sponsor Approval		Name	Date

1.   Introduction

To enable the Council to maximise the productivity of its workforce and facilitate effective service delivery, the Council is committed to supporting employees to work remotely during the ongoing pandemic.

Employees need to consider whether they are able to provide the necessary environment and equipment to facilitate remote working practices that meet the needs of the organisation, the service and the employee. This will maximise the Council's ability to maintain service efficiency whilst ensuring that offices remain Covid-secure.

2.   Procedure for the approval of remote working arrangements

It is recognised that there are some roles which are unsuitable for remote working.

In addition, no employee will be required to work away from the office environment if their personal circumstances make it difficult for them to do so (unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent the employee from attending their place of work).

Where there is an operational requirement for employees to work remotely, working arrangements must be authorised by the line manager or Head of Service.

3.   Working Environment

All employees who work remotely are expected to supply their own computer equipment, broadband connection, telephone, etc.

Employees must make available a suitable workspace within the home where they can work effectively. The workspace must offer adequate equipment including computer, broadband connection, etc., freedom from interruptions and distractions, security and confidentiality and the ability to meet health and safety requirements.

4.   Health and safety requirements

The Council has a legal duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees. In addition, all employees are responsible for taking care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work.

All employees who work remotely must complete a Homeworking risk assessment and a DSE assessment before remote working commences. These must be reviewed regularly (i.e. at least every six months) by their line manager, who must be satisfied that there is low risk to the employee and that any required changes to the working environment have been addressed.

Remote working is a form of lone working. This means that there may be a risk of employees who work remotely not having immediate access to another person for assistance or supervision if circumstances require.

To mitigate this risk, employees who are working remotely are required to:
- Remain contactable by telephone during working hours.

- Keep their work diary up-to-date so that colleagues know where they are and what they are doing.
- Agree contact arrangements and frequency of contact, including the hours during which they will be working.
- Agree any proposed variations to normal working hours with their line manager and/or their teams.
- Be aware of all relevant health and safety policies, including accident/incident reporting forms and processes.
- Take their annual leave at regular intervals through the year.
- Ensure that the accrual of overtime and TOIL is approved in advance by their line manager.

Employees should not share their home address for work purposes and under no circumstances should work contacts or customers be invited to visit an employee who is working remotely at their home address.

Employees should carefully consider whether it is appropriate to share a personal telephone number or email address for work purposes.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

Where an employee requires a reasonable adjustment because of a disability or other health condition, they should discuss this with their line manager and HR, who will seek advice on whether reasonable adjustments may be provided.

6. Council equipment

All equipment which has been temporarily removed from Council offices (e.g. office chairs) or provided by ICT to facilitate remote working (e.g. laptops), remains the property of the Council. A record of all loaned equipment must be kept by the line manager or ICT as appropriate.

All employees are able to spread the cost of purchasing their own IT equipment and make National Insurance savings through the Council's Techscheme.

7. ICT support

Employees must liaise with ICT to ensure that they are provided with secure access to ICT facilities for working remotely.

Whilst the Council's ICT service will provide support and advice to employees who are working remotely, the service can only offer limited support for home computer equipment (e.g. access to the Council's network).

ICT is not responsible for resolving issues arising from the use of an employee's home computer equipment or internet connection.

Support through the IT Helpdesk operates during the following business hours only:
- 08:00 to 17:30 Monday to Thursday
- 08:00 to 17:00 on Fridays

No ICT support is provided outside of these hours. Employees who choose to work outside of business hours should also note that during this time systems are backed up and may run slowly.

Regardless of whether they are using Council owned or personal equipment, employees must familiarise themselves with, and adhere to the ICT Security and Acceptable Use Policy. For the purposes of this procedure, the principles of the ICT Security and Acceptable Use Policy will be applied to employees' personal computers and laptops.

8. Confidentiality and security of data

Managers and employees must ensure that all Council information is kept confidential and secure at all times in line with the Council's Data Protection Policy. Employees are not permitted to keep Council data (including electronic and paper files) at home on a permanent basis.

It is the responsibility of employees to:
- Treat Council property with due regard and care.
- Ensure that personal devices feature up-to-date antivirus software and ensure operating systems and software are up-to-date and secure.
- Be conscious of other individuals within their household who may have access to their devices and restrict such access.
- Log out of Council systems and not allow the device to remember passwords, or write passwords down/share passwords with others.
- Be conscious that other people within their household may be able to see information on their screen/overhear phone calls and take the necessary measures to ensure confidentiality.
- Ensure that all Council data is stored on a Council network drive and not held on a personal device.
- Refrain from taking paper documents containing personal or otherwise confidential information home with them unless absolutely necessary. If paper documents are taken home they must be kept securely in line with the Council's Data Protection policy.
- Remain alert to phishing emails and any other suspected fraudulent activity.

Whilst the Council is appreciative of employees using their own personal equipment for work purposes, failure to adhere to the Data Protection and ICT Security and Acceptable Use policies may result in action being taken in line with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

9. Compliance with policies and procedures

Employees who work remotely are still governed by the terms and conditions of their contract of employment.

In addition, the Council's Code of Conduct and all other policies, procedures and associated guidance remain in place and should be adhered to during any period of remote working.

Employees who are working remotely are expected to keep up to date with all corporate information such as emails from the Chief Executive, staff updates and information posted on EHub.

10. Hours of work

Employees are expected to work their normal contractual hours (as agreed with their manager) when working remotely.

All employees have a responsibility to adhere to the Working Time Regulations in respect of limits to weekly working hours and rest breaks. Line managers should monitor employees who are working remotely to ensure they do not work insufficient or excessive hours.

Where an employee requests a working pattern which is outside of the normal working hours of their service, this must be agreed by their line manager, who will need to ensure that there is sufficient cover to meet operational demands.

11. Attendance

Where an employee is working remotely, they must remain available and able to work, unless their absence is due to an authorised form of leave or sickness.

The usual provisions relating to reporting sickness absence apply. Where an employee who is working remotely is unwell, they must inform their line manager using the sickness reporting procedure set out in the Council's Absence Management Procedure.

Where the absence is related to Covid-19 sickness or self-isolation, managers and employees must notify HR and follow the relevant guidance on the HR pages of EHub.

Working remotely is not appropriate where an employee is too unwell to attend their place of work.

Where an employee is unable to work remotely due to an emergency involving a dependant or at home, the Council's Special Leave Procedure will apply.

12. Availability

Managers must ensure that employees are clear on the standards that apply to them in terms of contact, availability, office/telephone cover, etc.

Managers must also ensure that team availability/contact details and rotas for office cover are made available to others and that any changes affecting service delivery are notified to the relevant parties, e.g. Contact Centre.

Employees who are working remotely must
- Update their Outlook calendar/Skype status as appropriate so that their working hours, location and preferred method of communication are clearly visible to others.

- Transfer their work telephone extension number to their mobile or ensure that an alternative contact number is shown in their Outlook calendar/Skype entry each day.
- Ensure that their Outlook calendar is visible to others.

Step-by-step guidance on the how to complete the above actions is available on the ICT pages of EHub.

Employees who are working remotely must be readily contactable, normally by email and by telephone, during normal working hours. Employees must advise their manager of any times they will not be contactable, seeking permission as appropriate.

Callbacks must be dealt with as a priority and, where an employee is unable to deal with these remotely, the employee must notify their line manager who will ensure that the callback is managed within timescales.

All employees who are working remotely are expected to attend meetings via telephone or video conference facilities as required.

All employees who are working remotely are expected to be available to come into the office if they are asked to do so, e.g. in the event of the sickness of a colleague, a work emergency or to attend a meeting. Where an employee is asked to attend the office, their line manager will try to provide sufficient notice to enable the employee to arrive at their normal starting time. Where this is not possible the employee's travelling time will be considered as part of their working day.

13. Caring responsibilities

Working remotely is not a substitute for childcare or the care of other dependants and employees who need emergency time off for childcare or to make new arrangements should use Emergency Dependant's Leave (as outlined in the Council's Special Leave Procedure), annual leave or unpaid leave.

Employees must ensure that they are able to fulfil the requirements of their role whilst working remotely by making adequate provision for the care of their dependants during their working hours. The Council reserves the right to request evidence of the employee's childcare arrangements.

Where employees have caring responsibilities, they should discuss and agree their working arrangements with their manager, including the hours that they are able to work and any potential impact on their colleagues and work outputs.

Requests for temporary or permanent contractual changes to accommodate caring responsibilities should be submitted in line with the Council's Flexible Working Procedure.

14. Performance Management

Employees are expected to maintain the same levels of productivity whether working remotely or attending the workplace.

Working remotely relies on outcome based management. To ensure that the expected outcomes are achieved, managers must put in place arrangements to ensure that the performance of employees who are working remotely can be managed effectively without continuous direct supervision.

Employees must speak with their line manager as soon as possible if they are experiencing difficulties with managing their workload and/or work priorities.

Managers and employees who are working remotely must ensure that:
- regular contact is planned and formalised
- My Performance Conversations take place as outlined in the Council's Performance Management Procedure
- communication mechanisms such as team meetings take place at regular intervals
- support is provided to employees who find remote working challenging

Where a manager has concerns about the performance of an employee who is working remotely, these should be raised with the individual as soon as possible (in line with the Council's Performance Management Procedure) and additional advice sought from the HR team. Consideration may be given to whether remote working arrangements should be temporarily suspended.

15. Insurance
All employees who are working remotely are covered by Council's Employer Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance, providing that the rules of this policy have been followed.

Any equipment supplied for remote working is covered by the Council's insurance arrangements provided that it is used for work purposes only.

In line with the ICT Security and Acceptable Use Policy, employees who are working remotely must ensure that all Council property is used appropriately and responsibly and that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent damage and/or theft. Employees must report any damage or theft of Council property to their line manager immediately.

Working remotely may affect the provisions of the employee's home contents insurance policy. It is the employee's responsibility to assess the personal implications of remote working on their household insurance and to inform their insurer. The Council will not reimburse any increase in premium or accept liability for damage caused to personal property.

16. Expenses and allowances
No contribution will be made by the Council towards normal household expenses attached to working remotely, e.g. heating and lighting.

Mileage is not payable where employees who have been working remotely are required to attend Council offices. Any other business mileage will be paid in line with the Council's Travel and Subsistence policy.

Where an employee holds a parking permit, no discounts or refunds will apply where the employee is working remotely.

17. Changes in circumstances

The Council reserves the right to review remote working arrangements in line with Government guidance and service requirements.

Managers will communicate any changes to working arrangements to employees as necessary.

18. New employees

Managers are responsible for monitoring a new employee's performance and progress during the Settling-In period and it is expected that, wherever possible, new employees will attend their place of work rather than working remotely during their first weeks of employment.

Managers will decide whether it is appropriate for employees to work remotely during the Settling-In period, taking into consideration the nature of their role, the requirements of the service, the level of support needed and their ability to review and assess the employee's performance, capability and suitability for the role.