Notice of Meeting

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Personnel Committee

Friday, 15th July 2022 at 10.30 am
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Note: This meeting can be streamed live here: https://www.westberks.gov.uk/personnelcommitteelive.

Date of despatch of Agenda: Thursday, 7 July 2022

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer) on 01635 519052   e-mail: sadie.owen1@westberks.gov.uk

Further information and Minutes are also available on the Council's website at www.westberks.gov.uk

West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

To: Councillors Dennis Benneyworth (Chairman), Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Lynne Doherty and Thomas Marino

Substitutes: Councillors James Cole, Lee Dillon, Nassar Hunt and Biyi Oloko

Agenda

Page No.

1. **Apologies for Absence**   5 - 6
   To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).

2. **Minutes**   7 - 12
   To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 21 February 2022 and 10 May 2022.

3. **Declarations of Interest**   13 - 14
   To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

4. **Update on HR Activity 2021/22**   15 - 64
   Purpose: the report is an information only report for the purposes of updating on HR activity for 2021/2022 which includes Recruitment, Appraisals and Performance Management, Training, and Casework. There is also a brief update on the Workforce Strategy and actions in Appendix A.

5. **Date of Next Meeting**
   The next meeting will be held on Friday 11 November 2022, at 10:30 am.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director (Strategy & Governance)

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Sadie Owen on telephone (01635) 519052.

West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Personnel Committee – 15 July 2022

Item 1 – Apologies for absence

Verbal Item

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DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 2022

Councillors Present: James Cole (Chairman), Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Richard Somner (as substitute), and Howard Woollaston

Officers Present: Paula Goodwin, Sadie Owen, Abigail Witting

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Garth Simpson

7. Minutes

Councillor Abbs drew attention to a sentence under item 4 which stated 'Concern was raised at the gender workforce split of 76% to 24% in favour of women, and the fact that there had been a 'Career progression for women' project'. It was suggested that the statement relating to the 'Career progression for women project', was incorrect and should be removed.

Cllr Woollaston commented that Cllr Benneyworth had attended the meeting as a substitute, and requested that the third paragraph under item 4 be amended to the 'council was looking for offers'.

Subject to the above amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Update on HR Activity 2021 Q1/2/3

The HR Service Lead introduced the report (Agenda Item 5).

Members made the following comments and observations:-

Appraisals

It was queried why employees were not set specific timeframes to complete appraisals.

The HR Service Lead reported that the report reflected the current position and that once the new behaviour framework was developed there would be a full review of the appraisal system and that the lack of deadlines would be rectified under the new process.

It was suggested that managers should also be trained to pick up any issues of concern outside the appraisal process.

The HR Service Lead confirmed that the appraisal process was being reviewed and reformed in its totality and would include far greater training for managers.

Attention was drawn to the appraisal data for the ICT department and it was commented that the new system needed to be robust with managers encouraged to prioritise appraisals.

It was noted that the new Chief Executive was fully supportive of the review of the appraisal system and it was anticipated that there would be significant pressure from senior management to improve results.

In response to a suggestion that appraisals should include an indication as to the performance of an employee, the HR Service Lead commented that an appropriate measure and standard was being developed.

In response to a suggestion that sight of the appraisal framework would be useful when reviewing the data, the HR Service Lead agreed to provide a link to the current appraisal system. It was reported that the new system would not be ready to share until late spring/early summer.

Casework

It was suggested and agreed that benchmarking should be against both similar private sector industries aswell as against the public sector. However it was noted that this would need to be undertaken in a holistic manner rather than just looking at the straight data.

It was commented that if the 7.15 days recorded under section 6.7 could be maintained then it would be a significant improvement.

It was suggested that the Employment Tribunal data should also detail whether the cases were still open, the average length of time taken to deal with, and the cost to the council.

In response, the HR Service Lead agreed to take advice from the Monitoring Officer, due to the GDPR implications of publishing such information. It was clarified that the cases within the report were all live cases, and that the council historically had not been taken to tribunal.

It was queried why 2 cases which had commenced in 2019 were still outstanding, and suggested that by having a KPI detailing average length of time to resolution, would focus officers to solve cases quicker.

The HR Service Lead agreed to report back to the committee following discussions with the Monitoring Officer.

It was suggested and agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture should review and ensure that the cases were being expedited with sufficient speed.

Staff Absence

It was queried whether initiatives such as Timelord2 were contributing to the stress suffered by members of staff.

The HR Service Lead commented that this had not been investigated specifically, but that staff survey data indicated that staff wellbeing was directly impacted by any general change project, and so was likely to be impacted by Timelord2. However it was clarified that whilst wellbeing may be impacted it was not necessarily stress related.

It was suggested that a standard return to work question for an employee suffering with stress, should be whether the stress was work related. This was felt to be particularly important given the number of different pressures impacting people during the pandemic, and the fact that daily interaction with team members may have significantly reduced, making identification of such issues harder to recognise.

Training

It was noted that mandatory training occurred on a 3 year cycle, and consequently numbers would fluctuate accordingly. It was further explained that some training had needed to be reduced due to external trainers refusing to provide training remotely.

In relation to a request for the percentage of mandatory training being missed, the HR Service Lead clarified that the information was published quarterly as part of the KPI requirements and so could be readily shared.

It was reported that a Training Needs Analysis survey had recently been undertaken to identify staff training requirements.

It was suggested that the emphasis should be on training that staff 'need' rather than 'want'.

It was commented that emphasis shouldn't just be on attending training courses but also on the effectiveness of that training and calibre of internal trainer.

The HR Service Lead clarified that feedback was requested from all staff attending a training session, however this could potentially be improved upon.

In response to a query as to why training figures remained lower than the position during 2018/19, the HR Manager suggested that there had been mandatory GDPR training for every member of staff during that period.

Retention

The HR Manager reported that the current KPI for turnover was less than 14% and that this was benchmarked against the LGA form. However it was also acknowledged that there was a desire to increase diversity and equality numbers and consequently a balance to be made.

It was clarified that figures related only to employees and wouldn't include contractor figures. It was noted that the commissioning department was responsible for contractors, and the HR Manager agreed to investigate the possibility of obtaining comparable retention data for contractors.

Recruitment

Cllr Brooks offered to provide some advice to the HR department, given his significant experience and 38 years working within the recruitment sector. The Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Culture and Leisure welcomed Cllr Brooks' offer.

It was noted that in relation to page 29 of the report approximately one third of recruitment was 'off-contract' and consequently not going through managed service provider. This was felt to be of potential impact to the rebate.

The HR Manager clarified that initially most job vacancies would be filled by direct recruitment. Comensura would be utilised in instances requiring immediate recruitment or where direct recruitment had failed. It was reported that other agencies would then be consulted where Commensura had been unsuccessful.

Cllr Brooks requested sight of the service level agreement and agreed to discuss that and the off contract spend with the HR team. He commented that he was aghast at the fact that the commissioning department were responsible for managing the Commensura contract. It was suggested that HR as the service users should be responsible for the contract.

It was suggested that the WBC job application website required some work. Job descriptions were felt to be too wordy. More visuals were suggested and improvements in relation to a welcome from the Leader of the Council or Chief Executive suggested.

In response to a query the HR Manager clarified that the website allowed for direct applicant tracking.

It was suggested that Google analytics would provide further extensive information in relation to candidates looking at the website.

The HR Service Lead agreed to include mandatory training details within forthcoming reports and suggested bringing the report back to committee on a six monthly basis.

RESOLVED: the Committee note the report.

10. Statutory Pay Policy 2022

The HR Service Lead introduced the report (Agenda Item 5), and commented that it had been produced as part of a statutory annual requirement and would need to obtain council approval for publication by 1st April.

Members made the following comments and suggestions:

- It was noted that change history should be recorded at the back of a report, not the front.
- It was noted that there was an additional bullet point at 2.16 of the policy.
- It was suggested that there should be more emphasis on packages rather than individual salaries, as these appeared more appealing.
- It was noted that section 2 duplicated section 1 of the Policy's covering report.

RESOLVED: the Committee unanimously approved the report for referral to Council on 17th March.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on 29 April at 10:00 am.

CHAIRMAN ……………………………………………

Date of Signature ……………………………………………

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 10 MAY 2022

Councillors Present: Dennis Benneyworth (Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty and Thomas Marino

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman)

PART I

1. **Election of the Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Dennis Benneyworth be elected Chairman of the Personnel Committee for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

2. **Appointment of the Vice-Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Jeff Brooks be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Personnel Committee for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

(The meeting commenced at 8.48 pm and closed at 8.50 pm)

CHAIRMAN ………………………………………….

Date of Signature ………………………………………….

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Personnel Committee – 15 July 2022

Item 3 – Declarations of Interest

Verbal Item

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Agenda Item 4.

Update on HR Activity 2021/2022

Committee considering report:	Personnel Committee
Date of Committee:	15 July 2022
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Tom Marino
Date Head of Service agreed report: *(for Corporate Board)*	24 May 2022
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	7 June 2022
Report Author:	Paula Goodwin, Vicky Holland, Amie Heath, Harriet Saunders, Lorraine Collins

1   Purpose of the Report

This report is an information only report for the purposes of updating on HR activity for 2021/2022 which includes Recruitment, Appraisals and Performance Management, Training, and Casework. There is also a brief update on the Workforce Strategy and actions as seen in Appendix A.

2   Recommendation

This is an information only report. Personnel Committee is asked to consider and feedback on the information provided within the report.

3   Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	None as this is an information only report.
Human Resource:	The activity stated within this report is completed as either part of BAU activity or as part of the delivery of the Workforce Strategy. This is an information only report so there are no direct implications from the outcome of the report.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Legal:	None			
Risk Management:	None			
Property:	None			
Policy:	All information provided in the report take account of the relevant WBC policies and procedures.			
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		This is an information only report.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		This is an information only report.
Environmental Impact:		X		None
Health Impact:		X		None
ICT Impact:		X		None
Digital Services Impact:		X		None

		X		This update report provides information that supports the Workforce Strategy and HR BAU activity to meet Council priorities.
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		This update report provides information that supports the Workforce Strategy and HR BAU activity to meet Council priorities.
Core Business:		X		This update report provides information that supports the Workforce Strategy and HR BAU activity to meet Council priorities.
Data Impact:		X		None as all data is anonymised.
Consultation and Engagement:	Corporate Board Operations Board Service Director, Strategy & Governance Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Internal Governance			

4   Executive Summary

4.1   This report is for information and has been written at the request of members of Personnel Committee to provide an update on the matters contained within the report.

4.2   The Workforce Strategy covers the period 2019 to 2023. The action plan is provided at Appendix A and highlights progress being made and what is still left to achieve. It is also intended that a new strategy will start to be developed in 2023. This helps provide an overview of past and future HR activity that exists over and above BAU.

4.3   The report contains a section on the overarching employment data and equalities data either at the 31st March 2022 or for the whole year of 2021/2022 (Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4). Against each data set the date of the data or the period will be stated. Appendix B.

4.4   This report provides and update on recruitment activity, appraisals, training and performance management – casework.

5   Employment Data

5.1   Appendix B details the employment data and equalities data relating to WBC. The headcount at WBC has remained pretty static over the last 5 years with 48 headcount increase in the last 5 years. (This data excludes all temporary posts). For an organisation with a current headcount of 1532 this is under a 2% increase over a 5 year period.

5.2   Turnover has increased slightly to 13% in the past 12 months and as a result the number of vacant posts has also increased by approximately 50 FTE, although there are currently 193.70 permanent FTE vacant posts. (Note – these posts may not have budget or are being covered by agency employees however there is no data to support that.

There is no current evidence to explain this increase although this could be linked to an increase in posts to support Covid activity that were specifically funded, although a project to look at recruitment activities and talent attraction will look further into this data. The average UK turnover ideal is 14% or lower. Leavers' data excludes those that are not voluntary such as TUPE transfers. Exit data is collated which does not indicate that there is any substantial issue other than an increase in the availability of job roles that might tempt staff to move on after the instability of the market during Covid.

5.3 The equalities data provided in Appendix B is collated from the HR/Payroll Information System (Resourcelink) which includes information provided by employees when they were job applicants and some further information provided directly by employees through the HR self-service module (MyView). Applicants are asked to define themselves according to their ethnic origin and whether or not they consider themselves to have a disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010. In some cases individuals choose not to define themselves. The data in these categories, therefore, is based on those who have chosen to define themselves as male/female, having a disability, or minority ethnic. Age data is collected automatically as it is necessary for administrative purposes, such as entry to the pension scheme.

5.4 Other protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 such as sexual orientation and religion have been included more recently, because enough data has now been collected through the recruitment process. However, there are still large percentages of staff recorded as "unknown" in these categories. We aim to improve data collection for equalities through asking staff to update MyView because many of the workforce joined WBC before this data was requested on appointment. "Prefer not to say" will remain an option to select for those staff who would rather not provide sensitive information.

5.5 Where possible, equality and diversity data has been compared to that available for the district population from the 2011 Census. 2021 Census data is not yet available. Data is also compared to the LGA Workforce Survey England and Wales 2020/2021.

5.6 A high proportion (77.48%) of female employees is typical for a unitary authority. This figure has remained stable for many years, and is unlikely to change significantly. The LGA Workforce Survey shows that in local government there are 76% of female employees and 24% of male employees. (This excludes schools and the fire service).

5.7 The percentage of employees who declare themselves to have a disability (3.88%) is a small increase on last year. It is slightly higher than the proportion of working age (16-65) residents in the 2011 Census who reported their day to day activities were limited 'a lot' by disability (3.2%). Therefore WBC continues to employ a representative proportion of the local working population with disabilities. The LGA state a national figure of 3.3% of those that have declared a disability.

5.8 The percentage of employees who declare themselves ethnic minorities (7.77%) is higher than the figure for the district population based on the 2011 Census (5%). The LGA cite a figure of 10.1% for ethnic minority employees. This figure may be higher than the figure for WBC as some employees at WBC will have chosen not to specify this detail whereas the LGA have confirmed figures.

5.9 The age profile of the workforce has remained relatively stable over recent years. The LGA survey states the following detail in relation to age of the local government workforce, and shows WBC is highly comparable:

Age range – in years	Percentage of the local government workforce (LGA)	WBC data for 2021/2022
Under 25	4.6%	4.18%
25 to 64	91.7%	90.6%
Over 65	3.5%	5.22%
Unknown	0.2%	0%

The data above highlights a pretty stable workforce makeup that equates to the 2011 Census Data. There a number of further actions required to consider the reasons for turnover to start to increase over the past 12 months and additional resource is being considered/requested to support this. This will form part of the projects to support a more proactive approach to talent attraction and retention which is specified within the Workforce Strategy.

6 Recruitment & Retention

Background

6.1 The information in this section is based on the last 5 years, focusing on full-time equivalent numbers. The data excludes staff employed in schools, casual and agency workers unless otherwise stated.

6.2 During 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 there were 427 adverts placed on the website, some of which were multiple roles.

6.3 The data in Appendix B shows there were 305.83 FTE at WBC as at the 31st March 2022 (including all temporary posts). What is not known is how many of these roles are filled by agency employees, contractors, consultants. It is intended that HR will undertake further research and evidence gathering to ascertain the picture more fully and to consider how this can then best be filled with a view to 'direct recruitment' first and foremost where possible as part of a talent attraction project.

6.4 Source of Job Applications

WBC uses Jobs Go Public (JGP) as the applicant tracking system where all candidates apply for jobs with WBC. Data shows that nearly all applicants come through this system and the WBC website. The external website has been updated recently and with the recruitment projects that will start during 2022, there is the intention to develop a broader

approach to using social media and alternative marketing campaigns to attract suitable candidates to WBC. There is also a review of recruitment policies and processes along with the development of an employer value proposition and talent attraction plan.

6.5   Agency Spend

The ability to utilise agency staff is crucial for the Council. There are a range of reasons the Council will need agency staff and, especially in social care areas, immediate staff absences will require filling with agency staff to maintain BAU. Much of the cost of agency staff will be funded through the existing budget, where an agency member of staff is covering a vacancy.

From 4th March 2019, all requests for agency support have been dealt with via the Managed Service Provider Comensura who was appointed the contract following procurement. Management of the contract sits within Commissioning rather than with HR. Comensura review the market and put forward agency employees with the Council receiving a rebate.

The Comensura contract was set up to reduce agency costs by using a managed service provider. All agencies charge a fee on top of the workers hourly rate to cover their expenses and contributions to National Insurance and Tax. At the start of the contract, looking at historical agency spend data, agreed margins were set with Comensura to limit the amount agencies could charge on top of the hourly rate.

The way this works is WBC pay the agency fee without the cap but Comensura only pass on the agreed margin to the agency itself and then each quarter WBC receives a rebate equivalent to the amount paid to Comensura and the rate paid to the agency. The margins and agreed rates vary from role to role.

The table below outlines the agency expenditure for the last 3 years. As Commensura was new in 2019 we do not have any baseline data prior to that as agency spend was recorded in a different way.

	Financial Year 19-20	Financial Year 20-21	Financial Year 21-22
Off-Contract Spend	£1,528,495.01	£2,102,647.35	£3,118,431.87
On Contract Spend	£4,101,025.46	£4,676,353.73	£7,004,604.37
Annual Rebate	-£401,537.39	-£526,401.83	-£737,563.70
Annual Total	£5,227,983.08	£6,252,599.25	£9,385,472.54

The data for the Financial Year 19-20 includes the values for March 2019 as it was the first month of the contract.

Overall spend has gone up each year which is due to increased demand for agency staff from services, rather than the Comensura contract costing more.

The reasons behind this will relate to an increased need for staff during the pandemic where staffing has been impacted due to self-isolation or Covid cases where staff have

also been unable to work from home due to the nature of their roles. In addition off contract spend has increased as demand for professional services staff and ASC staff was exceptionally high and due to there being a national shortage there was an extremely competitive market place meaning Commensura could not always fulfil the assignments. In addition there was a requirement to fill roles promptly.

The rebate figure is the perceived difference that the Commensura contract has made each year compared to when the contract was not in place.

The increasing cost for agency employees is now on the Council's risk register. The current HR service offers a transactional recruitment service and there is no resource to support a more strategic and proactive approach to recruitment and talent attraction. This has recently been recognised and a Transformation Bid to request budget for additional temporary resources for HR was approved in June 2022, for two temporary Talent Attraction posts, that will enable a review of the approach to talent attraction to ensure a more strategic and proactive commitment is made and will focus on reducing agency costs with a direct recruitment approach intended where possible. The following are intended outcomes of the project:

- To review the recruitment process and policy to ensure it meets customer and organisational needs and offers agility to offer a suitable pool of applicants for roles using direct recruitment where possible. To take out waste processes and decisions where they are not deemed necessary.

- To consider how current IT Systems (ATS – Jobs Go Public) and digital options (e.g. WBC website and Working For Us Pages) can be used to enhance the process for all users and to ensure an efficient use of time with a positive customer experience.

- To review employment data and posts to inform consideration of how to attract talent and marketing options to gain direct pools of applicants.

- To endeavour to reduce agency spend my using methods to gain direct pools of candidates.

- To develop a recruitment strategy and employer value proposition.

- To collaborate with key stakeholders such as Comms and Marketing, Digital to improve the employer branding of WBC.

- To consider options for overlaps with interns, apprentices, graduate schemes to enhance the 'grow our own approach' to talent attraction.

- To endeavour to reduce the reliance on agency employees and agency spend.

- To review and procure suitable marketing tools and recruitment tools to support the attraction of direct pools of candidates who may not be job hunting at present. This would include using social media and identification of suitable routes to attract talent.

- To consider options such as international recruitment campaigns and how best to target applicants for hard to fill roles.

It is important to note that the HR team are also about to be restructured and this will take a few months to complete and could take up to six months after that to embed

changes and staff into roles. It is intended that these two posts do not impact on the restructure and can work in isolation initially to support the project for talent attraction.

7   Performance Management – Casework

Context

7.1   The Council has a range of established employment policies and procedures to manage different issues that may arise during the employee lifecycle these include disciplinary, grievances, performance capability, probation and sickness absence/ ill-health capability issues (this comes under the umbrella defined for the purpose of the report as casework). The HR team supports managers and services in managing these issues to resolution. The team also supports organisational change including TUPE transfers, restructures and redundancies. The team supports both corporate teams and provides a traded service to 60% of West Berkshire schools.

7.2   There are key principles in all of our procedures, which are developed with input from our recognised trade unions, and in line with ACAS codes of practice. These include:

- An emphasis on resolving issues informally if possible
- Sharing information about the concerns with the employee and gaining their response
- Acting consistently
- Acting promptly
- A right to representation at formal meetings
- Reasonable notice of formal meetings
- The right to appeal any formal outcomes.

Routine Measures

7.3   Quarterly measures are currently reported as below for the Council. These are:

- Numbers of formal cases (schools and corporate)
- Numbers of informal cases (schools and corporate)
- Average feedback from managers (supported by the team)
- Number of Occupational Health referrals
- Number of contacts with Employee Assistance Programme
- Number of redundancies (schools and corporate).

The aim of these measures is to monitor the volume and quality of work undertaken by the team.

7.4   The previous report gave figures up to the end of Q3 for 2021/22; the full year's results are now available, and this gives a full year's comparison with previous years. For this report, we have split out the data for corporate and schools, and the data below refers to those cases within corporate teams.

7.5   Table 1 below, shows the number of formal and informal cases within corporate, for four full years. 2021/22 is slightly above the average for the previous three years,

but not outstandingly so given the Covid-19 pandemic, and we do not have any concerns around the number.

Table 1
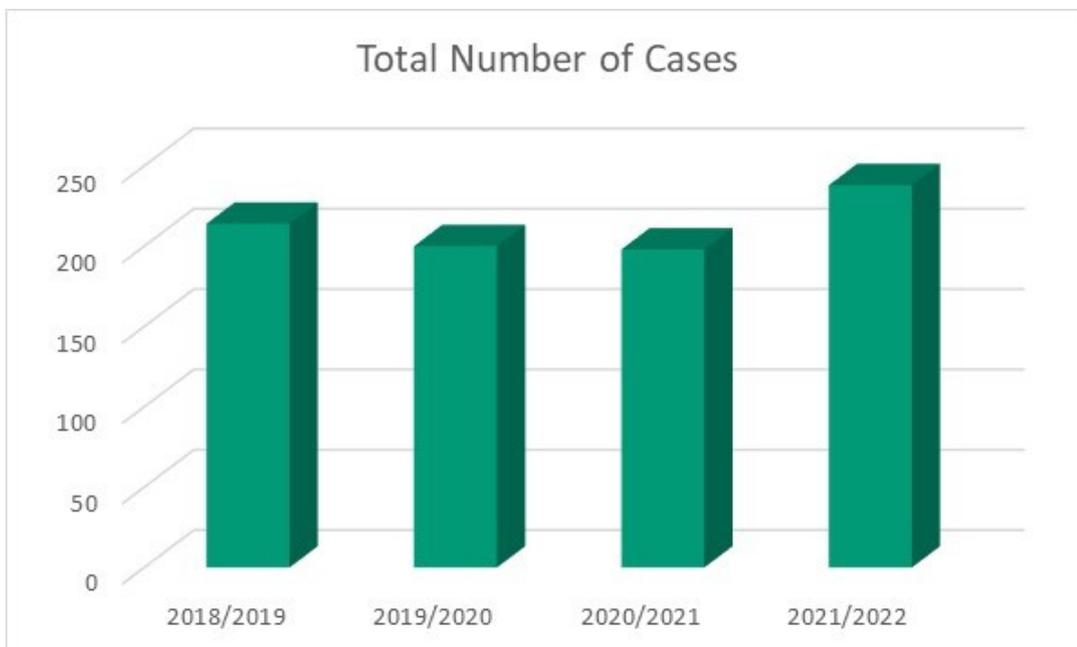
7.6 Table 2, below, shows the mix of informal and formal casework. For the four years shown, formal casework has made up between 23% and 27% of all cases recorded, and this is very stable. A significant proportion of informal casework relates to sickness absence, but it includes any advice and support given outside of a formal process. For 2021/2022 there have been 18 formal disciplinary cases and 8 formal grievances. This is an increase on the previous year of 2020/21, but in line with the two years before that; last year is the outlier in this sequence, most probably due to the effect of Covid-19, working from home and changes in working practices during that time.

Table 2

Formal and informal case breakdown
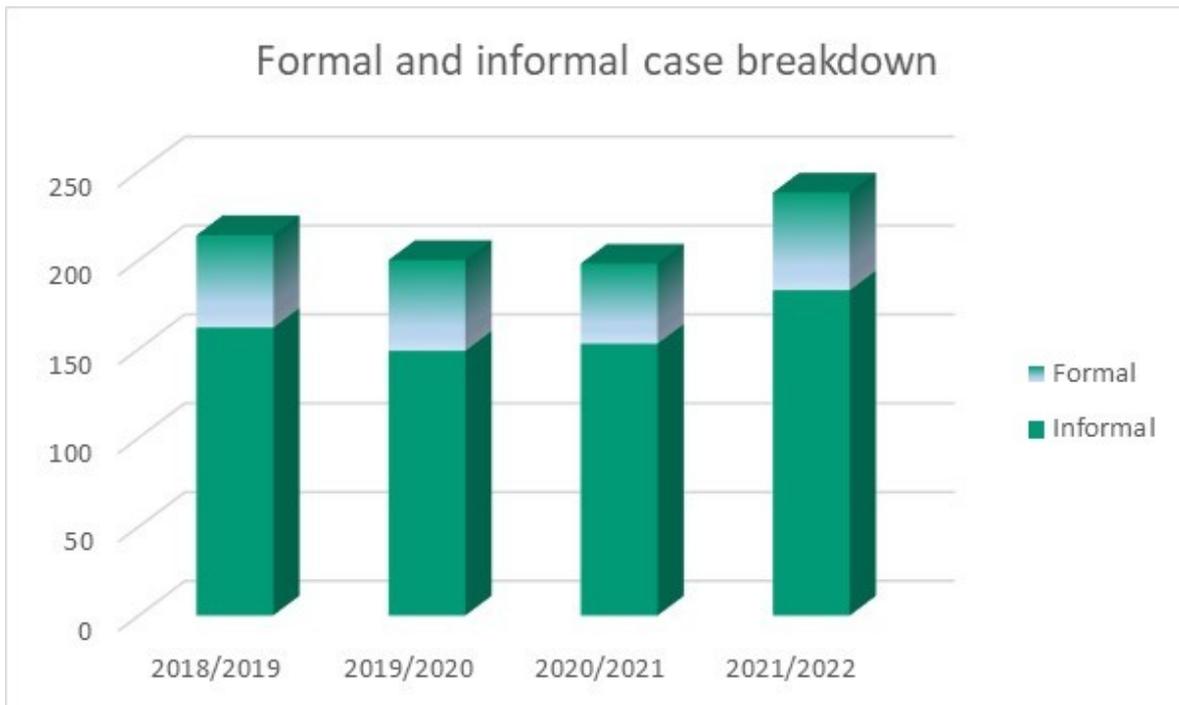
7.7 Table 3, below, shows the variation in the main types of cases over the past four years (note – actual numbers are not given, to ensure confidentiality and data protection). As the numbers of cases are not high, it is difficult to draw accurate assessments of causality for any rise or fall in numbers. Anecdotally, it seems that disciplinary and grievance cases fell during 2020/21 due to changing work practices because of Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns e.g. with more employees working from home. This may also be the reason for the rise in ill health retirement cases, as more employees have considered the impact of long-term health conditions and their impact on work and personal life.

Table 3
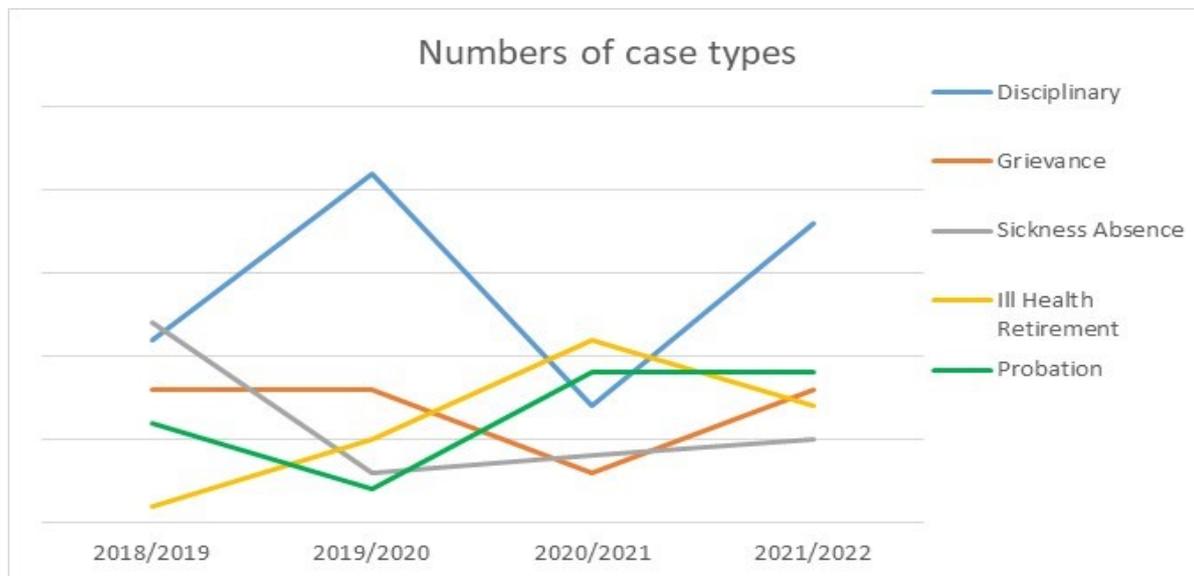
7.8 For future reports, we would like to try to analyse our employee data in more depth – for example, to look at the number of employee relations cases in relation to overall headcount numbers. Further exploration needs to be done to confirm that our data can be manipulated in this way, but a deeper analysis would provide more opportunities to identify trends and review whether specific interventions can assist our manager and employee populations. The development of wider metrics is a long-term aim and needs data to have been gathered over a period of time for meaningful assessment, so this may not give immediate insights; however, it is something we believe is worth exploring at this point.

Sickness Absence

7.9 At the end of quarter 4 of 2021/22, the annualised number of days lost through sickness absence for the whole Council is calculated as **9.95 days**.

The table below shows the year end outturn absence figures for the previous 4 years.

	Actual number of days lost per person in 2017/18	**Actual number of days lost per person in 2018/19**	**Actual number of days lost per person in 2019/20**	**Actual number of days lost per person in 2020/21**	**Actual number of days lost per person in 2021/22**
Council Result	**8.59** days	**9.84** days	**9.65** days	**7.15** days	**9.95** days

7.10   These figures show:

- 9.95 days lost per employee in 2021/22 is slightly higher than the levels of 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 2020/21 was the primary year impacted by the COVID pandemic. This impacted on absence rates in that normal absence was reduced significantly due to a large proportion of staff working at home for the majority of the year; thus 2020/21 was an anomaly.

Benchmarking

7.11   The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes an annual survey on workplace absence for all sectors. The 2021 report published in April 2022 confirms that the all-time low of 3.6 days of 2020 has increased to 4.6 days during 2021, making it the highest level since 2011.

7.12   This mirrors our own experience of the impact of Covid-19 working arrangements on sickness absence, in that it decreased during the first waves of home working and lockdown, and then increased again as the country started to open up, and dealt with the impacts caused by the Delta and Omicron variants.

7.13   The ONS figures for the public sector again show an all-time low for 2020 (5.3 days lost per FTE), increasing again in 2021 to 6.4 days. There are currently no 2022 figures available to compare. For Local Government, the figure is 6.5 days lost per FTE, against our own of 9.95 days per FTE. It should be noted, however, that as a direct provider of social care, sickness absence figures are higher than comparators such as the private sector and neighbouring authorities who do not provide direct care due to the nature of the work. Therefore the 9.95 days may be higher than the national average however this is not a direct comparison of like for like organisations.

7.14   No information is available in these ONS figures about the type of services and therefore staff for local government. Within Berkshire we are aware that the six unitary authorities have very different approaches to the contracting in and out of services.

Absence by Services & Directorates

7.15   Further breakdown shows the average absence rate within each Directorate for the full 2021/22 year, as below. As noted in 6.14, the rate of absence within Adult Social Care and Children & Families are the highest here, which would be expected given the overall picture of the pandemic during the last two years.

Directorate	Days lost per employee – at Q4 2021/22
Resources	6.0
People	12.0
Place	8.6

7.16   Long-term absence is defined as a continuing sickness absence of more than 28 consecutive calendar days. During 2021-22 the proportion of long-term sickness absence in 65.1% of all sickness absences (10,022 days lost); in 2020/21 the proportion was 65%, so there is no statistical difference in the two years.

7.17   The proportion of long-term absence continues to be higher than in previous years; this is due to a reduction in the days lost to short-term sickness absence during the pandemic (most likely because of the rise of home working) rather than a significant rise in the numbers of long-term absence cases.

Absence Reasons

7.18   The most common reason for both short term and long term absence for 2021/22 is "*stress, depression and mental health related*". In total, 36.4% of all sickness absence (long term and short term) was due to "stress, depression or mental health-related", compared to 40.3% in 2020/21.

7.19   Nevertheless, stress, depression and other mental health illness has increased by 27%, with 5,606 days in 2021/22 compared to 4,415 days in 2020/21. This is likely to reflect both the impact of the pandemic on mental health in the workforce and general population, but also the decline in absence for other reasons. However, it should be noted that the number of actual days lost for this reason increased compared with other years.

7.20   As previously noted, it is difficult to draw accurate reasons for causation from this data, grounded as it is in a global pandemic, rapidly altered ways of working, increased demands on local government, and global challenges. The engagement of our Wellbeing Officer is timely, and she will be closely involved in further conversations around absence trends.

Management processes

7.21   Sickness absence is reported by managers or services on the MyView portal, which is the linked into the main HR and Payroll system.

7.22   The Council's Sickness Absence procedures include trigger points for action under the procedure. These are:

- Three or more sickness/injury absences in a rolling three month period
- Unacceptable patterns of absence; for example a pattern of calling in sick the day before or after a weekend or bank holiday, or before or after annual leave.
- A period of long term absence of more than 28 calendar days (long term sickness absence) where the return to work date has not been specified or is of concern to the line manager

7.23   If any one of these triggers is met, the line manager is expected to undertake an informal sickness absence meeting with the individual. HR support is available for the planning and preparation of these meetings.   Monthly reporting within HR is in place for employees who breach the triggers for long term and short term. All cases are followed up with the line manager to offer advice. This would usually result in a referral to Occupational Health as well as advice on the informal sickness absence meeting.

Occupational Health

7.24   Our Occupational Health provider, Cordell Health, has been in place since 5th October 2021and feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of this new provider is positive. Quarterly referrals to Occupational Health for both corporate and schools staff are shown below:
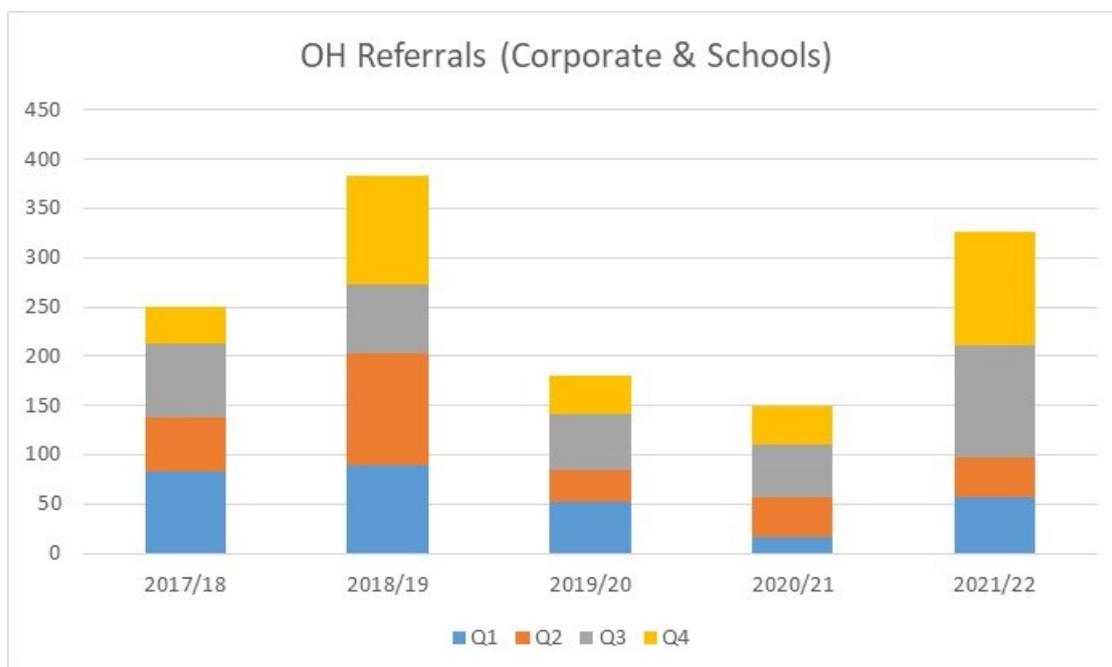
7.25 The increase in referrals seen in Q3 continued for the remainder of the year, and seems to be due to the provider catching up on a backlog as well as an unusually busy period.   It is too early to tell, but it may also be possible that the higher quality of reports coming out and the assistance to the employees and to their managers is causing them to seek ongoing support from the provider. We will look to provide

further analysis on the numbers of stand-alone referrals compared to the number of ongoing cases, to get further insights.

Additional support

7.26 The Council offers two sources of emotional support to employees. The first is confidential counselling with a local counsellor who meets our selective criteria including qualification, insurance and professional memberships. We commit to funding up to six sessions from a central budget, based on management referral.

7.27 The second source is the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) with Care First, which was implemented on 1st July 2020 as part of the Workforce strategy. The EAP provides a free access service to all corporate employees 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and can provide advice on a variety of topics as well as emotional support including counselling.

7.28 Measures for the Employee Assistance Programme vary widely. Since it was implemented in July 2020, we have seen up to 19 contacts per month, but in some months no, or very few contacts. This has been raised with our Wellbeing Officer, and will be considered as part of the return to Market Street as Timelord 2 is implemented, looking to raise awareness and usage of the service.

7.29 The chart below shows the numbers of counselling referrals over the last four years. Unsurprisingly, the number for 2021/22 is the highest of those. However for both referrals to EAP and for counselling we cannot break down the data further (for reasons of confidentiality), meaning that a deep dive into the reasons and causes of referral isn't possible. While we could make some assumptions based on sickness absence reasons, a correlation between the two sets of data doesn't mean that we can draw conclusions on causation.
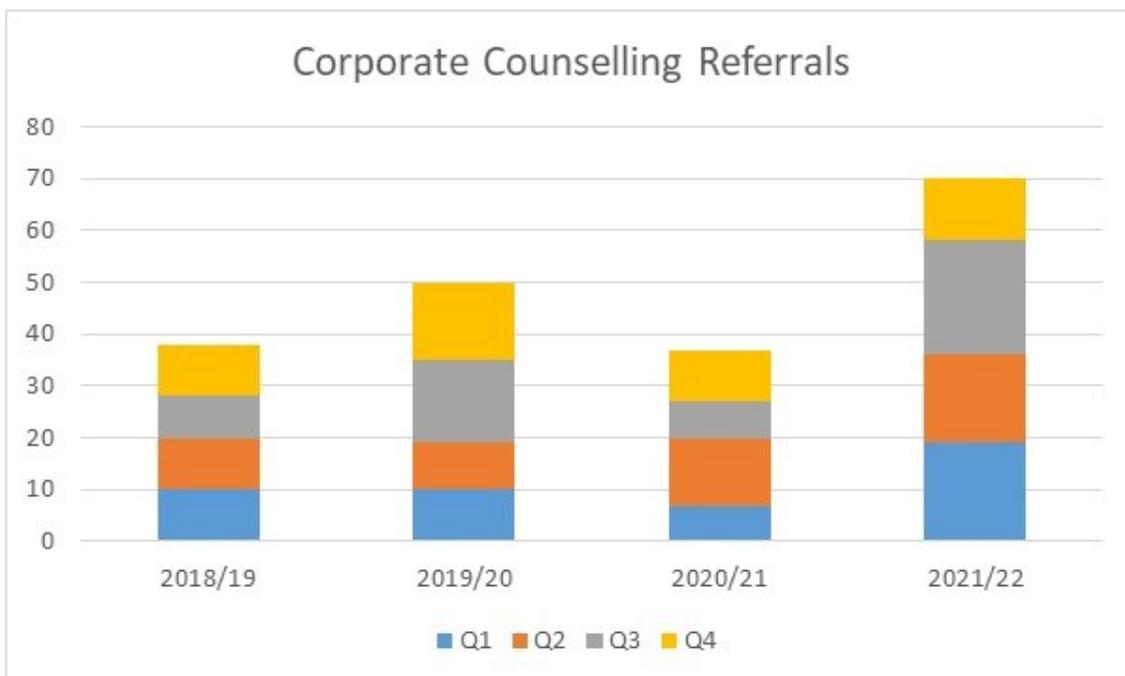
7.30 In conclusion, although sickness absence rates have increased over the previous 12 months this is unsurprising. Covid meant staff were not mixing as much and

were less likely to take time off sick as they were able to work from home more easily. With more staff returning to the office or a workplace and an increase in other illnesses due to staff mixing such as coughs and cold and flu this will have increased the need for staff to be off sick, and also the NHS backlogs have started to be cleared more staff which has meant staff requiring time off.   The number of absences due to mental health conditions should continue to be assessed, and we will continue to work to understand the reasons for these and provide successful interventions wherever possible.   It is considered that the Council has effective processes and procedures in place to support all employee relations and the relatively low rate of all formal cases, given the size of the Council's employee base, suggests that these are well understood and implemented.

8   Appraisals

8.1   WBC requires employees to have an annual appraisal. The annual appraisal, and 6 monthly reviews, are utilised to ensure that there is a balance between the strategic objectives of the Council, the respective service and to help staff development. A copy of the current Corporate Appraisal Form can be seen in Appendix C. Some of the key elements included in the appraisal are so that employees and line managers:

- Review achievements in the past 12 months against the objectives set at the last appraisal meeting, the six-month review and/or other objective-setting meeting;
- Review individual competencies against the WBC standards framework for employees and, where appropriate, the WBC standards for leaders and managers;
- Determine SMART objectives for achievement over the next year.   For managers these will include targets related to Corporate Health Indicators and Key Performance Indicators;
- Review learning and development over the past 12 months, and identify current and future learning needs and how these will met over the next period (the Personal Development Plan);
- Discuss other factors relevant to work performance and planning (career aspirations, retirement plans, etc).

8.2   New employees have objectives set as part of their probation review period (six months or one year depending on the post). Once probation is completed employees' should then have an appraisal meeting and the Appraisal Policy utilised from that point on. Appraisal data is monitored regularly to ensure as high as percentage as possible of staff have an appraisal annually.

8.3   Current data for percentages of appraisals completed are shown in the table below, and show an overall total of 87.17% for the Council as a whole as at Q4 in 2021/2022. The WBC target is set at 90% of staff to have had an appraisal within the previous 18 months (this is a temporary extension from the usual 15 months due to COVID) and there is a continual push from senior managers to support this happening. Directorates have been provided with lists of missing data to chase up within services and HR are working with services where reporting lines have changed and data can no longer be input in the

usual way. In addition CLT and Operations Board are receiving monthly reports on appraisals so the situation can be monitored.

8.4   Below is the appraisal date for each quarter of 2021/2022.

Appraisal/Performance Management Completions %	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
People	76.54	67.17	78.04	83.62
Place	81.17	74.46	77.40	90.94
Resources	62.97	61.90	82.72	92.54
Total	74.90	67.73	78.86	87.17

8.5   As part of the Workforce Strategy it has been agreed to replace the competency framework with a new behaviour framework. It is hoped this will be ready to implement in summer 2022. As part of the roll out of the new behaviour framework it is intended that there will be a review of the appraisal process along with other policies and procedures, and a review of appropriate training and coaching to support the change in approach when finalised. There are also considerations for how data can be better captured around the appraisal process and PDP's to ensure that the central training function has up to date training data along with line managers to support future career development.

9   Training

9.1   The Corporate Training Programme is made up of Mandatory and Non Mandatory Training. Training is delivered using a blended approach of E-learning, Virtual (Zoom or Teams) as well as Face to Face training.

9.2   Corporate training is commissioned annually and HR work with key stakeholders within the Council to design the programme based on the needs of the departments and employees collectively. There is a dedicated resource that supports training for Social Care teams as their annual mandatory and non-mandatory training need is large due to the nature of their service delivery.

9.3   This year HR undertook a Training Needs Analysis survey during March 2022. This was open to all staff to get their views on the training and learning they would like or need in the future to undertake their job roles. 37.8% of staff responded across all Directorates and Services. 82.3% of respondents felt our LMS (Learning Management System) was

either Good, Very Good, or Excellent). We also wanted to find out how our staff preferred to learn. The following table shows the results.

Delivery method of training	Ranking
Technology based learning – Zoom/Teams with trainer	1
Face to face classroom learning in groups	2
Hybrid learning – mix of classroom and technology based learning	3
On the job training	4
Self-directed learning through Learning Time (or other methods)	5
Formal qualifications	6
Webinars	7
Self-learning through feedback	8

9.4 Using the information above we are designing a programme to ensure that training is delivered in a timely and effective manner, and have started by making sure all our mandatory training is available online. More than 40% of the respondents to the survey would like more training variety than is currently on offer. We have identified common themes that arise throughout the survey results, and are working on implementing a shortlist of training to include in our programme over the following year and next.

9.5 One of the largest areas of training last year for the Council was Resilience and Wellbeing. Resilience was identified as a subject that staff really needed support on themselves or with their teams. We ran a successful programme of Resilience training, at different levels, for staff, Managers and Senior Managers. Feedback was excellent,

and 260 staff were trained virtually, with feedback being excellent for 96% of those that attended.

9.6   We are embedding Resilience & Wellbeing into our corporate programme this year, and looking at investing in some e-learning to ensure all staff can have the training as quickly as possible, although there will also be face to face options too. Other significant areas mentioned in the Training Needs Analysis, were Coaching & Mentoring, and Leadership & Management skills, which are all covered with the Workforce Strategy plans. There is also further work to be completed within specific areas for example in Social Care we need a skills gap analysis to look at ICT skills.

9.7   HR have priorities in the coming year to look at Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training, as well as Hybrid learning that supports TL2, Project Management, and the Induction experience.

9.8   The Training Programme is published on the intranet and shows what training is available to book within our Learning Management System - Learning Time. There is mandatory and non-mandatory training which is dependent on the role. For example, managers have different mandatory training to non-managers. Social Care workers have quite different responsibilities therefore their mandatory training is more extensive and specific.

9.9   The learning can be classroom (face to face or virtual) or e-learning. Courses are run by subject matter experts, some internal and some external. WBC have internal experts that run training, for example the majority of our Health & Safety training is run by the Health and Safety Manager and his team. Some Social Care training is run by Social Care experts who are qualified and experienced in specific areas. Many courses are run by external training organisations with specifically commissioned skills, experience and expertise. HR have received excellent training feedback and have worked with some companies for many years, and therefore they understand our culture, as well as our policies and procedures.

9.10   HR have worked hard to make learning more accessible over the last few years moving courses from face to face to e-learning where possible to ensure continuation of learning during Covid.   Our Learning Time site (WBC Learning Management System) is external so you do not have to be logged into the West Berkshire Intranet to get access, and it is available on any device, even smartphones. Our e-learning content is mainly written by Learning Pool (the company who provide our site) and authorised or edited by internal subject matter experts to meet the specific needs of the council before they are accessible to staff.

9.11   During 2020/2021 HR had to cancel and postpone training due to the pandemic. We had to adjust to different room capacities and change venues due to social distancing being put in place. Many external trainers decided not to run their courses and wait until they could see people face to face. This put a lot of pressure on us to find an alternative provider. Some training was introduced as e-learning, we bought into a Social Care Catalogue of courses and quickly assessed content and published them in April 2020. This meant Social Care workers could still practice and fulfil their roles.

9.12   The figures below show the number of e-learning courses completed over the last four years. Data for 2018/2019 is skewed due to the introduction of mandatory e-learning

for GDPR for all staff due to the introduction of new legislation which required all staff to complete a data protection refresher. In 2021/2022 there was a reduction as we slowly are able to introduce more face to face training.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of employees who completed at least one e-learning course	1287	1169	1305	1097
Percentage of employees undertaking e-learning	86.61	77.31	84.47	71.60
Number of e-learning courses completed	5218	4663	5808	5345
Percentage of employees completing any course (e-learning or classroom)	94.76	89.15	90.42	89.00
Total courses completed	8509	7376	7419	7722

As you can see the number of courses completed has increased which is down to more available training and the end of social distancing for face to face courses.

The table above only relates to corporate training. This is not fully reflective of all training and employee development that takes place at WBC. Each department will have it's own budget for post specific training such as CPD for lawyers. The 70-20-10 rule, a key principle used for employee learning and development, reveals that individuals tend to learn 70% of their knowledge from challenging experiences and assignments (generally on the job learning), 20% from developmental relationships (coaching, mentoring and buddying for example) and 10% from coursework and training. So it is important to ensure a holistic approach to all employee learning to ensure WBC offer an approach that suits all employees and their learning styles too to get the best from them.

17 Conclusion

The contents of the report are for information for Personnel Committee on the 15th July 2022.

18 Appendices

Appendix A   Workforce Strategy Development Plan with updated comments

Appendix B   Employment and Equalities Data

HR Update

Appendix C   Corporate Appraisal Form Template

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐   No: ☒

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	☐
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	☐
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	☐
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	☐
Item is Urgent Key Decision	☐
Report is to note only	☒

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Appendix A

Workforce Strategy 2021 – 2023
Delivery Plan

1. Succession Planning & Career Development

Project	Ambitions	Key elements	Priority Level	Target completion date	Update as at May 2022
Career Pathways	To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own leaders	1. Using free LGA consultancy support, run a training event for HR on workforce planning and career pathways. 2. Identify teams/ service with current career pathways. What can we learn about good practice? 3. Identify teams/ services without current career pathways 4. Prioritise services and work with each to identify and articulate pathways.	M	By March 2023	This piece of work is yet to start. The projects around pay, allowances and recruitment need to be completed first to ensure the correct foundations are in place for this project. Resource will be required to support this work.

Project	Ambitions	Key elements	Priority Level	Target completion date	Update as at May 2022
Review of Training & Development Programme	To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own future leaders.	1. Review training and development programme to ensure it reflects the Council's priorities, especially in digital skills, communications & engagement, commercialisation, project management etc. 2. Commission any new training provision. 3. Implement the revised programme.	H	By March 2022	Estimate completion by June 2022 Training needs analysis completed in March 2022 and a new corporate training programme is being developed at present with the intention to start to deliver some new courses from June 2022 onwards. Mandatory training is unaffected by this review.
Career Progression for Women	To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own future leaders … to increase diversity across all areas and levels of the workforce.	1. Carry out structured interviews to establish themes at play. 2. Consider wider survey to explore themes in more depth 3. Carry out review of next steps which could include: • Changes to recruitment processes • Training to raise awareness on diversity, inclusion, unconscious bias etc.	H	By March 2023 as linked to career pathways project	This project is linked to career pathways, review of recruitment, and leadership/management development all of which have yet to start and will overlap with this project. Coaching and mentoring arrangements are already in place although this is early days in terms of embedding such an approach to see what impact this might be having. EDI training is being reviewed as part of the TNA outcomes and corporate training programme offer and there are conversations with the Equalities Forum to ensure appropriate training is being provided.

		• Review of policies and procedures e.g. Shared Parental Leave			
Coaching & Mentoring Project	To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own future leaders	1. Pilot to go live early 2021. 2. Review pilot during and after 6 month period. 3. Bring results to WFB to decide whether/ how to roll out more widely.	**M**	By December 2021	The pilot was completed in accordance with this action for coaching and there are a very small handful of internal coaches trained to support staff. There is now further work planned to grow a coaching and mentoring framework for WBC both internally and externally. This includes training more coaches and mentors, offering supervision for this group and looking at external arrangements for coaching should this be deemed more appropriate. There are also plans to improve the intranet pages to support the coaching framework and to manage the process of applying for a coach or mentor and matching the employee to someone suitable.
Review of Performance Management Processes and Competency Frameworks	To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own future leaders	1. Carry out review 2. Consult with TUs and managers 3. Seek approvals	**M**	By March 2023	A draft behaviour framework has been put together based on feedback from senior managers and all employees using focus groups and a survey. The draft is to be more formally consulted with Unison prior to a further sign off. Once approved then an implementation plan and process will be considered and agreed and this will include a review of processes and policies that are impacted such as appraisal, induction, probation, recruitment, capability.

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					HR are currently working with a consultant to support this piece of work as internal resources are not available.

2. Leadership & Management

Project	Ambitions	Key elements	Priority Level	Target completion date	Update as at May 2022
Leadership & Management Development Programme	To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own future leaders. To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive & productive…	1. Review all leadership & management development activities with a view to articulating as a coherent programme. 2. Procure any new provision. 3. Publicise and implement.	H	Starting in 2022/2023	This will be developed in Q2 of 2022 with a view to pilot in the later part of the year before more fully implemented in 2023. Consideration will be given to using 360 degree feedback and personality profiles to support this action. Funding is available to support this work.
Management Support & Development Offer for Senior Leaders (Tiers 1-3)	To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own future leaders.	1. Articulate/ promote our offer of support and development for tiers 1-3. 2. Roll out programme of access to external coaching/mentoring for	M	By April 2022	As detailed above, coaching and mentoring is available. Commercialisation and audit training has taken place, and further audit training planned over the coming year.

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	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive & productive…	Grade L posts and above 3. Following Pilot of commercialisation training evaluate whether to make training available on an ongoing basis 4. Facilitate cohort for Senior Leadership Degree Apprenticeship each year. 5. Facilitate LA Challenge team each year 6. Following Pilot of audit training evaluate whether to make training available on an ongoing basis			The Tri Sector Challenge also took place in March 2022 and there will be further attempts to consider other options to attend/participate in such events. Number of officers undertaking senior Leadership Degree Apprenticeship.
Management Induction	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive and productive.	1. Hold discussion groups with a group of managers and senior leadership to understand what content should be in for management induction 2. Consider outcomes and propose format and content. 3. Implement	L	By April 2022	This project started in January 2022 and has temporarily been placed on hold due to other priorities. This project will start again when resource is available.

Manager Networks	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive and productive.	To consider as part of discussions alongside the Leadership & Management Programme, and the amended management induction	L	By March 2023	As an outcome of the Employee Attitude Survey there is a request to develop and implement an internal comms and engagement strategy that would support this action. This will require a collaboration with the Comms Team and will also require an additional resource to support this piece of work.

3.Recruitment & Retention

Project	Ambitions	Key elements	Priority Level	Target completion date	Update as at May 2022
Diversity in Recruitment	To be a workforce that represents our community…	1. Review methods & mechanisms for applications to ensure these are attractive for all potential applicants and promote diversity e.g. mobile enabled, blind shortlisting. To feed into potential tender for recruitment system (JGP contract ends 1/9/2021 but option for 2 year extension). 2. Review promotional material, including	M	By March 2023	This action has yet to commence and will require a Transformation Bid to enable resource to support all activity around a review of recruitment and talent attraction and employer branding and employer value proposition. Once resource is available (hopefully in the latter part of 2022) this project can commence.

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		website, to ensure that diversity is promoted. 3. Consider outcomes of Women in Leadership project and actions for recruitment processes. 4. Conduct a review of language used in JDs/ PSpecs and adverts and consider in the light of diversity.			
Honorarium Project	… to increase diversity across all areas and levels of the workforce. To support the career aspirations of all and grow our own future leaders	1. Carry out data analysis of use of honorariums 2. Deep dive into how and why honorariums are being used by services 3. Propose options for future 4. Review policies and procedures 5. Carry out briefing sessions for managers 6. Implement	M	By March 2022	This action is linked to a review of pay. There are resources to enable this project and the pay project to progress. It is anticipated this will start in June/July 2022.
Work Experience	To be a workforce that represents our community.	1. Offer job coach and job mentor training, for those working with young people on work experience.	M	By March 2022	This is now a BAU activity and the action has been completed.

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		2. Implement rolling programme, working with local schools.			
Review of Job Evaluation Scheme	To be a workforce that represents our community…	1. As the Diversity in Recruitment project progresses, assess whether there is a need to review the Hay JE scheme to reflect changing use of language, qualification expectations etc. 2. Commission a contractor to undertake this work independently.	L	By March 2023	This overlap with the review of the pay project and it is intended to use an external consultant during 2022 to support with this review.
Develop a Total Reward and Recognition Strategy	To be a workforce that takes pride in what we do and celebrates success	1. Develop Strategy 2. Consult with TUs and staff 3. Seek approvals	M	By March 2023	As an outcome of the EAS it is intended to set up a focus group to start to consider this subject which will be led by HR. This will start in June/July 2022.

4. **Employee Wellbeing**

Project	Ambitions	Key elements	Priority Level	Target completion date	Update as at May 2022
Mindfulness applications	To increase wellbeing and resilience for all staff	1. Research mindfulness applications and their appropriateness for our workforce. 2. Consider potential cost and benefits with Workforce Board 3. Undertake procurement exercise, if required.	M	By October 2022	This project is being led by the new Employee Wellbeing Officer who started in March 2022 who will consider options and provide a paper for Corporate Board to consider.
Mental Health First Aid	To increase wellbeing and resilience for all staff	1. Plan structure and roles to fully establish mental health first aiders within the workforce. To be considered by Workforce Board 2. Plan implementation of the mental health first aider structure. 3. Implement structure & provide ongoing support and training.	M	By October 2022	There are currently nearly 40 MHFA's trained and a plan to train a further cohort in 2022. There is also now a wellbeing page for staff on the intranet which highlights access to the MHFA's as well as signposting to other useful resources and companies who can support staff should they need this. There are regular supervision meetings with the MHFA's which will continue. Data will start to be collated on usage/access to the MHFA's with feedback on themes that will help inform the WBC approach to wellbeing going forward so changes can be made.

Expand Workplace Health initiatives	To increase wellbeing and resilience for all staff	1. Consider wellbeing indicators for the workforce e.g. EAS results. 2. Identify key areas for focus. 3. Identify and plan initiatives to impact the key areas. 4. Implement initiatives.	M	By June 2023	There is already a programme of workplace initiatives in place such as through using EAP, counselling services, financial wellbeing, and Physical Activity Champions. There is also a programme of events and promotions arrange as part of a newly implemented wellbeing calendar. There will be an annual wellness survey for staff to be able to feedback on current and new initiatives too.

5. How we work

Project	Ambitions	Key elements	Priority Level	Target completion date	Update as at May 2022
Timelord 2	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive and productive…	1. Support Timelord 2 project, consultation, policy, implementation 2. Assess new training needs e.g. Managing Remotely	H	June 2021 June 2021 December 2021	This project has been slightly delayed as is connected to the TL2 project which is intended to be implemented around June/July 2022. Support from HR has been provided as part of the project and updated and new policies drafted in accordance with the TL2 Executive sign off report in 2021. There is also the intention to start a Back to the Office working group to support the project implementation which HR will lead on. Training is being considered as part of the corporate training programme review.
One Council – our workplace culture	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive and productive…	1. Conduct Employee Attitude Survey and results analysis. 2. Plan employee engagement/ OD activities around organisational culture in new workstyles, and as a result of Employee Attitude Survey results, e.g. structured Let's Chat sessions. 3. Deliver activities and analyse results,	H	EAS completed by July 2021 and an action plan will be in place by April 2022.	Actions 1 and 2 have been completed with a final EAS action plan being finalised now (May 2022).

		progressing any follow up actions.			
ERP/HR & Payroll Systems	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive & productive…	1. Establish type of system to be procured with wider corporate stakeholder group, considering carefully the impacts on the Council Workforce and managers as end users. 2 Procure system 3. Transfer and implementation	H	RL contract extended from March 2022 with a procurement exercise to start during 2022 once a full specification has been written.	Specification is being drawn up for a HR, Payroll and Finance system in May 2022 which hopefully will be finalised in June 2022 with a view to undertaking procurement in the summer of 2022. HR and Payroll System contract has been extended until 17 March 2024 to enable procurement to take place and consideration of an implementation which could take up to 18 months for any system change.
Raising Concerns Project	….which values and listens to staff, built on trust and respect for all.	1. Research best practice 2. Plan employee/ management discussion groups 3. Draft policies & procedures & consult 4. Implementation	M	March 2022 onwards.	Due to other priorities, this has not yet commenced.
Internal Communications	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive & productive… ….which values and	1. Work with the Communications Team to review internal communications as a result of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.	M	March 2022 onwards.	EAS action plan will have a requirement for a new internal communications and engagement strategy which will be a collaboration between HR and Communications. This will require additional resource to support this activity.

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	listens to staff, built on trust and respect for all.	2. Contribute to any project work arising from this.			
Review People Processes	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive & productive… ….which values and listens to staff, built on trust and respect for all.	1. Conduct review of variety of people processes and identify those requiring review. i.e. appraisal. 2. Identify potential changes and developments. 3. Consult TUs, managers staff on any policy/ procedure changes.	M	March 2023	Not yet started and will commence when resource is available in 2022/2023.
Commitment to Carers	To actively foster an organisational culture that is positive & productive… ….which values and listens to staff, built on trust and respect for all.	1. Research best practice policies and approaches to support carers in the workforce. 2. Develop proposed policy documentation. 3. Consult with trade unions and staff. 4. Publicise and implement	L	By March 2023	Not yet started and will commence when resource is available in 2022/2023.

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Appendix B
WBC Employment Data and Equalities Data as at 31st March 2022

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Headcount	1488	1486	1512	1545	1532
Post FTE	1564.57	1561.59	1576.61	1621.98	1667.93
Occupied FTE	1290.38	1297.10	1323.62	1366.44	1362.10
Vacant FTE	274.19	264.49	252.99	255.54	305.83

Starters and Leavers during each full year

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/2022
Number of starters in year	246	209	243	175	210
Number of leavers in year	223	211	211	142	220
Turnover (%)	15.13%	14.19%	14.08%	9.29%	14.30%
Voluntary turnover (%)	12.01%	12.30%	12.14%	8.44%	13.00%
Average length of service of leavers	7y 3m	5y 8m	6y 2m	6y 8m	7y
Average length of service of employees employed at year end	8y 5m	8y 8m	8y 7m	8y 8m	8y 9m
Stability index (% employees at year end with 12 or more months' service)	86.29%	89.23%	87.10%	90.29%	89.43%

% of all starters during the last 5 years for each age range

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/2022
Under 25		10.57	12.44	10.29	18.29	20.95
25-34		24.80	24.40	19.34	26.86	22.86
35-44		17.89	23.92	25.51	17.71	23.33
45-54		29.27	24.88	25.93	24.00	21.90
55-64		16.67	14.35	17.70	12.00	9.52
65+		0.81	0.00	1.23	1.14	1.43

% of all leavers during the last 5 years in each age range

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Under 25		2.91	6.16	3.32	5.63	9.09
25-34		19.35	14.22	19.43	16.20	12.73
35-44		17.97	25.12	20.38	21.13	19.55
45-54		20.28	22.75	24.17	21.83	22.73
55-64		26.73	24.64	25.12	22.54	21.36
65+		8.76	7.11	7.58	12.68	14.55

Equalities Data as at 31st March 2022

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Female	77.80	77.46	78.04	77.35	77.48
Male	22.72	22.54	21.96	22.65	22.52
Disability	3.23	3.57	3.70	3.88	3.79
Ethnic Minority	6.25	7.07	7.08	6.99	7.77
Under 25	3.23	3.23	3.70	3.75	4.18
25-34	14.92	15.28	14.02	14.82	14.69
35-44	22.11	21.53	22.09	21.36	22.32
45-54	31.65	30.89	30.89	30.61	29.57
55-64	24.87	25.30	25.00	24.40	24.02
65+	3.23	3.77	4.30	5.05	5.22
Bisexual	0.67	0.67	0.93	1.36	1.57
Gay/Lesbian	0.74	0.94	0.93	0.91	0.85
Heterosexual	50.47	52.83	56.28	58.58	61.16
Other	0.27	0.61	0.73	0.84	0.91
Prefer not to say	4.77	5.11	5.22	5.24	5.94
Prefer to self-describe	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.07
Unknown	43.08	39.84	35.92	33.01	29.50
Agnostic	0.87	1.14	1.59	1.94	2.09
Atheist	2.69	3.16	4.43	4.98	5.42
Buddhist	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.13	0.13
Christian	28.23	30.15	30.89	32.23	32.11
Hindu	0.74	0.67	0.40	0.39	0.26
Jewish	0.00	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.00
Muslim	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.52
Sikh	0.27	0.20	0.26	0.39	0.39
None	17.94	18.30	19.71	20.39	23.04
Other religion/belief	1.21	1.48	1.65	1.62	1.31
Prefer not to say	5.17	5.18	5.22	5.18	5.81
Unknown	42.41	39.17	35.32	32.49	28.85

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Appendix C
Corporate Appraisal Form

Use this form to record the key points of the annual appraisal meeting and the six month appraisal review meeting.

This blank form is designed to be completed electronically.

Name of Employee	
Name of Appraiser	
Date of Appraisal	
Date of Six Month Review	

Guidance Notes

The purpose of the <u>annual appraisal meeting</u> is to:

A. Review achievements in the past 12 months against the objectives set at the last appraisal meeting, the six-month review and/or other objective-setting meeting;

B. Review individual competencies against the WBC standards framework for employees and, where appropriate, the WBC standards for leaders and managers;

C. Determine SMART objectives for achievement over the next year. For managers these will include targets related to Corporate Health Indicators and Key Performance Indicators;

D. Review learning and development over the past 12 months, and identify current and future learning needs and how these will met over the next period (the Personal Development Plan);

E. Discuss other factors relevant to work performance and planning (career aspirations, retirement plans etc).

The purpose of the <u>six month review meeting</u> is to review progress on the work objectives and the Personal Development Plan, note achievements and set new or revised objectives as necessary.

<u>It is the appraiser's responsibility to</u>:
- **Complete the appraisal form promptly following the annual appraisal meeting and six-month review meeting;**
- **Provide a copy, no later than 10 working days after the appraisal meeting, to the employee for their comments and signature;**
- **Provide a final signed copy of the form to their own line manager after the annual appraisal meeting.**

West Berkshire COUNCIL

Part A – Review of objectives and achievements

Objective (set at last appraisal or six month review)	Evidence of achievement		Importance High/Medium
	Appraiser's comments	**Appraisee's comments**	

July 2018

Other significant achievements during the past 12 months	Evidence of achievement		Importance High/Medium
	Appraiser's comments	Appraisee's comments	

Part B – review of competencies against WBC standards framework

WBC Standard (see appendix for full details)	Evidence of competencies	
	Appraiser's comments	Appraisee's comments
Working with people		
Learning and development		
Approach to work		
Managing performance (managers only)		

Corporate Appraisal Form

Part C – Objectives for next 12 months

Objectives should be Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART)
- *For managers, these should include objectives related to the achievement of relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Corporate Health Indicators (CHIs)*
- *For all employees, consider the principles and priorities set out in the Council Strategy*
- *Each objective should be rated High or Medium (identify no more than 3 or 4 with High importance)*
- *New objectives may be added at the six month review meeting*

SMART objectives set at <u>Annual Appraisal</u>			Importance High (H) or Medium (M)	Six month review comments
Objective	**Key activities and dates**	**Expected outcome(s)**		

July 2018

SMART objectives set at <u>Six Month Review</u>			Importance High (H) or Medium (M)
Objective	**Key activities and dates**	**Expected outcome(s)**	

Part D – Review of learning and development

Development objective set at last appraisal/six month review, or at other time during the year	Activity undertaken and associated costs	Evidence of impact on individual and team/service/directorate/organisation	
		Appraiser's comments	Appraisee's comments

The following link will take you to the full corporate training matrix Intranet - Mandatory Training Courses which also includes mandatory courses that do not need to be refreshed.

Personal Development Plan for next 12 months (also use this section for objectives set at six month review)

Development objective	Actions which will achieve the objective	Date(s)	Costs	Six month review comments

July 2018

Part E – Career planning and other issues

Record discussion points on career aspirations, retirement plans and/or other issues in the box below.

Comments and signature

	Comments on this appraisal review	Signed	Date
Appraisee			
Appraiser			
Appraiser's Manager			

A copy of the completed appraisal should be retained confidentially by the appraisee and appraiser

Appendix 1 – WBC framework standards for competencies

The following competencies are expected of all employees of West Berkshire Council.
Managers and leaders are also expected to display the competencies listed under 'leaders of people'.

	All employees	**Leaders of people**
When working with people	Display respect for customers/clients/colleagues Work as part of a team to achieve goals Listen to other points of view Deliver a high standard of customer service Communicate effectively	Understand stakeholders' motivation and objectives Be a skilled influencer (communicate the vision and objectives, inspire and motivate, develop buy-in and trust) Expect, encourage and support high standards of performance from team members Use a range of leadership styles appropriate to individual team members and the situation Develop team working and a sense of common purpose; manage conflict
In relation to learning and development	Learn continually through experience Seek opportunities to improve skills and understanding Coach and guide colleagues	Actively develop the team to meet current and future challenges Encourage team members to reflect on experience and learning; actively encourage transfer of learning Seek feedback on own performance to improve self awareness and own development needs
In their approach to work	Focus on priorities Work to the best of his/her ability Strive to deliver high standards Use initiative and seek creative solutions Display integrity and openness Ensure own personal safety and that of others in the workplace	Be a role model (demonstrating drive, purpose, integrity, fairness, enthusiasm, openness, resilience) Adapt to change, taking prompt and appropriate remedial action where required
When managing performance		Set/agree clear objectives, and quality and performance measures (for tasks and staff)

Corporate Appraisal Form

	All employees	Leaders of people
		Monitor and evaluate budgets, staff performance, and objectives Recognise good performance, and challenge underperformance and conduct Develop and empower team members to make decisions (coaching)