

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE AND PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7th March 2022

WORKFORCE UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report updates the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the County Councils changing workforce, presents key workforce data, outlines key areas of work and progress in year, and sets out key priorities for the year ahead.

2.0 Responding to and Supporting our Workforce Through Covid

- 2.1 In the last year, Covid continued to dominate, requiring the County Council to respond quickly to a rapidly changing situation and ensure the workforce was well informed and supported. The impact was felt throughout the year, with Covid infection causing 6% of staff absence as well the workforce being affected by issues such as bereavement, long covid, and wider repercussions of the pandemic on issues such as mental health. In response the County Council developed further the support available to it's workforce, and maintained high levels of engagement and communication. As the impact of Covid in communities continued, increasing work in some areas, notably HAS, and staff absence increased, the County Council needed to temporarily increase staffing levels and extended some services to 7 day working to facilitate efficient hospital discharge arrangements.

3.0 A Smaller More Diverse Workforce

- 3.1 The County Council's workforce (non-schools) has fallen slightly at a headcount of 7,151 and FTE of 5,461, with unfilled vacancies now seen across a range of services, following years of steady reduction. The non-schools FTE has reduced since 2011 by some 10% with number directly employed in schools reducing by 47% FTE. However this relates to schools converting to academies when numbers are removed from NYCC records and so does not represent an actual reduction in the education workforce.
- 3.2 In the past 18 months, the number of service reorganisations has been low, in part due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. Any staff at risk of redundancy have continued to be supported through redeployment and alternatives to achieve 'good outcomes' for their personal circumstances. Where an employees' destination at leaving is known, 38% found other employment, 26% did not wish to seek new work, 3% self-employed or in further training, and 3% unemployed and still seeking work. This means 97% achieved a positive alternative outcome and staff feedback shows they value highly the support received.

4.0 Key Workforce Data

- 4.1 **Composition:** the non-schools' workforce continues to see a slight increase in the proportion of men with a split of 23.5% male and 76.5% female. The proportion from an ethnic minority background remained at 2.3% (against a local population figure of 2.7%) and the proportion of staff declaring a disability increased slightly to 4% from 2.2%. However, 25.6% of staff chose not to declare their ethnicity, and 43.7% have not identified if they have a disability, despite further work to enable accurate information collection and

reporting, so these figures are known to be underreported. The average age of the workforce reduced slightly to 47.3 years and the proportion of under 25 year olds has increased to 4.85%, up from 4.6% last year. 43% of staff are full time so 57% work part time, with many of these having multiple part time roles.

- 4.2 **Sickness Absence:** sickness absence (measured in number of FTE days lost) was 6.5 days in 2020/21, amongst the lowest of county councils nationally. However, in the first 3 quarters of 2021/22 this increased significantly with a projected outturn figure of around 8.2 days, however this remains low in comparison with other similar benchmark councils which are looking to outturn at 12-16 days.
- 4.3 In 2021/22 working days lost to long term sickness absence accounted for 55% of all absence with the most common causes of sickness absence remaining stress, depression and anxiety related (32%), musculo-skeletal problems (16%) and infections (12%). The impact of Covid is still ongoing, and despite only making up 6% of absences in 2021/22, it is important to recognise that Covid infection can also be recorded under other absence reasons including chest and respiratory due to the effects of long Covid.
- 4.4 Sickness absence was particularly low in 2021 at the start of pandemic, when large parts of the workforce moved to homeworking, with some absence due to self isolation requirements or employees being furloughed. NYCC has, along with other employers, seen a significant rise in sickness absence this year. The reasons for this are varied, for example postponed operations have recommenced resulting in further sickness absence for post-operative recovery, and it is likely that the extended demands of the pandemic will have had an impact on absence levels. This year there has also been a rise in infections other than Covid which have spiked due to less communal transmission of viruses during the pandemic.
- 4.5 **Employee Health and Wellbeing:** NYCC aims to provide a health-promoting and inclusive workplace so staff can feel, and perform at their best. Staff are encouraged to use the wellbeing initiatives and support those around them in doing so. The initiatives this year included:
- askSAL, our Staff Advice line offering an additional line of support by providing practical advice and support to help with any life challenges or questions that Covid presents, not necessarily work related.
 - The Employee Assistance Programme provided by Health Assured includes access to 24/7 counselling services for staff (and any member of their household). There is also a range of online diagnostic tools and self-help guides and plans on lifestyle issues such as mental health, healthy eating and exercise.
 - Employee support groups were established for staff, focussing on a range of health and wellbeing topics in particular long terms health conditions and issues such as menopause, Crohns disease, cancer recovery.
 - The ['Taking Care of YOU Toolkit'](#) is a useful tool to help prevent and/or manager stress. It raises awareness and understanding of mental health, and includes straightforward strategies and coping mechanisms to help manage the challenges of work and workplace, and the impact of these on mental health.
 - The Looking After You intranet site provides a wealth of resources on a range of health and wellbeing topics.
 - Bereavement resources include practical advice and guidance for those dealing with bereavement personally, or supporting others through loss.
 - Learning Zone packages are available on personal resilience and mental health.

- Regular communications on healthy workplace issues and national health and awareness raising campaigns, utilising the intranet, key messages, blogs, team brief, Yammer, newsletters and the Healthy Workplace Group. Highlighting less well talked about topics and provision of related resources (e.g. domestic abuse charter, menopause guidance and training).
- Promotion of access to external events – Humber Coast and Vale wellbeing sessions, psychological first aid training, resilience hub.
- Voice Your Views staff survey incorporating results on wellbeing.
- Health Needs Assessment planned for 2022.
- Information and support on Zoom fatigue – webinar and top tips.
- Guidance for supporting staff who have had Covid-19 and long covid.

4.6 **Turnover:** Turnover was 11% in 2020/21(LGA benchmark 10%) but increased markedly in 2021/22, with a predicted outturn of 15.9%, the highest level known. The job market locally and nationally has experienced significant pressures due to a range of factors including the impact of BREXIT and market shortages for some roles caused by the pandemic and the aftermath. These and other factors including changes in employees' working expectations and priorities have created a more difficult job market. However the length of service is 9 years against a local authority average of 7 years and the Council continues to be relatively successful in recruiting and retaining staff in a very difficult recruitment environment.

4.7 **Spend on agency pay:** The workforce approach is to employ staff on permanent contracts and supplement this with internal relief staff (usually staff with an existing part time contract at/in a different location/role) or use existing staff in the same team to work extra hours. Agency staff are used only in circumstances when all other options have been exhausted, however the Covid pandemic and increasingly scarce labour markets has resulted in the increased use of agency solutions. Spend on agency staff was £716,389 in 2020/21 and so far is £1,358,922 in the first 3 quarters of 2021/22.

4.8 IR35 requirements, introduced for the public sector by HMRC in 2017, account for a portion of total agency spend. For 20/21, the total IR35 was £411,966k and is currently at £410,374 in the first 3 quarters of 21/21. NYCC minimise the use of interim and consultants covered by IR35, and the vast majority of off-payroll (IR35) engagements are for specialist and independent mental health and best interest assessors (94%) required due to statute/regulation.

4.9 Agency spend remains low compared to other local authority spend; agency spend in similar sized authorities was approximately £3-4m pre pandemic and will be much higher now. The largest increases in agency use are due to increasing demand for care workers, social workers and occupational therapists in Health and Adult Services, and for educational psychologists, social workers and children's residential care workers in Children's Services due to recruitment challenges and increased activity.

5.0 Recruitment Developments

Young People's Employment Initiatives

5.1 The impact of Covid 19 on youth employment was significant mid-pandemic, but since summer 2021 employment rates have improved and have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels. In North Yorkshire the percentage of young people aged 16–24 claiming out of work benefits at November 2021 is 4% (6% nationally), compared to 7.6% in the same period 12 months prior, and 3% in November 2019 (pre-pandemic). This is attributed to the return to

a buoyant employment market combined with the Kickstart Scheme. NYCC wants to equip young people for life and work in a strong North Yorkshire economy, and provides employability opportunities for young people which is also an opportunity to develop a pipeline of future talent for the workforce, addressing workplace and labour market demographics and recruitment difficulties.

- 5.2 A range of employment initiatives have been developed in NYCC over many years including: Supported Internships, Work Experience, Apprenticeships, Graduate Scheme, Graduate Internships, Traineeships, and most recently the Kickstart Scheme, as detailed below.
- 5.3 **Kickstart Scheme (Department of Work and Pensions);** In October 2020 NYCC applied to participate in the Kickstart Scheme, a national government £2 billion fund to support 16–24 year olds to access employment as part of the Government’s Plan for jobs in response to Covid. Employers receive funding to pay the wages for a 25 hour/week job, for 6 months for an eligible young person. In total NYCC has supported 136 young people to gain Kickstart employment jobs both in NYCC and through partner employers who accessed the scheme via us, working with over 120 different employers.
- 5.4 The process places responsibility for promoting the roles with the Job Centres, so roles are not been ‘advertised’ openly like normal vacancies, due to the necessary eligibility criteria. There have been significant challenges filling these roles, such as, the rural location of employers, the lack of young people’s ability to travel independently, roles in ‘hard to fill’ sectors such as care where there are high volume vacancies outside of the Kickstart Scheme, and the aspirations of young people in the geographic areas of the vacancies simply not matching. Young people completing Kickstart have provided feedback that the scheme has been really beneficial and helped them to develop confidence and new skills. Over 50% of those completing to date have gained sustainable employment afterwards, some with the same employer that hosted the Kickstart role, others with new employers.
- 5.6 30 young people have been appointed to Kickstart jobs in NYCC and 50% of those who have concluded Kickstart have successfully secured other jobs in NYCC, with the remainder securing other employment, progressing to higher education/study and a small proportion still seeking work.
- 5.7 **Traineeships:** First established in 2012, this is a course incorporating work experience, aimed at unemployed 16-24 year olds with little or no work experience and not qualified higher than level 3. The traineeship supports participants to get ready for work or an apprenticeship. Traineeships last from 6 weeks up to 1 year, though most last for less than 6 months. The government promoted these to employers as a response to youth unemployment due to Covid, and NYCC hosted the work experience element for four traineeships in early 2021 in Business Support and Technology and Change and also found placements via partner employers for two Traineeships candidates seeking placements based in York.

Resourcing for Health and Adult Services and external care providers

- 5.8 Recruiting care workers is a national challenge with approximately 105,000 unfilled vacancies nationally and some 1,200 in North Yorkshire. In response NYCC developed the MakeCareMatter campaign (www.makecarematter.co.uk) to promote careers in care and increase recruitment marketing for the sector. Alongside this, the Recruitment Hub, launched in October 2018, provides recruitment support to the care sector and has been a strong base from which to increase recruitment support to the sector during the pandemic.

- 5.9 The pandemic continued to increase demand for care workers, at the same time as increased staff absence due to infection and isolation, reduced staff availability. Recruiting to frontline roles amidst fear of infection, the impact of the mandatory vaccination, and the fact that care work remains unattractive to many job seekers, added to these challenges.
- 5.10 To meet the internal and external care sector staff requirement, a sector wide multi-channel recruitment campaign was launched on 8th November 2021 and continued, including a TV campaign, in the New Year. Since the launch, the MakeCareMatter campaign has reached over 500,000 people, resulting in hundreds of applicants for the sector, and to date, some 80 appointments. The Recruitment Hub is currently working with 80 providers to recruit to 112 vacancies. Over the first three quarters of 21/22, targeted recruitment campaigns have resulted in 1,143 applications, 279 interviews and 183 placements
- 5.11 In addition in order to address a shortage of care staff in NYCC due to Covid absence and recruitment challenges over 94 NYCC staff volunteered to be deployed on a temporary basis from other posts into care roles and 33 were placed for the duration of February from their current role into NYCC care homes. A further 22 agreed to take on additional, casual hours/relief work in care roles in addition to the substantive role.
- 5.12 The experience and views of two of these internally deployed staff are detailed below;
- “I have worked in the Communications team for the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) since just before the very first lockdown happened. It’s been a busy two years working in a communication’s role, but nothing like I imagine it was as a front line worker. Following NYCC’s shout out for volunteers to help support social care services, I felt that I ought to give a little back having had it comparatively easy throughout the pandemic and so put myself forward. The whole experience was really well organised by NYCC. We had a good conversation about what I could and couldn’t do before assigning me a role. The online training was a bit onerous but absolutely necessary to be volunteer-ready. I’ve now volunteered at Silver Birches adult residential home for two Fridays and I hope to continue to do this for as long as I’m needed. I was warmly welcomed by the staff at the home. I helped serve refreshments and lunch to the residents. I got the opportunity to talk to the residents (one was 103 and SO with it. Another was from South Africa and had led such an exciting life) and overall, I really enjoyed it. I actually felt like I was doing something different that was making a difference in the real world, instead of working remotely from home at my laptop.
- I genuinely would recommend doing this if you can spare the time. I’d be happy to chat to anyone considering it to share more about my positive experience.”
- “If me offering to do a night shift gives a support worker a full weekend break then I feel I am doing my bit, as over the past 2 years they have all worked without complaint on the front line in challenging situations for the service, the clients, their families and their home life. I am really humbled by their dedication and commitment. My 10hrs a week seems little in comparison to what they do on a regular basis and even when I am no longer required to work I will volunteer to take out clients and visit to chat with them etc. in my own time. I would strongly urge anyone else to consider volunteering as I have found it very rewarding”
- 5.13 Recruitment to other professional roles continued through the pandemic for the first three quarters of 2021/22 including:
- Social workers: 152 applications, 62 interviews and 28 new starters
 - Occupational Therapists: 18 applications, 10 interviews and 9 new starters

Resourcing for Education

- 5.14 Working with the Government established Opportunity Area on the specific challenge to increase the quality of teaching and learning and social mobility in the North Yorkshire Coastal area, NYCCs recruitment team have supported schools involved to secure full staffing since April 2018. To date the programme has:
- Worked with 51 primary and secondary schools and continued to build solid relationships with senior leaders, PGCE providers and HR/LA colleagues.
 - Dealt with a total of 384 vacancies (234 teaching posts, 150 support posts) with 380 of them filled first time (97% fill rate)** including filling 67 with no advertising costs, saving each school on average £780 per post, total saving £52,260, with indicative savings on supply costs based on an average cost of £160 per day at £1.3m per term from school supply budgets.
- 5.15 Traditionally schools recruitment is face to face, but through Covid lockdown and safety restrictions schools were supported to continue recruitment, remotely and successfully, avoiding gaps in school resourcing. DfE have audited the resourcing programme, highlighting it nationally as an example of excellence. The team continues to work closely with DfE having completed a pilot to support the development of national school vacancy portal and has now rolled this out across NY schools.

Apprenticeships

- 5.16 2021/22 is the fourth full year of the new apprenticeship levy scheme in operation. The actual spend since January 2021 and the committed for 2021/22 is as follows:

Q4 2020/21 and Q1-Q3 2021/22			
Levy Deduction		Levy Spent	Apprentice starts
Corporate	£723,379	£565,328	90
Schools	£657,683	£203,144	39
Total	£1,381,062	£768,472	129

- 5.17 Since January 2021, 129 apprentices started with 90 in NYCC roles and 39 in schools. 51 have completed apprenticeships in Administration, Health & Social Care, Children's Services, Accounting, Traded Service, Digital and Schools.
- 5.18 NYCC's levy spend for Q3 2020/21 and to date in 2021/22 is c£768k with c£565k spent on core council and c£203k on schools' apprentices.
- 5.19 Unspent funds from the levy pot continue to be returned to the treasury, of which 94.4% is schools unspent contributions. During the pandemic, apprenticeships continued to be delivered virtually where possible but some had to be delayed, all of whom have now returned to their apprenticeship programme.
- 5.20 As previously reported, in July 2020 the government introduced an incentive payment for hiring new apprentices with a payment to employers of £2,000 for under 25's and £1,500 for 25 and over. In April' 21 the scheme was extended and raised to £3,000 per apprentice regardless of age until end January 2022. 41 claims have been submitted, 30 for NYCC and 11 for schools, totalling £95,000; £67,500 for NYCC and £27,500 for schools. In Q4 an additional 14 claims will hopefully be submitted for the remaining period totalling an additional £42,000.

Public Sector Target Report 2020/21

- 5.21 As per the annual reporting requirements of the ESFA, NYCC reports on progress towards the achievement of the 2019/20 public sector apprenticeship target of 350 apprentices

(2.3% of the workforce including schools). Performance against the target has decreased from 0.76% in 2019/20 to 0.73% in 2020/21, with council apprentices at 1% and schools at 0.5% with 108 starts. NYCC continues to have regard to the public sector target, however it remains unachievable due to the continuing challenges and structural limitations previously reported and detailed below:

- The council employs a large number of part time workers whose Full Time Equivalent (FTE) makes it difficult to meet the apprentice numbers required.
- A number of services employ a significant number of part time staff with low contracted hours that makes apprenticeships ineligible or impractical.
- Most schools are small, in rural locations with small workforces and a high percentage being part time, making an apprenticeship almost impossible due to low contracted hours or ability to cover the 20% off the job training.
- The county is predominantly rural with public transport provision often reducing labour market mobility for apprentices who are lower paid until qualified. NYCC provides a transport allowance but it remains a restriction if a car is needed.
- The requirement to undertake Level 2 Maths and English functional skills for Level 2 & 3 apprenticeships has a negative impact on recruitment, retention and up skilling staff. A large proportion of apprentices require functional skills training as they do not hold an equivalent GCSE qualification, particularly in the older workforce, and this has a detrimental effect on some service areas, particularly the care sector. The introduction of occupational specific standards can be restricting for the public sector, as the standards are removing the more generic apprenticeships previously available, leaving gaps in provision for apprenticeships at level 2. A large proportion of NYCC's requirements are at level 2 and there is concern that there is no complete pathway for entry-level learners which specifically affects opportunities in Business Administration and IT.

5.22 The key priorities are;

- The continued delivery of the 25% transfer levy with a focus on supporting North Yorkshire employers delivering services in the county, and employers supporting the delivery of NYCC and North Yorkshire's community services. Work continues with the York and North Yorkshire LEP and other partners on this with good progress. In addition, NY Highways are levy payers, but do not have sufficient funds for their identified requirements, so NYCC can transfer levy funds to support their additional apprenticeship training costs, Also working with Health Education England to market apprenticeships to health and care employers as a solution to their workforce development needs, NYCC continues to support any local care employer by transferring available levy funds.

To date, there are 41 transfer levy agreements in place with employers, covering 152 apprentices, with transfer funding totalling c£1m paid over the life of the apprenticeships. There is a spread across sectors with 116 in the care sector, 21 in the construction industry, 1 in the digital sector, 1 in the voluntary sector, 9 with Brierley Group of companies and 4 with NY Highways.

- The use of the levy to support the development of NYCC employees. NYCC continues to support staff with a management qualification with 11 staff undertaking a chartered management degree apprenticeship via Coventry University, Scarborough, 3 via York St John, 1 with Teesside University, 6 on the Digital and technology solutions professional degree apprenticeship, and 1 Digital and technology solutions professional degree apprentice with Leeds Beckett University.

An additional 9 higher level Apprenticeships have been identified as appropriate; Chartered Legal Executive, Accountancy Taxation Professional, Civil Engineer, Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist, Teacher, Senior Leader, Career Development Professional and Social Worker, with work continuing with CYPS and HAS to look at the integration of the social work route into the current pathways into Social Work within CYPS. There are currently 17 apprentices on programme; 12 in CYPS and 5 in HAS.

Graduates

- 5.23 The graduate programme continues to be successful with 29 currently in post, 70% retention of those recruited since 2014, and 84% average across cohorts in the last 3 years. A summer 2021 cohort of 18 graduates were recruited, including 6 for Ryedale District Council, with virtual welcome briefings held to support line managers and their graduate trainees with on-boarding and understanding the graduate scheme. New and existing graduates have connected through virtual graduate networks and weekly graduate drop in discussions, and provided peer support to new and existing graduates on programme. Feedback from services indicates the calibre and contribution of graduates is high, and the graduates continue to express positive feedback about their experiences on the council's scheme. Plans for a summer 2022 cohort of 14 graduates is underway including 4 for Ryedale DC and further demand for graduate roles supporting Local Government Reorganisation will be added to the campaign as demand emerges from the LGR work streams.

Diversity and inclusion (D&I)

- 5.24 NYCC aims to be an inclusive and diverse employer, where employees feel valued and supported to be themselves at work. As well as being an important part of the wider commitment and approach as a council to diversity and inclusion, this provides real benefits including a better understanding of our communities and service users, greater retention, and greater appeal as an employer, which improves recruitment.
- 5.24 Employee networks have been set up to engage with colleagues from underrepresented backgrounds: the Value in Racial Diversity Employee Network, the Disabled Employee Network (DEN), Gender Equality Staff Forum and the LGBT+ Employee Network which in autumn 2021 was renamed the Pride Network. Whilst still early in their development, the staff networks have proven to be a valuable asset, not only in the support and sense of community that they provide members with, but also in shedding light on staff experiences, and areas that require improvements. The Senior Managers Seminar in November 2021 included presentations from each of the employee networks about topics that matter to them. It provided an opportunity for open dialogue about diversity and inclusion and actions have been drawn up following this to ensure views are not just listened to but change is made where needed.
- 5.25 Diversity and inclusion is about actively celebrating difference and celebrating awareness days has promoted and normalised discussions on issues relating to diversity and inclusion. Celebrations have included Black History Month, National Inclusion Week, Disability History Month, LGBT+ History Month, International Women's Day, Women's History Month, among others. From social media posts, Yammer posts, intranet articles, and senior manager blog features, staff have been engaged by providing case studies and videos on a regular basis.
- 5.26 The future is positive for NYCC's diversity and inclusion journey. Through engaging with staff, and senior leadership support for this agenda employees can be confident NYCC is a place that values them. Future work includes:

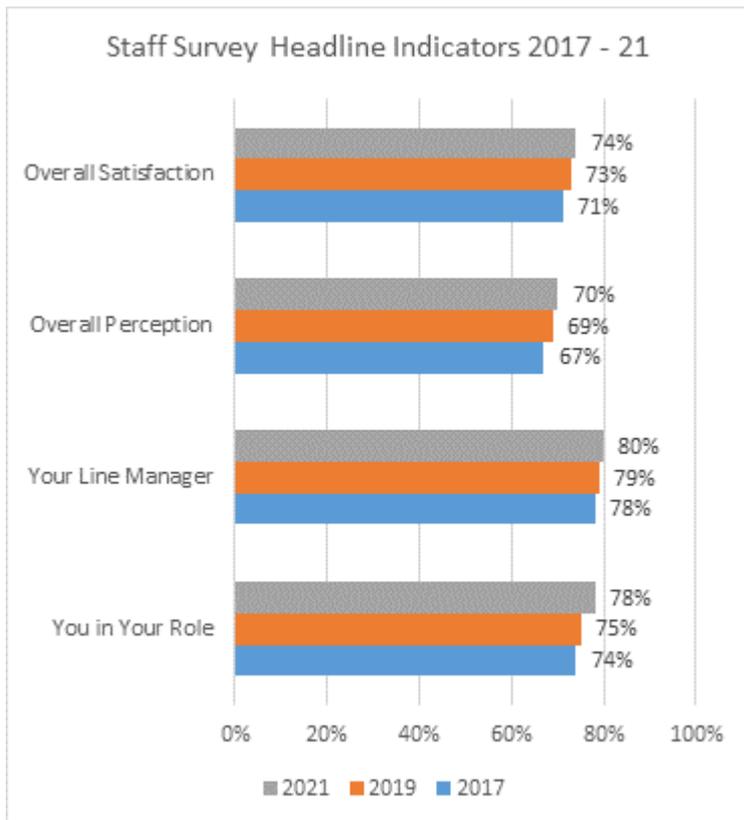
- Building on employee networks and enabling groups to shape the change needed
- Improved Equality and Diversity training and development for staff and managers
- Ongoing education and cultural awareness communication programme
- Development of our external and internal inclusive employer profile
- Improve D&I analytics and inclusive engagement indicators to measure success

Engaging the Workforce

- 5.27 The county council's workforce operates in a continually changing environment and is encouraged to challenge ways of working, to improve service delivery and be an active part of the changes underway. Engagement is crucial to the success of any change, listening to what staff have to say and responding to their views.

Staff Survey

- 5.28 Every 2 years, NYCC undertakes a comprehensive staff survey to identify trends in the workforce, and to gauge how the organisation is performing. This provides a valuable insight into the views of staff across a range of subjects, such as how they feel about their jobs, working for the council, how the organisation serves its customers, plus management and leadership. These biennial surveys are followed up by shorter pulse surveys in the intervening years. The longer term trends reported here are based on the full surveys to ensure consistency. 3,119 members of staff responded to the 2021 "Voice your Views" staff survey which was open for 5 weeks; this is an overall response rate of 41%, which compares well against figures from 2019 (43% completion with 9 weeks duration). Analysis of the 2021 results shows that despite the dramatic changes to working practices during the pandemic, there is still an increasing level of overall satisfaction, up from 71% in 2017 to 74%. There was also a gradual and consistent improvement across all headline indicators; demonstrating that management processes, equipment and support for staff have all improved despite the scale of change. Of particular note, the leadership questions show a more dramatic rate of improvement with an 8 percentage point improvement since the last full survey in 2019 survey, including a significant increase in satisfaction in senior management communications with staff. There are also strong positive results in questions on senior management keeping staff informed on Covid and LGR. Additional questions asked in 2021 also show staff are positive about future working arrangements including working in a hybrid way, spending their time both working from home and the office when it is safe to do so.



5.29 Feedback from the survey showed that the increase in online communication from management teams increased accessibility to senior managers and provided effective staff support and team building. 85% of staff agreed that line managers have done a good job of keeping them informed about Covid, and 83% for senior managers keeping staff informed. In relation to local government reorganisation 79% of staff felt well informed by senior managers. Engagement of staff through communication continued to develop throughout 2021, with the greater use of Yammer, regular emails, blogs from senior management, and continuing the Chief Executive's webinars.

5.30 In the 2021 survey questions were asked of staff who had been working from home about their expectations of future ways of working, including staff confidence returning to office buildings. The survey showed 59% were confident about returning to office buildings, 26% uncertain and 15% not feeling confident. In response to this, initiatives to support staff and address concerns around working arrangements or changes to ways of working were communicated and further support continues to be developed around staff health, wellbeing, and resilience.

5.31 Data from the staff survey was provided via the analysis tool, available on the council intranet to all staff for transparency. Presentations on the data were provided to Directorate leadership teams, Management Board and the Executive, and specific questions were analysed by key owners. Information from the survey fed into the new ways of working summer 2021 focus programme detailed below. A shorter pulse survey to all staff is being considered for 2022.

'New Ways of Working' engagement programme

5.32 This was delivered across the workforce, during summer and autumn 2021. It included;

- the development of a toolkit to support team and individual discussions to capture views and record key points of discussion,

- focus group sessions with over 200 attendees looking at new ways of working and sharing experiences of how the working environment has changed and how it we can work together in the future. These conversations complemented team discussions and 1-2-1 discussions taking place over the summer months.
- Further engagement included new ways of working conversations with employee network groups.
- Engagement with over 150 middle managers via 11 virtual sessions in October 2021 on new ways of working with managers sharing their experiences and asking questions. Feedback on the virtual sessions were good.

5.33 In December 2021, the seventh **annual staff Innovation Awards** took place virtually (and recorded and shared with all staff on the council intranet). Over 350 staff members joined the celebration highlighting innovative achievements that have taken place across the council over the past year. There were more than 60 entries, of which many demonstrated adaption to new ways of working. This year all of the entries were showcased in a video montage, alongside videos of the shortlisted entries in the award categories of: Improving the Customer Experience, Improving Efficiency & Effectiveness; Inspiring Change Behind the Scenes; People's Choice; and the Chief Executive's Award.

Learning and Development

5.34 Strengthening the workforce by developing the requisite knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the workforce priorities is important, and headline data for Q1-3 2021/22 is below:

- 608 classroom training events for 5,258 delegates (incl. 413 from PVI Sectors)
- 12 started a qualification with 23 completed with 22 on going.
- 14,359 mandatory online learning completions (including 2,783 from PVI Sectors)
- 23,390 non-mandatory online learning completions (including 2,157 from the PVI)
- 536 CPD training/learning activities undertaken
- 25 middle managers completed Middle Management Programme with a further 39 starting as cohort 12 in September.

5.35 Online learning resources delivered via the Learning Zone, accessed by staff from any device 24/7

- Ashridge (Learning materials for managers) 5,290 views
- Learning Nexus 9,106
- Learning Zone views 790,628

5.36 The key training and learning priorities for 2021/22 included;

- Support for HAS including a new delivery model increasing accessibility to training, as well as emerging needs resulting from the pandemic.
- Implement the new blended learning approach incorporating webinars, online packages and classroom workshops as a move away from a predominantly classroom based approach.
- Equip managers with requisite skills to enable them to manage new ways of working, navigate change and manage staff wellbeing.
- Equip colleagues to enable them to manage their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Develop better knowledge and skills around the diversity and inclusion agenda.
- Support health integration by co-delivery of training and learning between health and social care colleagues.

- Ongoing training to support organisational development work and service transitions, including team development and behaviour change.
- Continue to deliver adult social care training to wider sector via the Learning 4 Care project (funded by the IBCF) whilst planning for a longer term working relationship with external providers post funding.
- Build on successes such as the accreditation to Skills for Care Training Provider Endorsement Framework and the Head First Approved Mental Health training providers list by increased commercial growth in new areas.
- Continue to support a high number of Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programmes for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW)
- Provide mentoring, observation, support groups, guidance and advice for over 100 Practice Educators in social care.
- Continue succession planning alongside service planning and individual performance management, with the annual review of 'hotspot roles' completed as services assess risk and readiness of senior management, service critical/statutory and hard to recruit or retain roles, whilst developing internal talent and workforce plans.
- SMART Coaching continued to be a priority, with January seeing a high level of staff referred for coaching to support various work related activity.
- Despite the obvious challenges this year, T&L continued to build upon our commercial successes, this included work with Veritau, Selby District Council, Selby Partnership Team, Ryedale District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Warrington Council and Norfolk County Councils as well as North Yorkshire Highways.
- Capturing and developing "curiosity" within HAS has been high on the agenda so far this year. T&L are currently working with HRBPs to develop and deliver a pilot with focus on capturing and developing curious behaviours in order to understand and promote the impact this has on colleagues and the people whom they support. This will form an important culture shift within the Service areas.

Pay and Reward

- 5.37** Spend on pay is monitored on a quarterly basis and increased spend on Covid related payments has to some extent been offset by savings from furlough and travel and other expenses where service delivery was limited due to Covid. Pay terms and conditions are updated via negotiation with Unison to ensure they are fair and continue to attract and reward, with recent changes to payments for being on standby out of hours and to payments for working at a weekend
- 5.38 Workforce supply and demand is causing pressures throughout the workforce and the failure of national negotiations to agree a pay award for 2021-22 for NJC employees has not helped with pay pressures. NYCC agreed with Unison to pay the national employers' offer 'on account' ahead of the final agreement, to avoid further delay for employees.
- 5.38 The employee benefit scheme remains popular internally and generates savings for employees and the council as an employer. The employee benefits offer which included Cycle to Work, green lease cars, home technology, Financial Wellbeing and improved health cash plans, is being supplemented with a shared cost additional voluntary contribution (SCAVC) scheme to help employees plan for their retirement. As part of local government review the benefits are being offered to the NY District Councils ahead of vesting day where possible.

LGR Update

- 5.39 **HR/Workforce Workstream** - This Workstream, with Justine Brooksbank as sponsor, has the remit for the transition of the workforce and all workforce related issues.
- 5.40 Work began in November'21 to set up sub groups to support this work, as below.
- **TUPE**; ensure all staff from the seven district/borough councils are TUPE transferred to North Yorkshire Council in line with legislative requirements.
 - **Training & Development**; plan and provide statutory and mandatory training for day one, develop the manager training and development programme and the induction programme for all staff.
 - **Resourcing**; develop the employer brand to promote the council as a great place to work in the market to attract applicants, ensuring safe recruitment, developing the future workforce (apprentices, graduates, Kickstart), and arrangements/processes for onboarding staff.
 - **Senior Leadership Structure**; recruitment of CEX for North Yorkshire Council. Develop with Implementation team and other workstreams proposals on Tier 2 and 3 structures ready for the CEX and Executive to consider and determine pooling/ringfencing and selection processes.
 - **Pay & Reward**; Develop the pay policy and grading structure, job evaluate new and revised roles, develop terms and conditions and statement of particulars.
 - **HR Data, Systems & Payroll**; Transfer all staff onto HR/Payroll system and pay staff correctly in April 2023. Ensure safe transition of personal files and other documentation linked to staff across districts.
 - **HR Policies**; With a continuing authority model NYCC policies will transfer, but this is an opportunity to review and tweak to ensure policies are fit for purpose.
 - **Employee Relations**; Agree trade union framework and collective consultation process for the new council. Consult with Unison as required during transitional period to get agreement on policies and practices.
 - **Health & Wellbeing**; Determine Occupational Health provision and health and wellbeing support to ensure staff are supported, linking to Health and Safety and the provision of Health Surveillance.
- 5.41 Work is progressing very well with excellent working relationships between HR colleagues across all eight councils.
- 5.42 **HR Operational Group** - On a weekly basis all HR leads from across the eight councils come together to discuss and resolve operational issues affecting the here and now. Work includes joint recruitment campaigns, sharing best practice on policies and procedures, putting in place a secondments agreement to be used across the councils, and in general supporting each other.
- 5.43 **HR Support across other workstreams** - HR Colleagues are also supporting the other workstreams on the LGR programme. This work is evolving and increased capacity and support from HR will be required as we progress nearer to vesting day.
- 5.44 **Members Working Group** - The Implementation Board considered that having a member group to raise and address workforce issues is of benefit. This new group begins meeting in March and will:
- provide member oversight and input as appropriate into the HR/Workforce workstream
 - provide a “critical friend” function to the workstream sponsor
 - consider the work and progress of the workstream

- provide a two way conduit for ensuring staff concerns/issues in councils are raised and addressed.

5.45 Members are:

Cllr Philip Broadbank (Harrogate)
Cllr Keane Duncan (Ryedale)
Cllr Caroline Goodrick (NYCC)
Cllr Helen Grant (Richmondshire)
Cllr Mike Jordan (NYCC)
Cllr Cliff Lunn (Selby)
Cllr Sue Metcalfe (Craven)
Cllr Tony Randerson (Scarborough)
Cllr Malcolm Taylor (Hambleton)

5.46 The following items will be considered at every meeting;

- An overview report covering the work of all the subgroups. This report will provide a summary of work across all subgroups in the previous two months and highlight areas of both challenge and interest.
- A deep dive into one of the subgroup areas.
- Any queries or points of interest requested for consideration by any members.
- Feedback on any staff issues identified by or flagged to members at a local level.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 It has been another demanding and unusual year dominated by continuing to respond to Covid, service pressures and preparing for local government changes. A hybrid working model which can be adapted to individual and service needs has been developed in preparation for a return to workbases. The council has continued to innovate and adapt to attract and retain in a difficult recruitment market. Additional support was put in place in recognition of the ongoing pressures, particularly in adult social care. Staff feedback confirms that employees' appreciate how the Council has dealt with the pressures of the last 2 years, at both a corporate and team level. A strong start has been made on the work agenda for LGR, already establishing effective working groups with District and trade union colleagues. The focus continues on excellent communication and engagement to support the workforce to remain resilient through a continuing period of change.

Justine Brooksbank, Assistant Chief Executive (Business Support)

22 February 2022