

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: HR COMMITTEE

Date and Time: WEDNESDAY, 23 JUNE 2021, AT 9.30 AM*

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA

Enquiries to: Email: andy.rogers@nfdc.gov.uk
Tel: 023 8028 5070

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Members of the public may listen to this meeting live on the Council's website at the following link:-

<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=525&MId=7265&Ver=4>

*Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts, on items within the Committee's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.

Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above no later than 12.00 noon on MONDAY, 21 JUNE 2021.

Bob Jackson
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

This Agenda is also available on audio tape, in Braille, large print and digital format

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 11 June 2020 and 18 March 2021 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

4. HR UPDATE (Pages 3 - 4)

To receive an update on HR matters since the last HR Committee meeting.

5. HR METRICS (Pages 5 - 14)

To receive various workforce related data and statistics.

6. WORKSMART (Pages 15 - 24)

To note and feedback views on a summary of the proposed implementation of the WorkSmart initiative, the next step in the Council's Smarter Working Programme, supported with a HR Policy.

7. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

To:

Councillors:

Councillors:

Edward Heron (Chairman)
Mark Steele (Vice-Chairman)
Hilary Brand
Keith Craze

Kate Crisell
Michael Harris
Maureen Holding
Mahmoud Kangarani

HR COMMITTEE – 23 June 2021

HR UPDATE

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report gives an update on HR matters since the last HR Committee. These matters are in addition to the reactive caseload which includes job evaluations, restructuring advice, grievances, disciplinaries and sickness absence matters.
- 1.2 We also continue to provide Payroll and HR Advisory services to the National Park Authority.

2. FURLOUGH

- 2.1 The Leisure Centres reopened from 12 April, with group exercise classes returning from 17 May.
- 2.2 There are a number of staff still on furlough. These are mostly Activity Leaders, Gymnastics Instructors and Yoga Instructors.

3 TUPE TO FREEDOM LEISURE.

- 3.1 The final TUPE data will be sent to Freedom by 12 June. This will ensure a smooth handover between payrolls as Freedom pay slightly earlier than us on the 15th of the month.
- 3.2 Pension services have asked for two lists to be provided, one with current contributors to the pension scheme and one of current staff who would be eligible to join in the future. These two lists have been provided once and will be provided again just shortly after the transfer.
- 3.3 All current pension contributors will need to have termination forms for each post they hold. This amounts to around 425 forms to be completed. These will be completed as soon as possible after the final pay is processed.
- 3.4 Employee records will be transferred to Freedom in a secure manner. This is likely to be through an encrypted hard drive shortly after the date of transfer.

4. AGENCY FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT – JUNE 21 – MARCH 25

- 4.1 We have undertaken a further tender exercise to review and renew this framework agreement.
- 4.2 There are now 16 agencies in the framework for managers to use for Agency workers/Search and selection. This sets standard terms for ease of use,

secures favourable terms to us, and ensures workers receive necessary parity in relevant terms and conditions.

- 4.3 When looking for agency workers, the framework is to be used in the first instance – if suitable workers cannot be secured then alternatives can be considered.

5. KICKSTART PLACEMENTS

- 5.1 We have recruited to the following 7 kickstart placements :
Data Entry, Waste, Grounds Maintenance, Maintenance (x2), Customer Service, Planning Admin.
- 5.2 Our Waste and Grounds Maintenance placements started in May and are doing really well and enjoying themselves.
- 5.3 The Customer Service, Planning and Data Entry placements start mid-June.
- 5.4 An in-depth training programme has been put in place to assist our placements, as follows:
- A full NFDC induction, including any specific role related induction
 - Role specific ongoing mentoring and skills development will be provided day to day on-the-job with the line manager/mentor
 - A half-hour telephone careers advice call with our Employee Support Line provider
 - Training course on CV writing and interview prep
 - Interview practice 1
 - 'Embracing Equality and Diversity' training session
 - 'Importance of team working and how you fit within a team' (Belbin profile)
 - Time management training
 - Safeguarding training
 - Interview practice 2
- 5.5 All other placements have been advertised for a further month and will close 6th July.

For further information contact:

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EMT – 18TH May 2021
HR COMMITTEE – 23rd June 2021

HR METRICS AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide data on a number of HR issues in order that better informed business decisions can be made within the council.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The HR Metrics report has been used to compare data since 2017 and replaced the annual employee report.

3. WHERE WE NEED TO BE

3.1 As good practice we should regularly benchmark how the organisation is performing on a targeted set of essential HR metrics.

3.2 The data can be used to compare policies and practices with other employers.

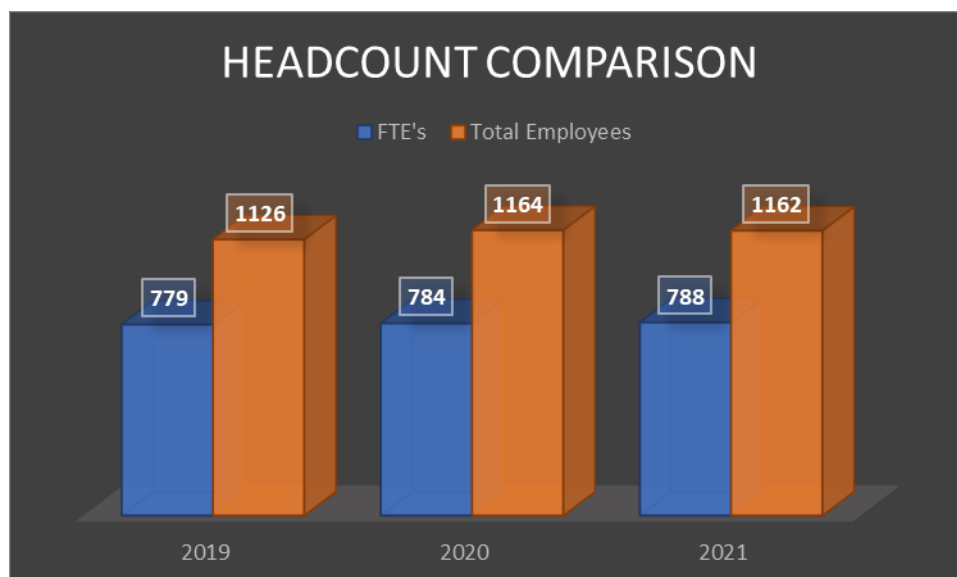
3.3 The results will enable HR to be more proactive in identifying areas for improvement.

4. KEY CORPORATE DATA

4.1 Headcount

4.1.1 The table and chart below compare total employees and FTE's over the past 3 years:

	01/04/2019	01/04/20	01/04/2021
Total Employees	1126	1164	1162
FTE's	779	784	788



4.1.2 It should be noted that these headcount figures include furloughed staff. For seven months of 20/21 most of Leisure Services (just under 400 employees) were furloughed as the Centres were unable to open due to covid restrictions.

4.2 Employee Post Turnover

4.2.1 The table below compares our turnover rates over the past 3 years

Year	Voluntary resignations only	Contract Terminations	Turnover (combined)
18/19	16%	10%	26%
19/20	18%	4%	22%
20/21	9%	3.5%*	12.5%

* plus an additional 10% but only due to closure of casual posts no longer used by the employee

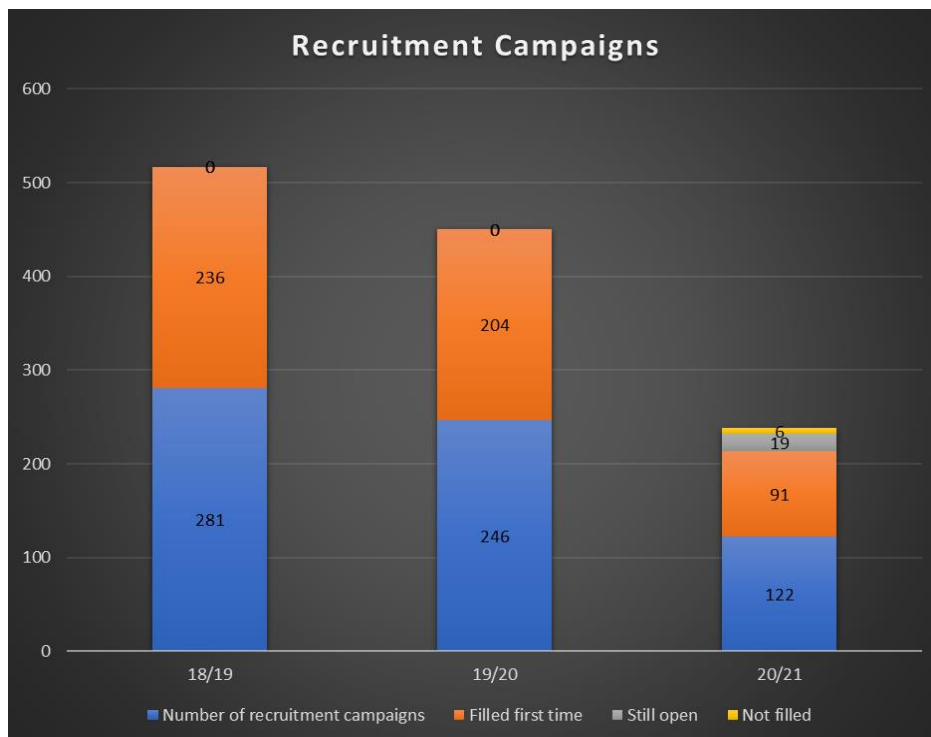
4.2.2 Overall turnover in 2020/21 saw a much lower rate of voluntary resignations, likely due to the uncertainty in the economy. Contract terminations remained similar to last year, including 12 voluntary redundancies in Leisure (this was mainly for those who hold multiple posts, so they are still employed by NFDC in other roles). In addition, as a result of Payroll reviewing posts no longer used in casual and instructor posts, we were able to close those posts. Again, many of these employees remain in NFDC employment in other roles.

4.2.3 Out of 100 new starters on probation during the period, 3 were dismissed during their probationary period. This means that 97% were successful in completing their probation.

4.3 Recruitment & Retention

4.3.1 The table and chart below compare recruitment campaigns over the past 3 years:

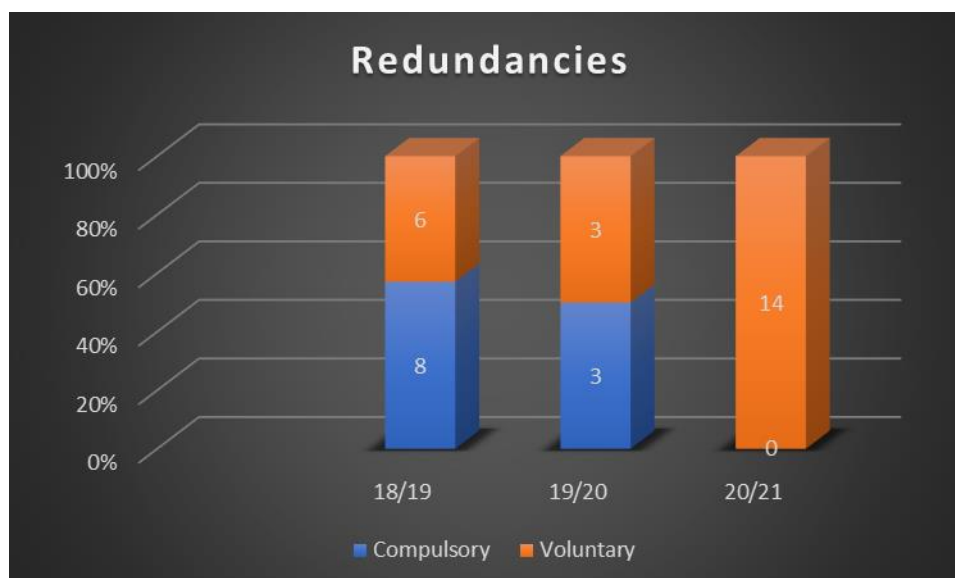
Year	18/19	19/20	20/21
Number of Recruitment campaigns	281	246	122 (including 6 advertised twice, 6 not filled, and 19 where interviews have not yet taken place).
Average days to fill (from closing date to offer made)	9	8	14
% filled first time	84%	83%	94%



4.3.2 There have been fewer vacancies than the previous year, partially due to Leisure being on furlough for most of the year. It has also taken longer to fill posts; we have had significantly more applicants for each role; therefore, the shortlisting procedure has taken longer.

4.4 Redundancies (included in 4.2 above)

Year	Number / % workforce Compulsory	Number / % workforce Voluntary	Number / % workforce Total
18/19	8/0.71%	6/0.53%	14 / 1.24%
19/20	3/0.2%	3/0.2%	6/0.4%
20/21	0	14 / 1.2% (inc 12 from leisure review – as staff were able to opt for other classes these were not compulsory)	14 / 1.2%



4.5 Workforce Data

4.5.1 The % female employees across the Council = 51% - this is the same as last year.

4.5.2 The table below shows a breakdown of age by sex:

Age Range	<21	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	>60	Total
Women	42	75	118	146	142	59	582
Men	44	73	87	129	174	72	579
Unspecified			1				1
Total							1162

4.5.3 The % of top 5% earners that are women = 34 (down by 6% on last year).

4.5.4 The % employees who declared themselves as from an ethnic minority = 1.4% (up by 0.6% on last year), an increase of seven people.

4.5.5 Disability is now self-declared on the HR Hub. 16 people have declared they have a disability. During 20/21 we reminded employees to keep their personal details up to date on the Hub; this may have lead to more accurate information.

4.5.6 A furthermore detailed workforce report will be given once the 2021 UK Census data is available.

5. GENDER PAY GAP

5.1 Due to the COVID pandemic, data is not required until October 2021; an update with comparisons to other organisations will be given after that deadline.

6. PAY BILL INFORMATION

6.1 Pay Bill Overview

6.1.1 The cost of living rise of 2.75% would have contributed to an increase in gross pay bill. It is also notable from the tables at 6.2 below that pension contributions have increased suggesting an increase in employee numbers taking up pension scheme membership.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total Pay Bill (£000's)	27,027	29,902	31,374

6.2 Pay bill breakdown

6.2.1 Paybill information for 2019/20

	£	TOTAL £	Paybill as %
Total Gross Pay	24,437,598.67		
Employers' NI	2,001,803.43		
Employers' Super	3,463,034.66 (14.2% of Gross pay)	29,902,436.76	
General Fund Original Budgeted Expenditure	80,212,130		

HRA Original Budgeted Expenditure	27,876,050	108,088,180	27.66%
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6.2.2 Paybill information for 2020/21

	£	TOTAL £	Paybill as %
Total Gross Pay	25,109,100.59		
Employers' NI	2,129,064.02		
Employers' Super (16.5% of Gross pay)	4,136,698.85	31,374,863.46	
General Fund Original Budgeted Expenditure	77,892,030		
HRA Original Budgeted Expenditure	28,199,700	106,091,730	29.57%

6.3 Additional pay information

6.3.1 The following table details additional pay information compared to last year:

	19/20	20/21
Double increments/ advancements	12 people	2 people
Increments withheld	0 people	2 people
Increment progression (in line with T&C's)	340 posts *	263 posts *
No increment due (top of band, at bar in career grade, on fixed term contract, casual, or started after September)	1334 posts *	1120 posts *
Additional payments (Bonus/Market Supplement/Honorarium)	21 people	7 people

* Please note this relates to posts – some people have a large number of posts, especially in Leisure, so this reflects the actual number of posts held where people either received an increment or not.

6.3.2 In accordance with The Local Government Association guidance on the Government's requirement for reporting remuneration relationships (the ratio between the highest paid employee and the median average earnings across the organisation as a multiple). Based on current salaries for 1st April 2021 this remains the same as last year. It has been calculated as follows:

Chief Executive Remuneration	£121,371
Employees Median average remuneration	£23,214
Ratio	5.22

7. HR CASE MANAGEMENT

7.1 Disciplinary and Grievance Case Management

Disciplinaries

Total number of Disciplinaries in 2018/19 = 17

Total number of Disciplinaries in 2019/20 = 19

Total number of Disciplinaries in 2020/21 = 19 (information below)

Disciplinary 20/21:**Number 19**

Number of S1, S2, S3 (combined figure)	16
Number of these where people appealed the decision	3
Number of these appeals where decision was upheld	2
Number of dismissal hearings (Stage 4)	3
Number of dismissals as a result	2
Number of dismissal appeals (member appeals)	0
Number of dismissal appeals upheld	0
Number of tribunal cases	0

Grievances

Total number of Grievances in 2018/19 = 4

Total number of Grievances in 2019/20 = 9

Total number of Grievances in 2020/21 = 3

Grievances 20/21:	Number 3
Number resolved informally after form submitted	1
Number of Stage 1's	1
Number of S1's not upheld	0
Number of S1's progressed to S2	0
Number of those that progressed to S2 where decision not upheld	0
Number gone straight to Stage 2's	1
Number of straight to S2's where decision not upheld	0

7.2 Other case work

Area of work	Number of cases 19/20	Number of cases 20/21
Occupational Health Referrals	40	25
Maternity	12	10
Paternity	4	4
Shared parental leave requests	0	0

8. KEY HR DATA

8.1 A key statistic for HR is the number of HR people per headcount of the organisation. Note: This figure does not include those employed in the payroll function but does include HR Advisory support to the National Park.

8.2 Ratio of HR people per Headcount

Year	No in HR	Headcount (inc NPA)	Median (Inc NPA)
2019/2020	10	1164 (1,248)	1:116 (1:124)
2020/2021	9	1162 (1,242)	1:129 (1:138)

8.3 This compares very favourably with the results of the XpertHR survey February 2020 of both public and private sectors which shows a median number of employees per HR practitioner as being 1:60 for 2020.

9. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Training during 2020/21

9.1.1 Training spend comparison over the past 2 years:

Year	2019/20	2020/21
Amount and % budget spent	£206,775 77%	£125,812 61%
Spend per employee	£176.50	£108.27

9.1.2 The 2020/21 training spend as a percentage of the overall paybill is 0.40%.

9.1.3 During the past year, some courses were not available, and many courses were run virtually at a reduced cost due to covid conditions. This impacted on an overall reduced spend.

9.1.4 Details of corporate training undertaken for the year to 31/03/2021 are given in the table below:

Course title	Number of sessions
Mental Health Awareness for Managers (external)	3
Wellbeing & Mindfulness techniques	2
Mental Health First Aider	1
Managing employees remotely	3
Brief Bite Mental Health Awareness for managers	4
Brief Bite Embracing Equality & Diversity	4
Brief Bite Homeworking	2
Brief Bite Managing Performance Day to Day	2
Brief Bite Performance Management – when things go wrong	2
Brief Bite Sickness & Absence Management	2
Brief Bite Performance Reviews on the Hub	2
Brief Bite Recruitment & Selection	1
Excel Introduction	8
Excel Intermediate	4
Dealing with difficult behaviour and situations	1
Developing your leadership brand	1
Delegation and Motivation	1
DEVELOP Management Coaching course	1

9.1.5 Additionally, the council currently has 25 e-learning modules which employees are required to complete (if relevant to their role) on a regular basis. The cost associated with this relates to the down time the employees spend completing the modules. This is not currently logged as a cost to the authority. If the authors of the modules detail a renewal date within the e-learning set up, the employee and manager receive an alert from the Hub. Authors of e-learning modules have been offered a report created by ICT so that they can monitor take up and renewals across the whole council.

9.1.6 The HR Hub now details all training undertaken by employees; records can be viewed by manager and employee, as well as the HR Team. Corporate training course dates and details are loaded into the system and employees can request to

book themselves on, with workflows to manager for approval. Employees can also log courses they have been on externally, again with an approval workflow.

- 9.1.7 During the past year, we were keen to provide some coaching training, and two options were considered by Service Managers; a two-day course, or a set of 6 hour long sessions over a couple of months, half taught virtually and half self-guided sessions. Consensus was to go with the 6 sessions, which was called the DEVELOP programme. 17 managers attended the sessions, and feedback was mixed; those new to management found it the most useful but it was quite a narrow programme, when perhaps their requirements were broader management development skills. More experienced managers did not feel it added much new or different content or perspective.
- 9.1.8 In the coming year, as staff return to the office in different capacities, and there is a mix of remote and office working, part of the training focus will be on virtual training for managers to manage this effectively.

9.2 Apprenticeships

- 9.2.1 We have two employees on Apprenticeship contracts with us this year.
- 9.2.2 There are 10 established employees undertaking training through the apprenticeship route in Operational Middle Management Level 5, Level 3 Business Administration, Level 6 Degree in Building Control, Business Improvement Technician Level 3, and a Paralegal Level 3 apprenticeship. These will be completed by October 2021, except the Business Improvement which ends in September 2022 and the Degree which ends 2023.
- 9.2.3 Three of these apprenticeships started within the 20/21 year, the remainder were already previously in place.
- 9.2.4 This means we have 1.02% of our workforce in training apprentice schemes, the Government set target 'to aim for' of 2.3% (equates 27 people). It is important to remember that all apprentices are required to take 20% of their working week for completion of the apprenticeship and we are careful to consider if the content of any apprenticeship programme is fit for the purpose required.
- 9.2.5 Management development continues to be a high priority for the Council, and where appropriate, apprenticeships are utilised to develop our potential and current supervisors and managers.

9.3 Work Experience

- 9.3.1 Due to the restrictions in place during the COVID pandemic, unfortunately we have not been able to provide any work experience placements during the last year. This will be reviewed if possible, once working arrangements change.

9.4 Kickstarts

- 9.4.1 The Council has been keen to support the Government's Kickstart scheme, aimed at 16 – 24-year olds currently on universal credit, to provide 6-month work placements. Selected candidates are paid their national minimum wage, and 25 hours per week per placement is funded by the Government (including NIC and auto enrolment costs).
- 9.4.2 We receive an additional £1500 payment per placement to fund training for them. We will provide employability training (covering interview techniques and time management, team working) as well as on the job training whilst they are with us.

- 9.4.3 We have advertised for 18 placements across most service areas, some at 25 hours, some at 37 per week; these are
- Admin Assistant Corporate
 - Admin Assistant Land Charges
 - Admin Assistant Planning
 - Civic Building Assistant
 - Street Scene Assistant
 - Enforcement Assistant (2 placements)
 - Workshop Assistant
 - Customer Services Assistant
 - Data Entry Assistant
 - Maintenance Assistants (6 placements)
 - Open Spaces Assistant
- 9.4.4 So far, we have successfully filled the Waste Assistant, 3 Maintenance Assistants, the Customer Service and Data Entry roles.
- 9.4.5 The other placements have been readvertised utilising Facebook, and our Recruitment Team are working to promote these in accessible ways. This includes a YouTube promotional video created by the Team.
- 9.4.6 The 6-month placements can start any time up to December 2021.
- 9.4.7 Our aim is that, if no suitable roles are available for them to apply for internally at the end of their placement with us, they will have the skills to be able to secure work elsewhere successfully.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report – furloughed staff were managed under the furlough scheme.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

12. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None

13. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Training and development opportunities are offered equally to all our staff. Recruitment of Kickstart placements are referred by Work Coaches from the Job Centres. Managers are encouraged to attend our Recruitment & Selection Brief Bite which covers issues such as equality in recruitment and unconscious bias.
- 13.2 All staff are required to complete the mandatory eLearning packages, can be accessed on Forestnet or with different links from personal devices. Where this is not possible, face to face training is provided.

14. EMT COMMENTS

- 14.1 EMT note the contents and are supportive of the report.

15. EMPLOYEE FORUM AND EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

Employee Side Liaison Comments:

15.1 It was suggested by the Panel that a breakdown of age and gender was provided as part of the report. This is given in section 4.5.2.

16. Employee Side Comments:

16.1 None received.

17. RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 That the HR Committee notes the contents of the report.

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HR COMMITTEE - 23 June 2021

INTRODUCING WORKSMART

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the members of HR Committee note the content of the report and feedback any comments on the proposed WorkSmart initiative for onward reporting to Cabinet and Council.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides the committee information on the proposed implementation of the WorkSmart initiative, the next step in the Council's Smarter Working Programme, supported with a HR Policy.
- 2.2 It is accepted that changes to the policy may have to be made due to external factors such as the NJC pay negotiations which has a homeworking element this year.
- 2.3 It is also accepted that while the council is supportive of this approach to flexible working there will need to be measures in place to ensure that productivity is retained. Should this not be the case then the council reserves the right to revert back to office based working arrangements.

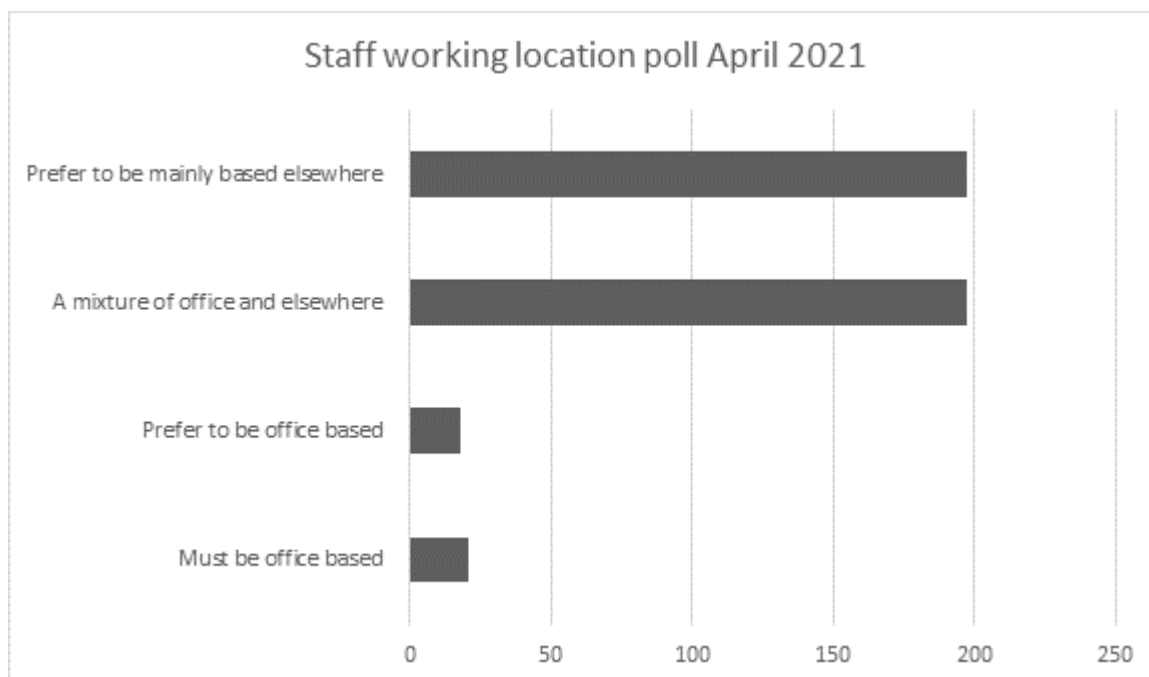
3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The significant majority of the Council's c400 office-based employees work in roles that have been working from home since the middle of March 2020. WorkSmart introduces a policy to allow staff to continue to work from home or an alternative base. Working from an alternative base is not possible for our Operational, Leisure and field-based employees
- 3.2 The investment made by the Council in recent years in its ICT equipment and infrastructure meant the Council was in an excellent position to respond to the immediate challenge faced by enforced home working in March 2020. In addition to the Laptops and Virtual Public Network the Council has in place to enable remote access, the Council provided ICT bundles consisting of a Keyboard, Mouse and Monitor to ensure employees they have the equipment that they require to work from home effectively. In addition employees have the opportunity to recycle surplus office equipment such as chairs and small filing cabinets.
- 3.3 The mainstay of the WorkSmart Policy for staff is a commitment from the Council to support officers to work from home or from another location for part of their working week, in line with the business needs of the service.

4. INTRODUCING THE WORKSMART PROGRAMME FOR EMPLOYEES

- 4.1 A couple of months into lockdown, an Employee Survey of all employees was carried out. In particular we wanted to assess how they were coping with their new working arrangements at home and in general we received a lot of positive feedback. Despite all the concerns and upheaval caused by enforced home-working, many employees welcomed being able to work from home. Those who were homeworking were liking the fact they were commuting less and that they could work more flexibly around childcare and they said they felt supported and trusted and that they enjoyed having autonomy over their work.

- 4.2 There were some staff that did feel isolated and were looking forward to a return to the office.
- 4.3 Most staff at that early stage said they would welcome a hybrid approach.
- 4.4 A second staff poll was run in April 2021, 12 months after the initial move to remote working. The results clearly favour a remote / in-office mix (i.e. 'Hybrid'), or a pure remote working pattern.



- 4.5 This feedback favouring hybrid and remote working has prompted the council to consider whether these arrangements could become the "new normal", when lockdown ends and employees are able to return to their offices.
- 4.6 The mainstay of the WorkSmart programme would be a commitment from the council to support employee's, with the managers agreement, to work from home or from another location for part of their working week. The scheme would be flexible but there would always be occasions when there would be a need to come into the office for meetings or to collaborate with colleagues on a scheduled remote working day. Agreement from employees to this element of the programme would be essential.
- 4.7 With their managers agreement employees would be able to work flexibly outside of the current 'core hours'. There would be some exceptions that are role dependent, for example where there is a need to be available to answer customer queries during normal office hours. Flexible working arrangements would be managed through agreements with line managers and would still be subject to a regular pre-determined work pattern. Normal working hours would be expected to be between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday.
- 4.8 Managers will arrange flexible working locally - and they will be responsible for ensuring they are getting the business outcomes they need and are providing a good level of service with sufficient cover.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Managers will be required to maintain frequent contact with their team members and are encouraged to maintain team collaboration and communication through regular virtual 'touch point' meetings and on-site team meetings and briefings.
- 5.2 Managers will be responsible for setting targets for individuals and discussing their performance expectations. Regular constructive feedback will be essential to ensure employees remain both engaged and positive in terms of their performance.
- 5.3 Where managers become concerned over an employee's performance or contribution to the team then initially this should be addressed by more regular contact. If no improvement is made then a more formal approach may be required.
- 5.4 Managers will keep track of overall and individual team performance and will regularly feedback to their Executive Head.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Although there may be no direct financial implications, indirectly the ability to offer employees the flexibility of hybrid working may well lead to greater retention rates and therefore reduced recruitment costs.

7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Moving to a hybrid way of working enables the Council to make a good contribution towards its sustainability agenda.
- 8.2 Employee travel (not including commuter or roundage miles) in 2019/20 was in the region of 480,000 miles. A reduction in travel is anticipated from employees who have a new flexible working arrangement in place, which could generate financial and time benefits.
- 8.3 A hybrid way of working could therefore also lead to a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.
- 8.4 The Council is also aiming to discourage mass use of printing in line with its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint.

9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Any employee will be able to request flexible working which would enable them to spend some of their normal working week off site.
- 9.2 All applications will be considered taking into account the needs of the business and the customers

10. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There will be strict requirements placed on employees who wish to work off site to ensure the confidentiality of data. This will apply equally to paper and electronic data.

11.0 EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

11.1 Hybrid Working Proposal paper

- The paper implies in item 3.3 and other areas throughout the document that this approach will enable staff to work part of their working week at another location outside of the civic centre. However, it also implies that some staff might work all of their time in that way. Further clarification is therefore needed.
- The paper does not have sufficient detail around the process for making a Work Smart request, timescale for implementation or any right of appeal if a request is denied. Equally, it does not say whether successful requests are time limited or subject to review
- The paper also fails to mention the implications that any such changes might have on individual contracts of employment. This needs further clarity

11.2 Hybrid Working Policy paper

- It would be useful to have a better understanding of how staff will be monitored when working at home to ensure they are not working outside of the 8am-6pm parameters
- In our view the council should reconsider its stance on not making any contribution towards internet costs. I am aware of other employers who have made such contributions and we would like to discuss this further before any final decision is made
- On the issue of H&S, it would be useful to have some further information as to how the DSE assessment of a homeworking work station is to be undertaken
- In relation to insurance, the council will have a responsibility to insure its own equipment, albeit that it might be in someone's private home. This needs to be clarified. Furthermore, the council also retains the responsibilities for employer liability when it comes to accidents in the home that occur whilst the individual is carrying out work duties. I would therefore appreciate some further consideration on this point

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

WorkSmart Policy

WORKSMART - Hybrid Working Policy

We promote flexible working for all staff and will agree to an employee working partly or wholly from home or an alternative location (herein referred to collectively as 'off-site') as opposed to solely from an NFDC workplace, where appropriate.

Individual requests for hybrid working will depend on whether or not your work can be done off-site effectively. We cannot agree to all requests because every job is different, service demands are different and every employee is different.

An integral part of the decision as to whether agreement can be reached between the Manager and employee on the flexible working request will have regard to what is happening across other service areas. Requests for flexible working will not be considered in isolation but on a corporate basis.

If making a request to work off-site you should consider whether or not you have the necessary organisational and time-management skills; the ability to work without direct supervision; and are able to cope with the potentially conflicting demands of work and family.

This policy outlines the working arrangements that will apply when a flexible working request has been approved. All requests granted will initially be for a period of 12 months. A review will then be undertaken before any further request is agreed to. Should there be concerns about productivity then meetings must be arranged during the trial to discuss this. If the issues cannot be overcome then the trial may be halted.

Hours of work

Off-site workers are not subject to fixed hours and subject first and foremost to the needs of the business and the agreement of their manager, are free to perform the agreed number of hours/work at times that suit them. The flexible working agreement would include details of the working pattern agreed. These should typically be between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

We would expect all staff to be in regular contact with their supervisor and team colleagues when working off-site.

Where employees are required to be accessible to members of the public then arrangements need to be put in place to accommodate this. Where members of the public are unable or unwilling to use devices to facilitate a virtual meeting then alternative arrangements need to be made which will include face to face meetings at an NFDC workplace.

All employees must ensure they take adequate rest breaks, as set out by the Working Time Regulations 1998:

- take a break of at least 20 minutes if working a period of 6 hours or more;

- ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours; and
- have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

All employees working off site will be required to complete a DSE Assessment of their off site set up and this will need to be submitted as part of their application for flexible working. The Council has appropriate workspace in its office locations for any employer whose home DSE assessment fails to provide a suitable workspace.

Visits to the employer's premises

Any staff that work off-site are required, on request, to attend the NFDC workplace for purposes such as, but not limited to; training, performance assessments, collaborative work and team briefings. In the event of any ICT issues experienced you may be asked to attend the NFDC workplace to provide ICT staff physical access to your device. The dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance. Travel to and from the NFDC workplace will be in the employees own time.

Equipment and materials

We will provide and maintain all ICT equipment and materials necessary for you to work from home. It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of such equipment and materials.

Specifically, we will provide:

- a laptop computer;
- Screen
- Keyboard / mouse

On termination of your employment for any reason, we will have the right to visit your home at an agreed time and retrieve all equipment, materials and documents belonging to us if you are unable to bring them back to the office yourself.

Telephone and internet accounts

You will pay the costs for all telephone and internet connections in your home and these must be of a suitable quality to ensure you can carry out your work with maximum productivity. If a suitable stable internet connection is not available then you will be unable to work from that location.

We will pay all charges on any mobile phone provided by us, with the strict proviso that it must be used only for work-related purposes. The employee should be aware of their data usage on their NFDC device and speak to ICT immediately if they have concerns about data limits.

Mileage Claims

On days that you work from home / off-site you will be able to claim mileage for any visits undertaken using your home / off-site location as your base.

On days when you work in the NFDC workplace – any mileage claimed should start using the NFDC workplace as your base starting point.

Employees are responsible for planning their days sensibly to minimise travel and downtime during work hours.

Stationery Printing and Postage

If you require stationery to complete your job whilst working off-site, then this should be collected from the NFDC workplace.

There will be no reimbursement of printing or postage costs. The Corporate Admin team offer a printing and postal service and this can be used via the online eform available on Forestnet.

Security

You must not allow members of your family or third parties to access or use our equipment.

Employees who work off-site are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with our business secure at all times. Specifically, those that work from home are under a duty to:

- keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used;
- keep all documentation under lock and key at all times except when in use; and
- use a unique password for the computer and any other digital devices.

Further, the computer and other equipment provided by us must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose. All employees working off-site must continue to adhere to the ICT Security Policy; http://forestnet/media/1111/ICT-Security-Policy/pdf/ICT_Security_Policy_-_New.pdf

Health and safety issues

We are legally obliged to ensure the health and safety of homeworkers in the same way as office-based staff. We are therefore required to ensure that:

- all equipment is safe;
- all articles and substances are handled and stored safely;
- an assessment of your workstation is conducted;
- information and training on the safe use of equipment, including display screen equipment, is provided; and
- relevant risk assessments are carried out.

All employees who work off-site have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by us from time to time.

Insurance

The homeworker is responsible for checking that all home and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact that they work from home. Any additional costs would need to be met by the employee.

Mortgage or rental agreements

You are responsible for checking applicable mortgage or rental agreements to ensure you are permitted to work from home, and for obtaining any permissions necessary to work from home.

Requests to work from home or an alternative location

Any employee who wishes to work from home or an alternative location should make the request under the council's Worksmart Flexible Working Procedure. In general, most requests should be made with a view to spending a proportion of a working week off-site, and a proportion at an NFDC workplace. Your manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the feasibility of your flexible working request within 28 days. If you do not accept the outcome of that meeting, you have the right to request a review be carried out by your Service Manager.

It is our policy to view such requests in a positive light and we will, whenever it is possible and practicable, agree to the request. You must however be in a position where your productivity will not be affected by working off site.

This formal application is made under the Councils Worksmart Policy to apply for flexible working.
Part of the assessment for this application will be based on corporate needs.
Applications are not assessed in isolation.

Employee name:	Job Title:
Manager:	Section:
<p><i>I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern/arrangement that is different to my current contractual working arrangements. This is your working pattern before the Covid Pandemic. This may include hours of work or work location. Hours of work requested should be between 8am and 6pm unless there is an operational requirement for alternatives.</i></p> <p>Please complete a DSE Assessment form for your off site set up and submit it as part of your flexible working request.</p>	
Describe your current* (*pre-covid) working pattern (days/hours/times worked):	
Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked): Does your proposed work pattern meet with any requirements as communicated with you by your manager? Yes / No / Not Applicable	
Impact of the new working pattern – please detail how you think this change to your working arrangement will affect the Council, the public, the service you provide and your	

colleague(s). Please detail how you believe the impact can be dealt with.

*In signing this form, you are confirming that you believe your new requested work pattern will have **no** detrimental impact on your ability to carry out your work with the same effectiveness as if you were in the office and accept that your performance and output will be subject to more regular review.*

Signed

Date

Once signed please send the original to your Manager and a copy to Human Resources

Note to the Manager:

A meeting should be arranged within 28 days following the receipt of this application.

Initial approvals should be given for no more than 12 months duration and then reviewed.

If applications are not approved employees have the right of appeal through their Service Manager.