

This Report will be made public on 5 June 2019



Report Number **P/19/01**

**To:** Personnel Committee  
**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
**Status:** Non-executive Decision  
**Head of Service:** Andrina Smith, Chief HR Officer

**SUBJECT: HR ANNUAL REVIEW (2018/2019)**

**SUMMARY:** This report presents a review of the HR function over the last financial year 2018-2019.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note Report P/19/01.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The HR Service has now been back in-house at Folkestone & Hythe for 7 years following a period of out-sourcing to the East Kent HR shared service. This report is written to give Committee members an overview of the service and the HR developments that are underway to support managers in achieving their council objectives.
- 1.2 A report is presented to the committee on an annual basis in order for members to be satisfied that the HR team is appropriately supporting the council.

## 2. HR STRUCTURE AND SERVICE

- 2.1 The HR team structure has changed considerably during the 2018/19 financial year due to the investment made into the Organisational Development (OD) team not only to support the ongoing transformation programme within the council but also to provide a contracted service to other local authorities (see further detail in section 5). The current HR Team structure can be seen in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 The service continues to maintain a Business Partner approach to supporting managers to enable a greater understanding of particular service areas, however as they are also generalist advisors they also provide advice across the whole business.
- 2.3 The HR Business Partner and HR Manager continue to have monthly meetings with their Assistant Directors and managers to discuss a standing agenda of HR items, including recruitment, absence management, casework, restructuring and corporate developments. They will also attend the relevant managers meetings within the service areas when required. The HR Manager and Business Partner each have a fortnightly 1-2-1 with the Head of HR. The whole HR team also have a fortnightly team brief to share knowledge, discuss casework and receive corporate information.
- 2.4 The HR team continue to work flexibly from home whenever possible and hot desk across the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. In order to maintain confidentiality when needed the team also have access to a smaller confidential hot desk facility on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor and have access to the small meetings rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors for ad hoc private discussions.

## 3. CASEWORK

- 3.1 During 2017/18 the HR service the team have dealt with the following cases:
- 3 disciplinary cases resulting in 2 written warnings, and 1 final written warning. Under section 4.4 of the disciplinary procedures a penalty can be agreed outside of a disciplinary hearing if the employee is in agreement. Two of the three case numbers mentioned above were issued in this way.
  - 3 capability cases resulting in two members of staff leaving under a settlement agreement due to performance and absence issues and one member of staff left under ill health retirement following a prolonged period of absence due to deteriorating health conditions.
  - 1 grievance was raised during the year which was not upheld. There was no appeal to the outcome.
- 3.2 As a comparison, during 2017/18 the following cases were dealt with:

- 9 disciplinary cases resulting in 5 verbal warnings, 2 written warnings, and 1 final written warning. Under section 4.4 of the disciplinary procedures a penalty can be agreed outside of a disciplinary hearing if the employee is in agreement. All of the case numbers mentioned above were issued in this way.
- 2 capability cases resulting in 1 ill health retirement following previous long term absence and 1 left under a settlement agreement due to performance and absence issues.
- 1 grievance was raised during the year which was upheld. There was no appeal to the outcome.

3.3 These figures show a substantial decrease in the number of disciplinary investigations. The continuation of the use of section 4.4 to enable warnings to be issued and recorded without the need for a formal hearing continues to reduce the amount of time being spent on formal hearings and the associated preparation time.

#### **4. ABSENCE MANAGEMENT**

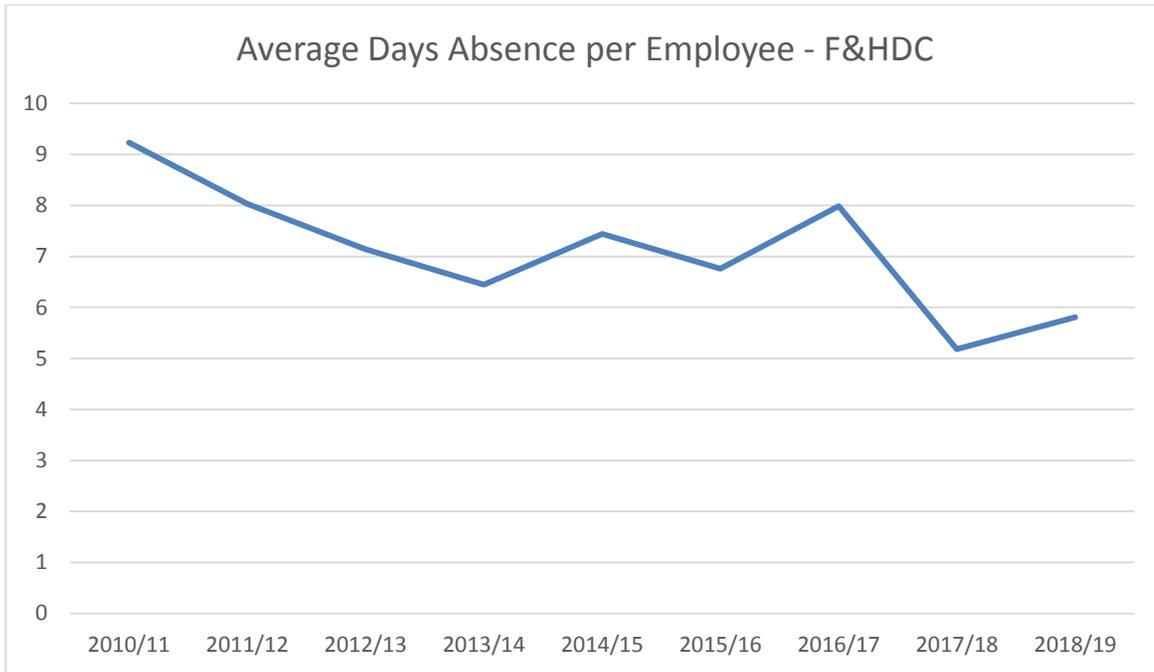
4.1 For the 2018/19 year sickness absence per employee was 5.8 days (based on an average headcount of 361.5). While this represents a slight increase on last year's absence levels, the reasons for which are considered in paragraph 4.6, this still represents a relatively low amount of time lost due to sickness in comparison to previous years and other comparable organisations.

Reporting absence as an average per employee is a widely used formula across different sectors and enables a comparison to be made using data collected by professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

4.2 In previous years the figures have been as follows:

- 2012/13 – 7.1 days absence per employee
- 2013/14 – 6.4 days absence per employee
- 2014/15 – 7.4 days absence per employee
- 2015/16 – 6.7 days absence per employee
- 2016/17 – 7.9 days absence per employee
- 2017/18 – 5.2 days absence per employee

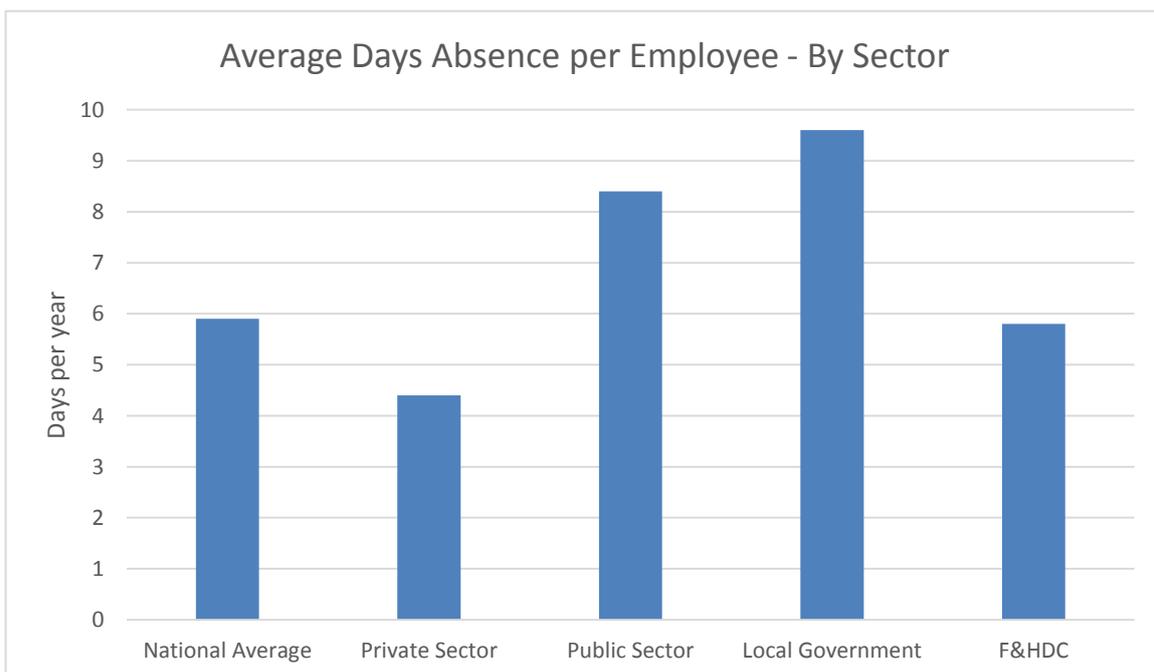
In 2017/18 the council reported an average 5.2 days sickness absence per employee, the lowest since 2010/11 which is as far back as HR have analysed this data. While over the past year this average has increased to 5.8 days, this still represents a relatively low amount of time lost to sickness in comparison with previous years:



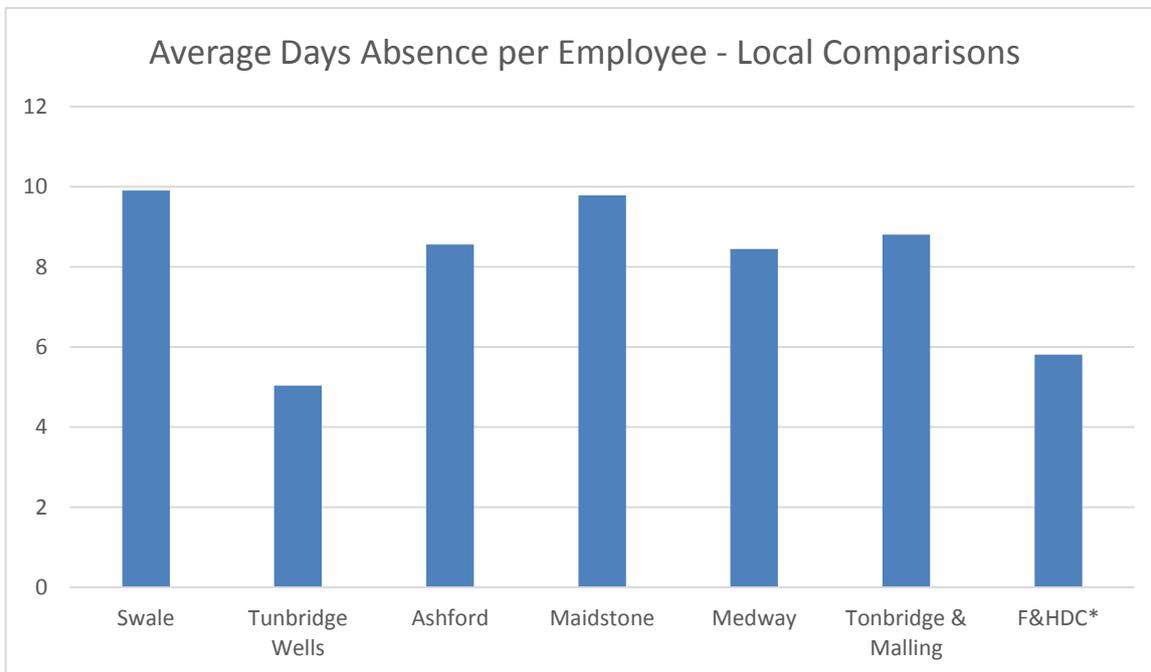
4.3 The national average reported by the CIPD in their 2019 survey is 5.9 days per employee per annum. This is the lowest rate of employee absence recorded by the CIPD, who reported an average of 6.6 days in 2018.

Nationally there is a considerable variance across sectors, with the public sector reporting an average 8.4 days per employee when compared to 4.4 days in the private sector. The national average for local government specifically is 9.6 days per employee.

There is also a correlation between the size of the organisation and absence levels, with larger organisations reporting higher levels of sickness. The national average for an organisation of the council's size is 6.3 days per employee per annum.



4.4 In previous years the council has benchmarked sickness absence rates against other local authorities. Figures for 2018/19 are still to be compiled and will be provided once collated. In order to provide some local comparison for this report, sickness absence rates reported by other Kent local authorities in 2017/18 are utilised in the graph below.



\*For F&HDC the 2018/19 figure has been used. For all other local authorities the figures refer to 2017/18.

4.5 Following completion of the 2014/15 annual report, the HR team have compared how sickness absence broke down across long-term and short-term cases.

Long-term absence is classed as 20 working days or more.

The instances of absence and amount of days lost to sickness will be influenced by fluctuations in staffing levels. The average number of days per employee column therefore gives the most accurate indication of the relative impact that short or long-term absence have had on the organization.

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

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

Year	Short-Term Absences			Long-Term Absences		
	Instances	Days Lost	Ave. Days	Instances	Days Lost	Ave. Days
2014/15	425	1031.5	2.72	36	1788	4.72
2015/16	349	1016.89	2.65	33	1562	4.06
2016/17	375	985	2.62	29	2021.5	5.37
2017/18	345	951.5	2.58	18	957	2.60
2018/19	258	675	1.87	30	1424	3.94

4.6 In 2017/18, 4.9% of our absences were long-term and this equated to 50.1% of the total time lost due to sickness. However, in 2018/19 instances of long-term absence and the amount of working time lost due to these cases have significantly increased. Over the past year 10.4% of absences were long-term and this equated to 67.8% of the total time lost due to sickness.

Unfortunately, over the last year we have experienced some very serious illnesses amongst staff and, sadly, we lost two colleagues to cancer. Nicola Baker passed away in November 2018 and Alistair Ashton in January 2019. A colleague also left the council on ill health retirement grounds after being unable to return to work due to the seriousness of their condition.

4.7 Although long-term absences should be included within the overall picture of absence to give an accurate view, given the long-term severe nature of some of the absences a further calculation was undertaken to remove the 3 most serious cases. This had the impact of reducing the average number of days absence per employee from 5.81 days to 4.64 days.

4.8 As with 2017/18, the biggest reason for long-term absence over the past year was 'stress, depression, fatigue or mental health', which accounted for nearly half of all long term cases and 42% of the total time lost due to long-term absence. There is a mixture of work and personal stress related cases and while the team work to get people back into work as quickly as possible such cases have to be handled appropriately, including ensuring sufficient recovery time, in order to enable an effective return to work. The prominence of this type of absence is not unique to Folkestone & Hythe; the CIPD report 'mental ill health' and 'stress' as the top two most common causes of long-term absence across the country.

We have implemented a number of measures to support employees in the workplace manage mental health and stress related issues:

- Specific Learning & Development sessions on resilience, managing stress and promoting well-being
- Health and wellbeing activities including Zen yoga classes, free swimming at Hythe Pool and discounted gym memberships available through the council's reward platform, 'F&H Rewards'.
- Access to an online wellbeing centre, which includes a range of health and wellbeing advice and resources, and an Employee Assistance Programme available through F&H Rewards. Staff can access counselling services, including face-to-face counselling sessions, and specialist information and support on a range of personal and professional issues that could be affecting them in their work or their health and wellbeing generally, including financial, debt and legal advice. An onsite counsellor was organised through this service for staff working within Revenues and Benefits after the passing of a colleague within the team.
- Promoting world mental health day, which included championing the campaign across the council's social media platforms, providing our staff with focused mental health information, and arranging free lunch time activities aimed at supporting health and wellbeing.
- Utilising our occupational health providers and resources such as HSE risk assessment questionnaires to understand the causes of stress and take targeted actions to mitigate these effectively.

- Promoting flexible working options and other policies that may support work/life balance.
- Undertaking our annual staff survey, which can help us identify organisation wide issues and assess the positive steps taken to address these.

4.9 While over the past year we have seen an increase in long-term sickness cases, short-term absenteeism has reduced for the second year in a row. The average amount of times that people are absent are at their lowest levels since 2010/11, which is as far back as HR have analysed this data.

When considering reasons for short term absence minor illnesses such as viruses (inc. e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea etc) and colds are the most common causes. These are in line with the most common causes of absence across the country.

4.10 Within the Corporate Plan, an outcome by 2020 under 'delivering excellence' is to have sickness absence at less than 7 days per employee per year. In addition to the measures outlined in paragraph 4.8, a number of other HR initiatives are in place to ensure that we continue to meet this target:

- A robust absence monitoring system. The line manager notifies the generic HR email address when an employee is absent from work. This notification includes the reason for absence and the expected duration of the absence. The HR Assistant or HR Officer monitors this email address daily, ensuring swift interventions from the team.
- As the expected duration of absence is included in the notification, HR can monitor the undertaking of return to work interviews, which form an integral part of effective absence management. If HR have not received a copy of the return to work interview as expected reminders are sent to the line manager to ensure they are completed.
- The HR team provide dedicated and focused support to managers, including attending return to work interviews if there is a cause for concern. At these meetings supportive measures may be discussed that enable the employee to return to work earlier than otherwise anticipated or, in the case of frequent absenteeism, attend work on a more regular basis. If appropriate, it is made very clear to the employee that if their absence(s) continue then we may take the decision to withhold occupational sick pay and formal processes may also be instigated.
- The HR Business Partner and HR Manager review absence data and cases with Heads of Service or appropriate lead manager on a monthly basis.
- Alongside a case management approach and providing focused support to line managers, HR also provide general training on managing absence effectively as part of the manager induction process. There will also be a specific session on absence management as part of the 2019/20 Manager Development Programme.
- Occupational Health services continue to be utilised and, through increased contract monitoring, focused KPIs and closer working relationships, we believe we have overseen an increase in quality of medical advice and effective support received as a consequence.
- The HR team continue to promote the council's Employee Assistance Programme available through F&H Rewards.
- The HR team have continued to work with other external organisations and

sources of support, such as Access to Work, and relevant internal departments to improve health and wellbeing and support absence management. For example, Health and Safety have supported on a number of cases where the working environment may have an effect, such as on musculoskeletal and migraine issues. There have also been examples of more creative support, such as working with the Community Services team in order to assist mental and health and wellbeing.

- To reduce short term absenteeism the council offered all staff free 'flu vaccinations at the Civic Centre. Staff unable to attend these vaccination sessions because of their job role (such as staff on duty at Hythe Pool, working in the Grounds Maintenance team in a different part of the district, or working night shifts) were offered vouchers to obtain a vaccination from a local pharmacy.

## **5. APPRENTICESHIPS / TRAINEES**

- 5.1 During 2018/19 we have continued to offer Level 2 apprenticeships in Customer Services and maintained our link with Ashford College for the provision of the apprenticeships.
- 5.2 We have also continued our relationships with local schools and universities offering work placements of 1-4 weeks for local young people in a variety of departments across the Council. Our partnership with Kent University also means that students occasionally attend training events with officers.
- 5.3 The 'Grow Our Own' scheme is continuing with 1 trainee in Planning remaining. The trainee is studying for a degree in Planning with one year of the course remaining.
- 5.4 With the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2016/17 Personnel Committee agreed to shift our focus away from trainees and onto apprenticeships. We have 4 officers currently undertaking a Management Apprenticeship which involves studying for an ILM Level 3 Diploma for Managers. This is a year-long programme and helps develop our talent pipeline in terms of developing aspiring managers. Two participants have nearly completed the programme, with two others having to pause for several months for varying reasons.

In order to enhance their development our management apprentices have been involved in corporate projects (such as elections) and taken on additional management and cross-training responsibilities as well as shadowing budget managers to learn the basics of budget management.

We had 3 external participants on the programme, bringing £15,000 of income into the authority (in addition to the £20,000 we drew down from the digital apprenticeship fund for our own members of staff).

- 5.5 In January 2019 the OD & Engagement Manager negotiated and signed 2 year contracts with Thanet District Council, Canterbury District Council and Dover District Council to be the training provider for their leadership and management apprentices and undertake learning and development work for them. These contracts will bring income into the council, give the OD team greater resilience and will enable us to benefit from economies of scale, offering our own people not only a more diverse range of development opportunities but a diverse learning environment with

participants from other local authorities.

## **6. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

6.1 The Middle Manager and Team Leader development programme was updated to reflect the development needs of people managers (based on their feedback and input from our Senior Management Team). The majority of sessions are an hour long, with some longer, as needed. Topics covered have included:

- Motivation Forum (April '18)
- Supporting staff with uncertainty (April '18)
- 360 feedback (Sept-Oct '18)
- Communications (Nov '18)
- Political Awareness (Nov '18)
- Commercial Awareness (Jan '19)
- Effective Performance Appraisals (Feb '19)
- Risk Management (March '19)

The 2019/20 programme has begun with workshops on competency based interviewing for managers (in line with our Transformation programme). A full programme of development sessions has been scheduled for people managers that involves a number of modules on people management/ HR matters, and also key information for all managers such as understanding the political environment, brand guidelines, risk and budget management. . Managers are also offered ad hoc support and coaching with specific people management related issues.

6.2 Over the course of the 2018/19 year we have offered a variety of development opportunities for staff at all levels via our Learning and Development brochure. Our organisation-wide learning needs analysis gave us a clear steer on the areas people want to learn more about, and as a result the team have run 60-90 minute sessions on:

- Project Management
- Conflict Management
- Personal Resilience
- Managing Stress & Promoting Well-being.

Professional training priorities reflect those of the Corporate Plan and this year have included:

- HMO enforcement (Sept '18)
- Unauthorised Encampments (Oct '18)
- Commercial & Development Appraisal (Nov '18)
- Strategic Communications – managers' responsibilities (Nov '18)
- Better Business Cases (Dec '18)
- Enforcement - animal inspections (Jan '20)

We also fund individual officers to undertake relevant technical training to support performance in their roles, including Project Management Qualifications, a course on copy-writing, and a wide variety of conferences.

Chief Officers, Assistant Directors and Corporate Directors are also offered coaching and bespoke training courses provided by respected organisations such as

universities, Roffey Park Institute and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

- 6.3 Following each development session, a review is undertaken to evaluate the success of the topic. Workshops are evaluated based on the extent to which participants felt that they had increased their competence and confidence in the topic area of the workshop. The majority of participants reported that the workshops have increased their competence and, to a lesser extent, their confidence which develops as they begin to put into practice what has been learnt during the sessions.
- 6.4 e-Learning modules have been promoted to all staff in order to comply with our duties for providing relevant Health & Safety and statutory training. We also continue to offer face to face training on key statutory topics such as Safeguarding, Risk Assessments, First Aid, and being a Fire Warden.
- 6.5 We have continued with the delivery of our recognition scheme. The peer-nominated scheme recognises those who have noticeably displayed behaviours aligned to our core values. We also focus on embedding our core values through the corporate induction.
- 6.6 We conducted an employee engagement survey in January 2019. The results showed an improvement on last year's results with a dramatic increase in Employee Net Promoter score (the extent to which staff would recommend working for FHDC to a friend or former colleague). The result was the best score we have ever had: -8 (up from -37 last year). This increase is reflective of the positive change in culture that has developed over the last 12 months.

We also saw an increase in positive responses to almost all other questions (which are based on the externally validated Gallup Q12 engagement questions). Staff made positive free text comments about: flexible working, change in leadership, social events, ICT plans, recognition scheme. They also highlighted a desire for better ICT systems, more annual leave for new starters, increased internal communications on the Transformation Project and more training and development.

- 6.7 As well as feeding back survey results to staff actions have been developed to improve on these areas. We have put in place a communications and engagement plan for the Transformation programme that will see quarterly compulsory briefing sessions, launch events, video content to explain the change, training, and surveys to check understanding. Our Learning and Development brochure was launched in April 2019 and includes a wide variety of training and development opportunities that map with our new Competency Framework.
- 6.8 As an organisation we have been encouraged by the positive survey results and feel that now is the right time to set ourselves a stretch-target to enhance our employer brand. We are also keen to benchmark ourselves against other employers externally who are recognised for their employment offer. As a result we have started to explore the possibility of entering the Sunday Times top 100 best not-for-profit organisations to work for competition. This is not something we expect to achieve in the next 12-18 months, but are aiming to achieve this in the next 2-3 years so are starting to research requirements, criteria, and how other organisations have been successful in achieving this.

6.9 The OD and Engagement team have also run Away Days for teams to help them review progress and plan for the future. These have included Planning, Strategic Development and the Senior Management Team (which has quarterly meetings including Corporate Directors, Assistant Directors and Chief Officers).

6.10 A comprehensive training programme was arranged for Councillors following the May 2015 elections. Subsequent to this Councillors have undertaken more tailored activities depending on their individual needs. These have included:

- Taxi Licensing training (April 2018)
- Treasury Management training by the Council's treasury advisers (Arling Close)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training (May 2018)

Councillors have points of contact within the HR team and Committee Services team in order for them to be able to request any individual training or conferences.

Councillors also have a specific page on the Learning Zone of the staff intranet. All training presentations are uploaded after each session has taken place to enable those who could not attend to view the materials.

Work started during the 2018/19 year on the new induction and training sessions for elected members following the May 2019 district elections. All councillors elected in May received a training guide detailing the opportunities available to them over the forthcoming months.

## **7. PAYROLL**

7.1 Following Cabinet approval in February 2014, a delegated agreement was signed with Ashford Borough Council to provide our payroll service. The new payroll service went live in November 2014 following several months of implementation meetings designed to build the structure of our organisation and input payroll information and 2 months of parallel runs with KCC in order for both Folkestone & Hythe and Ashford to be confident that every element had been transferred correctly (for example, mileage calculations, overtime calculations etc).

7.2 East Kent Audit have carried out annual audit reviews of the payroll service and placed substantial assurance on the systems of internal controls in operation with no recommendations or actions, with one report stating that 'the success...is reflected by there not being any payroll errors since the payroll went live in November 2014'.

7.3 During 2018/19 the majority of managers and officers have continued to use the self serve options within the payroll system. It is recognised that not all staff are able to access self service, for example the grounds maintenance teams and staff at Hythe pool who continue to work using paper forms, however we have rolled out an option to receive e-payslips to personal email accounts for those staff who preferred that option to having paper payslips.

7.4 The self service element of the iTrent payroll system enables staff to update their own address details, bank details, request annual leave, review their absence history, submit mileage claims and expenses claims for authorisation and to view historical payslips & P60 information. Managers are able to run their own reports on team

structure, leave and absence information as well as approving requests submitted by the staff within their teams.

- 7.5 In addition to the original delegated agreement, Ashford also provide our election payroll.
- 7.6 The delegation arrangement and service level agreement are reviewed annually by the Head of HR and the Head of Personnel at Ashford. During 2018/19 discussions took place to consider the extension of the delegation compared against implementing a stand-alone payroll system for Folkestone & Hythe. Whilst the transformation programme is ongoing at the council, the most sensible option was considered to be an extension of the delegation, however this will be on a year-on-year basis which will be reviewed as new corporate systems are implemented at the council.

## 8. STAFF BENEFITS

- 8.1 For several years now staff have been able to benefit from some locally sourced discounts with businesses within the district, a privilege discount card with MacArthur Glen Designer Outlet in Ashford and wider discounts via the CSSC scheme (Civil Service Sports Council) where for a small fee each month staff could access English Heritage sites at a reduced rate along with discounts locally and nationally for cinema tickets, theatre trips and sporting activities.
- 8.2 In August 2018 we launched a new online staff benefit scheme called F&H Rewards in conjunction with Reward Gateway enabling staff to access a wide range of online and high street shopping instant discounts or cash back opportunities including supermarkets, general retailers, holidays, insurances, cinemas and restaurants.



- 8.3 Since the launch, we now have 327 active users – approximately 87% of staff – with the majority of discounts being obtained in the supermarkets, Halfords, B&Q, Currys PC World and cinemas.
- 8.4 Part of the F&H Rewards Scheme offers a salary sacrifice option to staff using the ‘Cycle to Work’ scheme where they can order a bicycle (and equipment) worth up to £1,000 which is paid by the council upfront to the relevant store with the staff member repaying the amount over 12 months through the payroll system which enables tax savings of between 32-42%.

We currently have 6 members of staff who have taken up this option.

- 8.5 The F&H Rewards platform also has a ‘wellbeing centre’ enabling staff to access our Employee Assistance Programme (provided via BHSF), healthcare cashplans, healthy recipes and meal plans, discounted gym memberships, advice on mental health issues and also impartial financial advice.

## 9. PEOPLE STRATEGY

9.1 As part of the transformation programme, work was undertaken to devise a new People Strategy for the council. The initial work was led by the Chief HR Officer with the HR and OD teams to identify the key themes and actions for the strategy. Once this work had been completed the Corporate Leadership Team and Senior Management Teams were consulted on the content before the Chief HR Officer and Head of Paid Service took the People Strategy out to individual team meetings in order to socialise the content rather than simply publishing the detail in an email or online. This was received extremely well and resulted in some positive feedback which enabled the final document to be produced in conjunction with the Communications team who provided the final version that will be published on our intranet and internet.

9.2 The 6 main themes of the people strategy are:



The final draft of the People Strategy can be seen in **Appendix 2**. The Chief HR Officer is now working with the Communications Team to ensure that the language meets with our tone of voice expectations before formally publishing the document.

## 10. TRANSFORMATION

10.1 During the 2018/19 year the Chief HR Officer and HR Project Officer have continued to support the transformation programme.

10.2 Discussions have taken place with the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), facilitated by the Chief HR Officer, on options around consultation processes, voluntary redundancy, assimilation and recruitment & selection processes in order to form a view for the transformation programme which will be affecting change on a whole-

organisational scale rather than the usual departmental change processes. In addition, network contacts have been maintained with other lead HR officers in authorities who have been through similar programmes in recent years. Regular meetings led by the Chief HR Officer have also taken place with the branch Unison chair, regional Unison officer and regional GMB officer to ensure that the unions are kept up to date with progress towards transformation.

- 10.3 The HR Project Officer also completed redundancy estimates for every member of staff and requested bulk pension estimates for those staff aged 53 and over in order to produce accurate costs so that CLT could have an overall view of the potential costs associated with the transformation programme over the proposed 2 year duration.

10.4 **Behavioural Competency Framework**

In early 2018, the Head of HR commissioned Indigo Training to provide a behavioural psychologist to assist in the creation of a new behavioural competency framework for the council. This would form the basis of any recruitment and selection under the transformation programme and also provide a foundation for the creation of a new performance management framework and links to career development and progression.

- 10.5 Six workshops took place in February 2018, led by Indigo, with over 100 members of staff. The focus of the workshops was to draw out thoughts from the participants on good behaviours that they had seen, bad behaviours & their impact and then the types of behaviours the council would need looking forward. The sessions were split with 2 of them focusing on customer facing services, 2 on professional services and 2 on management.

The output of the workshops led to the proposal of 9 key behaviours linked to our established core values, and these were approved at the end of February by CLT enabling the detailed design to then take place.

- 10.6 Having reviewed a number of different styles of competency framework, it was agreed at CLT that the framework should be designed around 4 levels –
- operational delivery,
  - customer services ,case officers / first line team leaders,
  - specialists / middle managers, and finally
  - lead specialists / senior managers.

The main focus is on positive behaviours but a small section on each page identifies negative indicators.

- 10.7 As the framework developed it was shared with the HR team for additional feedback, senior managers and also with Annette Jones – Unison branch chair, Andy Wilson – Lead HR Specialist at South Hams & West Devon District Council – and Nicky Lodemore at iESE.

Feedback has been as follows:

- Nicky Lodemore shared it with one of iESE's business psychologists who said it was a 'solid and robust framework';
- Andy Wilson said that it was a 'good piece of work' and that the 'language is clear and consistent.....it does feel like it will be robust enough to inform much

more than just an assessment process, but build into future performance management and personal development’; and

- Annette thought it was extremely thorough and was pleased to see that a large number of staff were involved in the design.

10.8 Following final approval at CMT in May 2018, the framework was launched to staff by the same behavioural psychologist in order to provide some consistency of approach. The launch comprised a series of weekly emails introducing behaviours under each of the 4 core values followed by familiarisation sessions, also run by Indigo, to enable staff to identify how they are already displaying many of the behaviours within the new framework.

Finally, as a new performance management framework is designed against new pay structures as part of the programme, further sessions or information cascades will be used to introduce this to staff and managers.

10.9 The behavioural framework has been used during the recruitment and selection of several positions during the 2018/19 year in order to start embedding its use across the council at all levels – for example, area officers, team leaders and the recent selection process for the Communications Manager.

10.10 In order to enable staff to feel comfortable with a competency based interview which focuses primarily on behaviours, we have arranged for Indigo’s chartered psychologist to return in the 2019/20 financial year to upskill staff on how to prepare for the interview and also to train managers on how to lead a competency based interview.

A bank of interview questions for each behaviour at each level has also been designed in conjunction with Indigo and further work is planned later in the year to enable the HR team to write selection assessment exercises that can be assessed within the levels of the framework which will mean that a range of selection methods can be used depending upon the role that is being recruited to in the future, for example a role play exercise or group discussion alongside the standard interview. Managers will also be trained on how to assess these exercises.

10.11 Whilst our primary intention is to assimilate as many members of staff into new posts without the need for competitive processes during the transformation programme, every member of staff is aware that they will be expected to undergo a behavioural assessment (competency based interview) which will focus on the relevant behaviours for the role with the outcomes being used to design a personal development plan for each member of staff providing them with the opportunity to improve on certain behaviours should the need arise. This is considered to be the first step in moving towards a new performance framework based around our behaviours enabling us to embed a high performance culture across the council.

10.12 The behavioural competency framework is attached as **Appendix 3**.

## **11. HR SERVICES IN 2019/20**

11.1 Some of the work already identified for the team during the 2019/20 year includes:

- Development of the behavioural framework to embed competency based

recruitment and selection activity and the initial work on designing a new performance management framework;

- Support to the transformation programme;
- Development of role families to enable clear progression opportunities across the council and to reduce the number of individual job descriptions currently in use;
- Continuation of talent management and succession planning;
- Development of additional employee benefits to enhance reward & recognition;
- Induction and training options for members following the May 2019 elections;
- Development of a new on-line recruitment module linked to JobsGoPublic; and
- Continuation of the ILM internal and external delivery and preparation for a potential OfSTED inspection as we are an approved provider under the apprenticeship levy.

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

### **12.1 Legal Officers Comments (AK)**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **12.2 Finance Officers Comments (LH)**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

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

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

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

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

Andrina Smith – Chief HR Officer

Tel: 01303 853405

Email: [andrina.smith@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:andrina.smith@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

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

None

### **APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1 – HR Services Structure Chart

Appendix 2 – People Strategy

Appendix 3 – Behavioural Competency Framework