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Tuesday 20 June 2023

To: Chair – Councillor William Jackson-Wood  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Sally Ann Hart  
Members of the Employment and Staffing Committee – Councillors  
Anna Bradnam, Sunita Hansraj, Mark Howell, Richard Stobart and  
John Williams

Quorum: 3

Substitutes: Councillors Heather Williams, Sue Ellington, Graham Cone, Bunty Waters,  
Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Peter Fane, Ariel Cahn,  
Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, Peter Sandford and Bridget Smith

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Employment and Staffing Committee**, which will be held in at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **Wednesday, 28 June 2023 at 10.00 a.m.**

Members are respectfully reminded that when substituting on committees, subcommittees, and outside or joint bodies, Democratic Services must be advised of the substitution ***in advance of*** the meeting. It is not possible to accept a substitute once the meeting has started. Council Standing Order 4.3 refers.

Yours faithfully  
**Liz Watts**  
Chief Executive

Requests for a large print agenda must be received at least 48 hours before the meeting.

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2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
3.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	<b>5 - 8</b>
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5.	<b>HR Recruitment, Retention and Absence Data for May 2023</b>	<b>33 - 36</b>



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# Agenda Item 3

## South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on  
Tuesday, 2 May 2023 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sally Ann Hart – Chair  
Councillor Anna Bradnam – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Sunita Hansraj Mark Howell  
Richard Stobart John Williams

Officers: Patrick Adams Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Helen Cornwell HR Business Partner  
Jeff Membery Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate  
Services  
Liz Watts Chief Executive

Councillor Bridget Smith was in attendance, by invitation.

Councillor Cllr Daniel Lentell was in attendance remotely, by invitation.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received Councillor William Jackson-Wood.

Councillor Anna Bradnam was elected unopposed as Vice Chair for the meeting.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

None.

### 3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the penultimate sentence of the main paragraph of minute 5 to read "... with workers in the waste depot making up a large proportion of lower quartile staff."

### 4. Public Question

Mr Daniel Fulton congratulated the Chief Executive on her PhD regarding the working of a four-day week but he asked whether this information should have been shared publicly and he questioned why it had been kept secret. The Chair stated that this question differed from the statement provided and that Mr Fulton would receive a written answer.

### 5. Results of the Four-Day Week Trial and Next Steps

Councillor John Williams presented this report on the results of the four-day week trial, which proposed that the Committee recommended that Cabinet agree

to extend the trial up to March 2024. He stated that the trial demonstrated that a four-day week could assist the Council in the recruitment and retention of staff, which would reduce the cost of agency staff. He reported that there had been no decline in performance due to the four-day week. He corrected a recent report in the press by stating that the Council would remain open for five days a week.

The Chief Executive thanked the Bennett Institute for Public Policy for their extensive evaluation of the Council's performance during the four-day week trial.

Councillor Mark Howell stated that it was not unusual for senior officers to undertake post-graduate courses on their own time and then apply the knowledge they obtained from those studies to their work for the Council. He concluded that the Committee should question members of the Cabinet on the Council's proposed policies.

Councillor Daniel Lentell asked if the fact that the Chief Executive was undertaking a PhD was potentially withheld from Members, the public and officers and whether the Committee had been aware of it. Councillor Lentell also asked if a political decision had been taken to decide not to disclose the Chief Executive's PhD to the public and if so whether the Committee would support an investigation into that decision. Councillor Lentell was promised a written response to his questions.

#### **Minor amendment – cost of agency staff**

The Committee noted that the number "£2,065.000" for the annual cost of agency staff in paragraph 12 of the report should be "£2,065,000". Jeff Membery explained that the Council was competing with other authorities and the private sector in the recruitment of officers in posts that were hard to fill, hence the high cost of agency staff. It was hoped that by retaining staff through the four-day week, these costs would be reduced.

#### **Responding to Members' queries**

Jeff Membery stated that there was no specific performance indicator for responding to queries from Members, beyond the general expectation that either an answer would be provided, or an explanation why this was not possible, within 48 hours. He encouraged members to use the online form, as this would allow questions to be tracked.

#### **Assessing impact of the trial**

Nina Jorden, from the Bennett Institute for Public Policy, explained that they had used the Council's Key Performance Indicators to assess the authority's performance during the trial period. She suggested that staff could be trained on how to make better use of digital tools to improve their productivity. It was noted that assessing the productivity of staff, if the trial period was extended, would require input from managers and was not a straight forward task.

#### **Developing teams**

Jeff Membery explained that a toolkit was being produced for managers to assist them in leading their teams. It was noted that all teams were being encouraged to meet up at least once every two weeks.

**Waste Service**

Councillor Mark Howell expressed concern that the report on the Shared Waste Service had not been included in the agenda. He concluded that he could not vote on the proposed recommendation to Cabinet without this information. The Chief Executive explained that the decision had been taken to send the report on the Waste Service, which included a review of the growth of the service, to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. The report to this Committee was on the Four-Day week desk-based trial and Cabinet would consider both reports.

Jeff Membery explained that the proposal was to trial a four-way week in the waste service which would require officers to work an extra half hour each day.

The Chair stated that there were no officers from the Waste Service present and the Committee would continue its discussion on the four-day week trial.

A vote was taken and, with the exception of Councillor Mark Howell who did not vote, all members of the Committee

**Agreed** to recommend that Cabinet:

- A) Approves an extension of the trial up until March 2024**, in order to assess the impact on recruitment and retention, with regular reports on progress being submitted to Employment & Staffing Committee during 2023/24 and a final report to Cabinet and Council at the end of the extended trial period.
- B) Notes the position of Cambridge City Council regarding the Shared Planning Service trial extension** (to be provided on 11 May, but not available at the time this report was published) and, should the City Council agree to proceed with the trial extension, Cabinet ensure equivalent reporting arrangements are established in order to provide Cambridge City Council with appropriate oversight arrangements regarding the Shared Planning Service.
- C) Approves a three-month trial for Facilities Management** colleagues at South Cambs Hall, with a report being presented to Employment & Staffing Committee at the end of the trial.

**6. Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 28 June 2023 at 2 pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.**

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# Agenda Item 4



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Employment and Staffing Committee 28 June 2023
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	John Williams
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Jeff Membery

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## Review of hybrid policy for Employment Committee

### Executive Summary

- Since Covid, hybrid working has become a staple offer from employers in the private sector and public sector alike. It is valued by employees and has become a significant factor in people deciding which organisations they would be willing to work for. Having a version of hybrid working at the Council is therefore important for attracting and retaining staff, and appears to deliver benefits for customers, members and other partners whilst also supporting the green agenda.
- The review of the current arrangements at South Cambridgeshire shows that our policy is still fit for purpose. However, we need to continue to monitor the impacts of the arrangements and ensure that we take action to maximise the benefits of the policy whilst mitigating any potentially negative impacts.

### Key Decision

- No

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee;

- **Note** the findings of the review and the resulting action plan.
- **Make recommendations** for any further actions to be added to the plan
- **Agree** for a further update in a years' time, highlighting progress against the action plan and including a further exercise to obtain the updated views of members at that time.

## Reasons for Recommendations

It is considered that the current approach allows flexibility for SCDC to adapt for different aspects of the workforce whilst retaining the flexibility for individuals with the opportunity to achieve the benefits.

## Details

### Objectives and success of a hybrid culture

According to the CIPD its estimated that as many as 4 million people have changed careers due to a lack of flexibility at work, and around 2 million have left a job in the last year for the same reason.

*“Organisations that keep harking back to tradition, versus those that embrace technology and the shift that has been made to flexible working practices, will rapidly lose ground in commercial competitiveness and the battle for talent.”*

Steve Threader, managing director, reward and benefit consulting at Gallagher’s Benefits and HR Consulting Division in the UK

When looking at the wider impact of hybrid working, employers, according to the CIPD, are most likely to say it has brought a positive impact for:

- ability to recruit from a wider geography in the UK - for SCDC this means to avoid high cost of living in South Cambridgeshire by recruiting outside area;
- ability to recruit a more diverse workforce - in our recent wellbeing survey both women and employees with a disability or long-term health condition are more likely to say a flexible working pattern and ability to work remotely are important to them;
- attraction and retention of talent - flexible working is pivotal when looking for new roles. Almost a fifth (19%) of employees are currently looking for a new job. When thinking about a new role, 71% say being able to have a flexible working pattern is important to them and 69% say the ability to work remotely is important. Employees also highlight flexible working (53%) and remote working (53%) as key when considering a new job, only overtaken in importance by pay and benefits (77%) (CIPD);
- employee financial wellbeing by reducing travel costs from commuting and attending meetings, a reduction in commuter travel also supports the green agenda
- Increase in net productivity:

**Table 1: Impact of hybrid working on an organisation's productivity and efficiency (%)**

Source of support	2023	2021	2020
Has increased productivity	38	41	33
Neither increased nor decreased productivity	49	41	38
Has decreased productivity	13	18	23
Net productivity score	+25 n=1,209	+23 n=1,209	+10 n=1,209

46% of employees reported feeling more productive working in a hybrid way (CIPD). In SCDC statistical analysis by the Bennet institute for the 4DW did not highlight any statistical variances in performance data over the period assessed (January – March 2023).

- Legislative requirements – there are proposed changes to employment legislation allowing all employees to be able to request flexible working from day 1 of employment (an increase to the statutory current provision.)

## **SCDC staff opportunities and challenges**

The results of the recent wellbeing survey conducted for the 4DW show an increase in wellbeing since its inception and whilst we can't benchmark this against result from before hybrid working was introduced, there are some clear wellbeing benefits to working from home alongside flexibility. We need to ensure that this is not outweighed by considered challenges, highlighted below; and how we overcome these.

Those mostly working in the office scored lowest overall, and had most areas of concern, but this was a much smaller cohort, and so the results are heavily weighted by individuals. They also potentially were going to the office to get social support.

For colleagues declaring a disability, results to the survey were low across the board and despite the introduction of the Disability passport scheme and the work around disability confidence there is still more engagement to be completed to see what further support can be provided.

## **Views of Members**

Members were surveyed to get feedback on hybrid working; nine members completed the survey, with key issues set out below:

Benefits identified:

Flexibility, less travel and petrol, efficiency, wider participation, able to combine caring responsibilities.

Issues identified:

Reliable ICT (teams) and technical training

Considerations of presentations for hybrid meetings and access needs to be equal if meetings are hybrid.

In terms of interactions with officers, members felt that it increased accessibility and allowed officers to spend more time doing their jobs and provided increased flexibility. Issues raised were that more informal conversations can be difficult and harder to build.

78% reported no issues with response times from officers; on occasion there appeared to be issues with calling and getting the right officer; half of members felt the relocation to the first floor for all officers seemed to have helped.

When asked on a scale 1-5 if it was a positive to increase opportunities for recruitment and retaining staff the average score was 3.78 with all councillors thinking it was significant to some degree

## **Customer impact**

Performance data is monitored quarterly, and significant variances responded to in real time; performance data can be affected by external influences as well as internal, so any root causes need to be investigated

Statistical analysis by the Bennet institute for the 4DW did not highlight any statistical variances in performance data over the period assessed. Moving to more digital channels increases flexibility for the customer to contact at a time and place to suit them.

Moving to hybrid working for the contact centre has not resulted in a drop in performance and a recent mystery shopper exercise in the contact centre aligned with performance results of our KPI's. A summary of the mystery shopper exercise is set out in Appendix C.

## **Opportunities /challenges for SCDC**

Areas raised in the CIPD survey are similar to areas identified for SCDC where perceived negative impact for:

- employee connection to organisation purpose - we need to understand and share widely the organisation purpose, shared vision and define our culture/core values and goals
- ability of managers to lead teams effectively - training and toolkit for managers on managing hybrid workers, assess the results of the wellbeing survey to identify any problem areas
- Equality access – ensure equality in access to development – career support, L&D and inclusion and consistency across application of the policy to ensure it meets the needs of different teams

- the culture of the organisation – undertake a review of new starters and how we induct them – place emphasis on what is the SCDC brand and how do they know they work for South Cambs and this should be followed through our performance framework
- Building trust with the people you spend the most time with – how can we collaborate in different ways – what are the new opportunities to work together
- Getting staff back in the office – leadership team have already recommended that teams meet in the office twice a month Isolation issue - continued emphasis on wellbeing and support – the office is now a much more user-friendly experience with teams based all in one area.

## **Policy**

In research from the CIPD only 45% have a formal policy, 24% an informal approach; having a policy that is flexible allows SCDC to adapt for different aspects of the workforce whilst retaining the flexibility for individuals.

The worker profiles have not been implemented organisation wide but still remain fit for purpose should it be helpful for managers or workers to understand how the policy affects them.

## **Options**

1. Note the findings of the review and the resulting action plan.
2. Make recommendations for any further actions to be added to the plan

## **Implications**

- In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

## **Staffing**

This policy impacts the recruitment and retention of staff

## **Consultation responses**

- Member survey

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **Being green to our core**

- Reducing commuter mileage contributes to a lower carbon footprint of the workforce

### **A modern and caring Council**

- Having a successful hybrid working policy will contribute to SCDC being an employer of choice

## **Background Papers**

[Flexible and hybrid working practices in 2023 | CIPD](#)

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Action Plan

Appendix B: Hybrid Work Policy

Appendix C: Summary of mystery shopper exercise in the contact centre

## **Report Author:**

Helen Cornwell – HR Service Manager

Telephone: (01954) 713288

## **Appendix 1**

### Action Plan

- Training and toolkit for managers on managing hybrid workers – ensure equality in access to development – career support, L&D and inclusion and consistency across application of the policy to ensure it meets the needs of different teams – High
- Digital skills audit and review IT software support, Ensure technology meets our needs - High
- Review of New starters and how we induct them – place emphasis on what is the SCDC brand and how do they know they work for South Cambs. Include in the review how we build Cllr – officer relationships when the role is a key member contact - Medium
- Understand and share widely the organisation purpose, shared vision and define our culture/core values and goals - Medium
- create opportunities to connect – ie staff awards – Continue with the Buddy scheme to connect people with new workers – virtual new starter coffee morning/induction – Medium/Low
- Ensure our website clearly markets all of our flexible working arrangements – inc. career breaks, buying holiday and hybrid work arrangements and who is eligible – use in recruitment campaigns and also for current staff awareness – HR newsletter - Medium
- Continue to review exit interview data - ongoing
- Continue to adapt office space to ensure fit for use – ensure hybrid meetings can function effectively - Ongoing

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# Hybrid Working Policy

<b>Document Control</b>	
<b>Date of Last version</b>	2022
<b>Latest review</b>	
<b>Name of Reviewer</b>	Chloe Whitehead
<b>Consultation</b>	Unions 2022
<b>Approved by</b>	Cabinet 2022

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## Abbreviations and definitions

The table below contains explanations for the abbreviations and definitions used in this policy. If you have any questions about any of these please contact the HR team for clarification.

Abbreviation or word	Meaning
DSE	Display Screen Equipment (e.g. laptop screen, computer monitor, tablet screen, phone, etc.)
Hybrid working	A working arrangement where colleagues have more than one regular location of work (e.g. office, home-working, hub, district council office, etc.)
Agile working	Bringing people, processes, connectivity and technology, time and place together to find the most appropriate and effective way of working
Reasonable Adjustments	Changes to a colleagues' work/role that remove or reduce a disadvantage. This could be an adjustment to working patters, or an alteration to the way tasks are completed.
Matrix Management	Where an individual may report to one line manager, but also additional 'project' or 'team' managers at different times.

## 1. Introduction

South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to providing a flexible, adaptive, and agile working environment for its employees. This includes the way we work, where we work, and what tools we need to utilise to support our hybrid approach.

Our “*hybrid*” approach means that work is an activity we do rather than a place we go; “work is what you do – not where you do it”. It places an emphasis on an activity-based culture, using new tools, new processes, increased flexible working opportunities and new approaches to management and teamwork. It is underpinned by our behaviours; working together, authenticity, dynamic and innovative, and supports a culture of looking at outcomes as the measure of success.

This policy is part of a suite of documents to implement hybrid ways of working. Please refer to the FAQs in Appendix 1 for further information.

### **Aim of the procedure**

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that the Council treats all staff fairly and consistently. It outlines the framework in which we expect employees to agree and develop their own forms of hybrid working, and provides support for managers in making these agreements with their teams and wider colleagues.

### **Access to this Policy**

As part of this policy, the Council will make reasonable adjustments for employees to support their hybrid working, and ensure a safe working environment for all.

Employees who need assistance with interpreting this policy should contact the HR team for guidance and support.

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## **2. Hybrid Principles**

We recognise that developing our hybrid culture and ensuring that the changes become embedded is a collective responsibility. The principles and commitments below play a key part of embedding our new way of working.

### ***At SCDC we work flexibly by:***

- accepting that flexibility is the norm rather than the exception,
- reviewing each role to agree how it can best be delivered, based on the activities required to meet customers' needs and support delivery of agreed outcomes,
- ensuring work takes place at the most effective location and time, relevant to the outcome, customer, individual and team needs.
- delivering tools and space which enable collaboration, connectivity and opportunities for hybrid ways of working together,
- continuously challenging traditional and new approaches to how we deliver our services to make sure they are fit for purpose and continually improving,
- ensuring consistency of approach in how we manage flexible working, using pragmatism to accept that specifics may differ for each team, role, and person,
- respecting and supporting individual circumstances, concerns, and the changing needs of our colleagues, providing wellbeing support and development as required,
- managing employees by performance and outcomes rather than presenteeism,
- providing fit for purpose digital and virtual tools to enable the best delivery of services and interactions, automating processes, and eliminating need for paper wherever possible,
- focussing and delivering benefits related to working flexibly e.g., reduced carbon emissions and accommodation costs.

### **As an Organisation We Will...**

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- Provide training, equipment, and the tools required to fulfil your role effectively and efficiently,
- Support our managers to:
  - ensure safe and effective working practices can be easily understood and adhered to by you,
  - take accountability for their team's progress and commitment to workplace culture,
  - manage individual requirements, including specifics such as reasonable adjustments and the needs of newly appointed colleagues,
  - undertake regular performance development conversations and be available to provide necessary support,
- Ensure information about the Council, your employment and specifics related to your role are kept up to date and easily accessible via a colleagues' intranet,
- Provide as much notice and detail as possible about activities and duties which need to be completed at a specific location and time,
- Enable face to face collaboration to be completed in any suitable space appropriate to the confidentiality of the discussion,

### As Colleagues We Will...

- Maintain positive communication and engagement within and across teams, including delivering virtual meetings and interactions in an appropriate manner,
- Ensure a working environment which is conducive to delivering our very best, meeting health & safety and working time directive requirements,
- Respect and support individual circumstances, participating in team activities, sharing learnings and best practice with colleagues,
- Manage our time to ensure delivery of agreed outcomes, sharing any challenges or concerns so a solution can be found,
- Work with our teams to ensure cover for our customers and colleagues, ensuring calendars and communication tools are effectively used,
- Agree as a team when we will have collaborative time and actively participate in this,
- Comply with ICT security and data protection requirements, taking care of all equipment provided.

## 3. Hybrid Approach

In many cases, colleagues will blend different flexible working options, according to the activities required. This involves a substantial move away from the idea that an individual applies for and is granted a single work pattern that is set in stone. It is important to take a team approach so that flexible working arrangements can be planned to cover the service needs as well as promote more flexible working arrangements for colleagues. Please refer to your Team Charter for your team's agreement to how they will work together.

To consider the flexible and hybrid working arrangements which would be suitable for a specific role or team, you should analyse the activities involved in each job role, considering how effectively they can be done at different times and in different locations.

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You should then consider the impact on teamwork and/ or customer service to agree the worker profile for each role.

The worker profile will be the same for every role in a team and enables the colleague and their manager to be clear about how much flexibility there is to deliver a role. This is then overlaid with the individual personal preference. The table below captures our two forms of worker profile: Hybrid and Fixed. Most of our roles are classified as hybrid, which is then further broken down into the requirements of the hybrid role. In addition, a set of standard equipment for each role will be agreed.

**Worker profile descriptions**

Hybrid	Fixed
<p>A role which in the main can be conducted from various locations. Although they may have some pre-determined hours/location requirements Individuals in the team have the autonomy to determine their working hours and/or location within pre-agreed team requirements to ensure the agile working profile requirements are met.</p>	<p>A role which in the main has to be completed during set hours and/or location. Flexibility is very limited and only on a pre-agreed basis with the team manager. Individuals in the team can work together with their manager to consider how the role can be delivered in a more agile way, but due to the agile working profile requirement, individuals are not able to have the autonomy to determine their working hours and/or location.</p>

Hybrid is then further divided, as outlined below.

Hybrid: on-the-go	Hybrid: desk based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A role which starts and finishes their day from a base but during the day moves between locations and places.</li> <li>• Typically, this role needs the flexibility to schedule diaries so they can meet customers/partners and have meetings with teams or their manager in any location.</li> <li>• It is vital they can access files and folders from wherever they are working.</li> <li>• They may work from partners' buildings or in public spaces.</li> <li>• They will come back to the office from time to time across the week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A role which can be completed without specific desk set up requirements.</li> <li>• Typically, this role needs a desk, screen and ICT access to folders and systems.</li> <li>• They don't need a particular location but tend to stay in one location all day.</li> <li>• Their role is mainly desk based.</li> <li>• They may occasionally work from partners' buildings or in public spaces.</li> </ul> <p><i>NB: Some roles in this category will require a set desk due to specific requirements which can only be set up on a certain desk. This will be agreed where relevant.</i></p>

Delivering this approach to ways of working means:

## OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

- Our focus is on delivering agreed outcomes and activities, as opposed to the number of hours worked. We will still have a total contracted number of hours, with an agreed work pattern (this is required for our HR/payroll system), however where and how these are worked will vary from person to person.
- Core business hours may differ between services, based on customer and activity needs. The support required to deliver these services needs to be considered and agreed.
- The use of both virtual and digital working is critical, however we accept that there is sometimes great benefit in being face to face, such as when inducting new people or supporting less experienced colleagues to develop their knowledge/skills.
- We want to see an increase in mixed working groups, cutting across teams and services, including more use of matrix management.
- It is important to take a team approach so that working arrangements can be planned to cover our customers' needs as well as promote more flexible working arrangements for colleagues,
- We recognise that for some colleagues the option for flexible working is greatly reduced or not available, due to the nature of their role, as they are required to deliver a service from a specific location or at a specific time. In these cases, local options will be discussed and agreed to allow as much flexibility as possible for all colleagues.
- All our colleagues, where their role allows, are empowered to manage their hours of work to ensure customer needs and partner requirements are met and our agreed outcomes delivered.
- Health and Wellbeing of all colleagues remains important and colleagues should raise any concerns or challenges with their managers initially, or with HR

## 4. Workspace

Within our offices, accommodation will be set up with:

- Spaces for collaboration equipped with appropriate technology to connect virtually with remote colleagues/ customers and partners,
- Touch-down spaces for people working on the move,
- Special project areas.

A key constraint on the introduction of flexible working is a perceived dependency on paper documents, storage, and other physical resources. While there are some statutory obligations to retain paper documents, the reasons for using and generating paper are becoming less and less compelling in an age of electronic based working.

The use of electronic processes and appropriate on-line storage and filing is essential to flexible working, enabling more effective working from any location. Managers and colleagues should feel empowered to continuously challenge traditional and new approaches to work, making sure they are fit for purpose but do not suppress our hybrid and flexible ways of working practices.

## **Working remotely**

Most of our hybrid workers can work from a selection of different locations outside of the office. We have three different forms of remote working available to our colleagues, captured below:

**Home** - When colleagues are working from home, it is important that the home working environment is set up properly, your home must:

- provide you with a space which is free from interruptions and distractions, including distractions from caring responsibilities (please see FAQs for more details),
- comply with the needs of the home workplace assessment,
- not be used as a work location for face to face (in person) meetings with members of the public,
- enable you to always keep all documents and information associated with council's business secure,
- have adequate insurance cover to enable you to work from home, the Council will not fund any additional premiums, (*refer FAQs for more information on this*)
- have no restrictions which would stop you working from home e.g., specific clauses in a mortgage or rental agreement.

**Hub** - work may be able to be carried out in 'third party places', for example: client offices, organisational partners, shared offices, cafés, hotel lobbies, libraries and on public transport. Colleagues accessing the network via such external WiFi hotspots signals should always use the correct security procedures and be mindful of information security and confidentiality when working from alternative locations.

**Roam** - For some of our colleagues work is completed either on the move or from various sites. The main issues with working on the move relate to confidentiality, security, safety and health. Safety concerns relate both to personal security and security of organisational property and data.

All colleagues should follow the Lone Worker Policy and whatever your work style, you should never give out your home address, or personal phone number to those outside your immediate team.

## **5. Team Management**

When working in different locations and at different times, social relationships need to be maintained and appropriate online and offline mechanisms need to be developed, such as buddy schemes for new recruits, regular team meetings, colleague briefings etc.

It is the responsibility of teams to look out for each other, and for managers of dispersed teams to spot problems and resolve them before they become major issues. These may be teased out through regular conversations, or clues may be spotted in terms of performance. If necessary, the manager and team member can agree an alternative work style. It is about finding the right work style for the individual, and about providing the appropriate support to overcome the problem.



## **OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE**

The aim in moving to our new ways of working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact. Though they may no longer sit next to one another, the new technologies should allow much more effective sharing of work and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before. New ways of working will also support more effective cross-team working amongst services.

It is important to have clear expectations about what is to be done and about communications within the team. A team should ensure there is/are:

- clear reporting structures,
- clear methods of regular communication, such as Teams updates or team meetings,
- sharing of calendars and schedules,
- rigorous use of electronic document management systems, to ensure work is easily accessible,
- a balanced approach to allocating work and working times, such that no individual is disadvantaged by the choices of others, e.g., in providing office cover or attending meetings,
- useful online communications, and etiquette in virtual meetings is followed,
- signposting and availability for phone contact or online discussion,
- fairness in use of space when in the office.

## **6. Data Security and Information Management**

Maintaining the security of the information we work with is vital and those working remotely are responsible for the security of the data they keep and should comply with all relevant legislation and organisational policies, just as if they were working in a fixed council office.

Specifically:

- Confidential or sensitive conversations/work should not be carried out whilst in any public areas,
- Other individuals (including family members) should not have any access to personal data either on paper or as electronic records,
- All printed or other paper records must be safely locked away when not in use,
- Confidential waste should be disposed of securely using the confidential waste bins provided at Council offices,
- All council data stored outside of the council's network, must only be stored on council systems and/or encrypted council owned devices. Council data must not be stored on any personal devices and/or colleagues should not send work related emails to their personal email address,
- If colleagues are using a laptop or other portable device, they must be aware of the additional security risks if leaving this device unattended,
- If colleagues become aware of any loss of council data they must contact the Information Governance team and notify their line manager immediately.

## **OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE**

It is the responsibility of all colleagues to ensure that information is handled correctly and not used for personal benefit or gain. Failure to follow the above regulations may result in disciplinary action.

### **Personal usage of equipment and technology**

Please refer to our IT policy for more information

## **7. Health and Safety when Working Hybrid**

The Council has a duty of care for all employees, whether they are working in the office, at home, on the move, or in some other working environment.

Employees also need to be responsible for ensuring their workstation is fit for purpose and that they follow the health & safety tips and guidelines provided. Further information can be found on the health and safety pages on Insite.

It is a requirement that all colleagues complete the Workplace DSE workstation assessment for their usual working locations; this means for both home and office. The DSE assessment can be accessed by contacting our Health and Safety officer.

If you are working remotely then your comfort and safety is just as important as it is when working in an office. Using laptops for prolonged periods in an office or home office environment may require the use of a laptop stand and/or an additional properly positioned screen, with a separate keyboard and mouse.

There are also some simple steps you can take to increase your physical wellbeing whilst working from home or remotely:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity,
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position,
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises,
- avoiding eye fatigue by for example changing focus,
- wiping down hard surfaces at the end and start of every working day,
- ensuring adequate lighting within your working environment to avoid eye strain.

If colleagues have any questions or concerns about their health and safety they should discuss these initially with their line manager, and then with the Health and Safety officer or HR if required.

## **8. Working Hours**

One of the benefits of working more flexibly is that it can help create a positive work-life balance. For example, it can ease the daily commute and/or help colleagues manage family, caring or domestic responsibilities during lunch breaks or directly before and after they work. Colleagues should ensure that whilst working from home they do not

## **OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE**

work excessively long or low hours on a regular basis and should only work their contracted hours. More information can be found on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours>.

Please also refer to the FAQ about working extra hours.

Alongside other initiatives to promote a healthy workplace, flexible working practices can help support mental wellbeing, and reduce absences from work. There are occasions where a colleague may not feel able to commute to work or sit in an office, but does feel able to work from home. In these instances, colleagues should speak with their line manager to agree if working from home is a viable option; colleagues should not feel obliged to work from home if they are sick - if the colleague is not well enough to work from home, then the normal sickness absence procedure will apply.

Colleagues who are being affected by stress may find home working beneficial to their wellbeing, however others may find it isolating. Individual circumstances should be discussed with line managers or the HR team to find a solution that works best for you. It is also important that colleagues remember to take annual leave on a regular basis to help protect and maintain their wellbeing.

Colleagues who do work from home also need to set boundaries so they can 'switch off' after the working day and ensure they maintain good health and well-being.

## **9. Environmental Sustainability**

One of the primary components of the carbon footprint of work relates to travel. Travelling thousands of miles each year for work/ meetings that can be carried out using video or telephone conferencing is an unsustainable and unproductive thing to do. Decisions about where we work, where we expect our colleagues to work, and the ways in which we communicate can increase or reduce our need for travel, our energy consumption and consumption of physical resources. We would therefore always encourage that meetings be held virtually where appropriate, and face-to-face meetings do not need to be seen as the norm. There are some times where virtual meetings are not appropriate, and in those situations spaces will still be available in our offices to conduct face-to-face meetings.

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## Results of our Contact Centre Mystery Shopper Review

A team of 16 researchers called us on 400 occasions, at a range of times through the day, across the week. They asked us questions about lots of our services. Here are some of their findings from the calls in March and April.



### How long did it take for the phone to be answered?

**72%**  
of calls

**11%**  
of calls

**17%**  
of calls

**<2**  
minutes

**2-4**  
minutes

**4+**  
minutes



## Results of our Contact Centre Mystery Shopper Review

A team of 16 researchers called us on 400 occasions, at a range of times through the day, across the week. They asked us questions about lots of our services. Here are some of their findings from the calls in March and April.



### Was the phone answered...

With a smile?



**95%**

With a pleasant greeting?



**98%**

With a name given?



**98%**

With an offer of help?



**100%**



## Results of our Contact Centre Mystery Shopper Review

A team of 16 researchers called us on 400 occasions, at a range of times through the day, across the week. They asked us questions about lots of our services. Here are some of their findings from the calls in March and April.



**Did the person who answered show knowledge, and were they able to answer your enquiry satisfactorily?**



## Results of our Contact Centre Mystery Shopper Review

A team of 16 researchers called us on 400 occasions, at a range of times through the day, across the week. They asked us questions about lots of our services. Here are some of their findings from the calls in March and April.



Overall, what best describes the way in which the team member interacted with you whilst dealing with your enquiry?

**36%** OF CALLS  
Extremely warm & friendly

**50%** OF CALLS  
Warm and friendly

**13%** OF CALLS  
Polite and efficient





# Agenda Item 5



**South  
Cambridgeshire**  
District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Employment and Staffing Committee 28 June 2023
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	John Williams
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Jeff Membery

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## HR Recruitment, Retention and Absence Data for May 2023

### Executive Summary

Monitoring of absence data enables us to review where interventions are required to support wellbeing in the organisation.

Review of recruitment and turnover information is critical to ensure that the Council is aware of any risk areas in terms of resourcing and delivering services to the public.

This new format report is both more timely in providing members with the information from the previous month and also focuses on a strategic overview of recruitment and absence activity within the Council, avoiding the need to redact potentially sensitive information. Much of this report is also now produced automatically by the Council's new HR software system, increasing efficiency, and releasing officer time to work on other areas. The data contained in this report is reviewed by officers in the HR team and is used to inform future policies and highlight areas where early intervention may be required.

### Key Decision

- No

### Recommendations

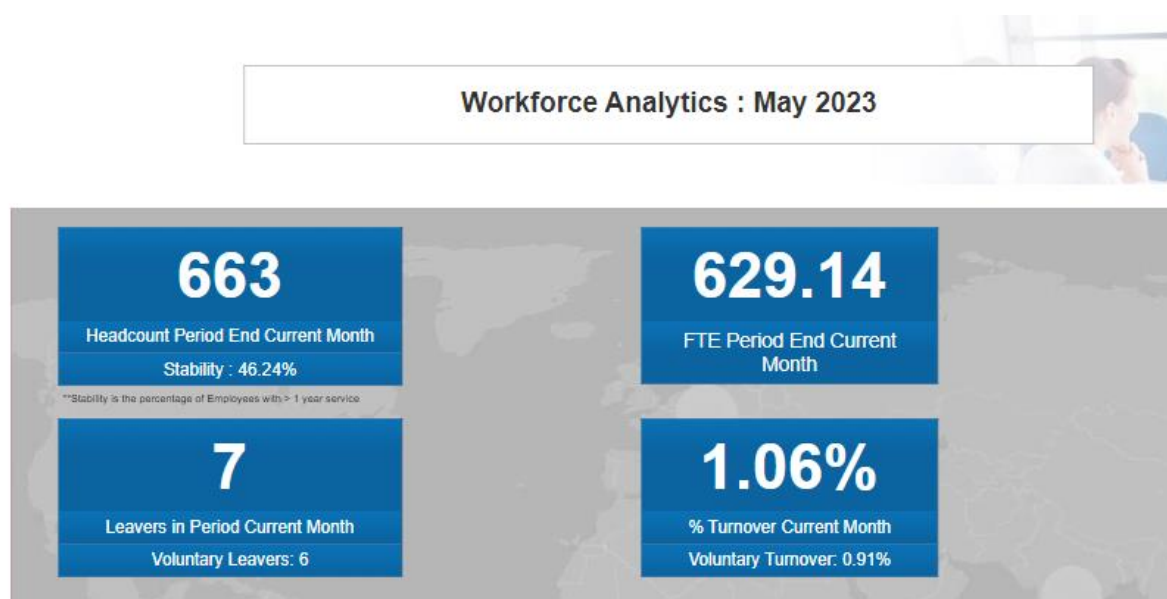
- To note the report.

### Reasons for Recommendations

It is important that members are kept up to date with recruitment, retention and absence data.

## Details

### Recruitment and Turnover



One of the expected outcomes of the 4-day week was an improvement in the number of vacancies that were successfully recruited to. In May 2023, 14 Jobs were advertised of which 9 were filled, 1 withdrawn by the manager and 4 are currently going through the interview process. Although still early in the extended trial, the signs are positive that recruitment is becoming easier for the Council.

The number of applications received per advertised vacancy has also increased, and that metric will be included in this report in the September reporting cycle for this committee.

Other data that will be collected to identify whether recruitment has improved will include:

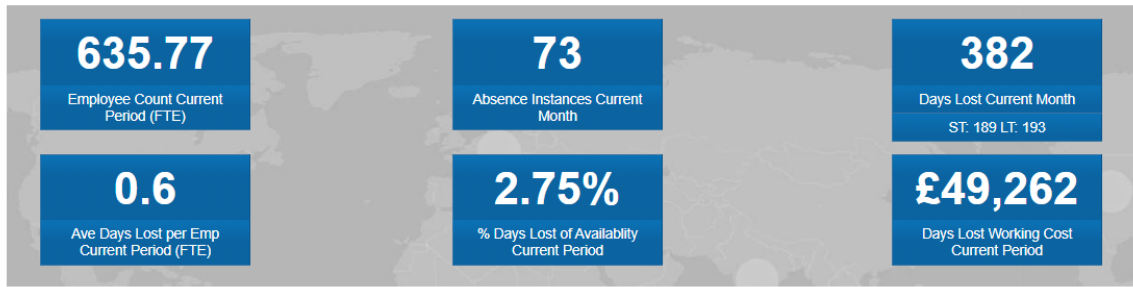
- a survey of staff after 6 months, as part of their post-induction follow up
- a survey of those who have been unsuccessful at interview
- a review of any posts which are not successfully recruited to.

The new HR software module for recruitment is also due to launch in July/August. This will also allow more comprehensive monitoring of our success in recruiting into vacant posts.

### Absence data

Absence data for May has remained relatively stable when compared with April, with an increase of 65 days lost (382 vs. 317 days). This equates to 2.75% days lost in May.

## Absence Analytics May 2023



Days Lost Working Cost Current vs Previous Month – this equates to a 65-day increase but is a reduction on absence in 2022/23 where absence was 395 days for the month (extracted from the reported 1187 days for the quarter reported to E&S committee in October 22). Most of the increase between April 23 and May 2023 was in the Shared Waste Service.

Org Structure	Days Lost Working Cost Previous Period	Days Lost Working Cost Current Period	Variance
<b>Total</b>	317 £43,816.51	382 £49,261.93	£5,445.43

### % days lost of available period Current vs Previous Month

Org Structure	% Days Lost of Availability Previous Period	% Days Lost of Availability Current Period	Variance
<b>Total</b>	2.50%	2.75%	0.25%

## Implications

### Staffing

This report provides data about absence and recruitment both of which are directly relevant to staffing and the work of the Employment and Staffing Committee.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **A modern and caring Council**

The review and response to these statistics helps us to inform policies and support measures for staff and to identify any improvement opportunities

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Report Author:**

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