

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE AND PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19th April 2021

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 The majority of work in the last year has focused on reacting to and supporting our workforce through Covid. A detailed report provided to this Committee on 18th January 2021, covered this in detail and so is not included in the content of this report.

3.0 A Smaller more Diverse Workforce

- 3.1 The County Council's workforce (non-schools) has now stabilised at a headcount of around 7,300 and FTE of around 5,500 following years of steady reduction. The number of restructures and the impact on staff numbers has reduced, although there are still further restructures ongoing and planned. There has been an increase in the temporary (relief) workforce to respond to Covid, notably in HAS.
- 3.2 The overall non-schools FTE reduction since 2010 has been some 13% (19% on headcount). The numbers directly employed in schools has reduced by 44%, however this includes schools converting to academies where numbers are removed from NYCC records and so does not represent an actual reduction in the education workforce.
- 3.3 Further reductions are offset by increases in posts funded by one-off government grants/initiatives, partnership initiatives such as with the NHS, and new traded service contracts which generate additional income and increase workforce numbers.
- 3.4 Since April 2014 which was the start of the, now concluded, 2020 change programme nearly 6,000 staff have been involved in redundancy consultation in over 170 restructures resulting in 1094 staff displaced (meaning their job no longer exists in the structure) and 659 redundancies, of which over half were voluntary, and 20 retired.
- 3.5 In terms of the cost of redundancies, £5m was allocated in 2014/15 for 2020 restructure costs, and a final £2m for remaining and potential restructures allocated in last year's budget. Of this £1m remains unallocated to conclude the remaining restructures. Exit payments are determined by relevant legislation, notably the Redundancy Modification Order as applicable to local government, and the LGPS if

staff made redundant are over 55. Additional payments via available discretions are not used. Spend compares well with other authorities and the average exit cost per leaver is £13k (including any pension strain) compared to an average £23k in other benchmarked authorities (ONS).

- 3.6 During 2020 reorganisations it became increasingly difficult to redeploy staff due to the more specialist and senior posts affected and so support to staff focussed on achieving 'good outcomes'. Where an employees' destination at leaving is known 39% found other employment, 27% did not wish to seek new work, 3% self-employed or in further training, and 4% unemployed and still seeking work. This means 96% 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 23.4% male and 76.6% female. The proportion from a BAME background has increased to 2.3% (against a local population figure of 2.7%) and the proportion of staff declaring a disability has increased slightly to 2.2%. However, over 2,000 staff who have chosen not to declare their ethnicity, and half of employees have not identified if they have a disability, despite further work to enable accurate information collection and reporting. The average age of the workforce has increased slightly to 47.4 years and the proportion of under 25 year olds has increased to 4.6%. 40.8% of staff are full time so 59.2% work part time with many of these having multiple part time roles. The characteristics of the top 5% of earners are 59.5% female, 1.3% BAME and 1.7% with a disability.
- 4.2 **Sickness Absence:** sickness absence is measured in number of FTE days lost and was 8 days in 2019/20, still amongst the lowest of county councils nationally. In the first 3 quarters of 2020/21 this has decreased significantly with a projected 2020/21 figure of around 6.5 days. This reduction in sickness absence in year is seen nationally across sectors and is a response to Covid whereby staff find it easier to manage illness where they are working from home and are less likely to feel they need to declare themselves "off sick". This will be considered as part of the work looking at working arrangements in the future and "the new normal" post Covid. In addition the furloughing of around 800 staff will have impacted on absence levels.
- 4.3 In 2019/20 working days lost to long term sickness absence accounted for 65% of all absence. The most common causes of sickness absence remain stress, depression and anxiety related (32.2%), musculo-skeletal problems (19.5%) and infections (11.1%). Some of the increase in mental illhealth related absence appears to be a change in how the reason for absence is recorded, with a decrease in most other causes of sickness absence, which suggests improved confidence about reporting and seeking help for mental health issues.
- 4.4 The previously provided report on on the workforce impact of Covid detailed work undertaken to support employee wellbeing and resilience over the last year and this committee commented positively on this provision.

- 4.5 **Turnover:** Turnover was 13.5% in 2019/20 and is currently slightly lower with a predicted 2020/21 outturn of 12% (LGA benchmark 13.5%). Length of service is 9 years against a local authority average of 4.5 years, so double. The Council continues to be relatively successful in recruiting and retaining staff and works hard in maintaining this position.
- 4.7 **The implications of Brexit:** This is currently the 'grace period' whereby EU workers are able to work in the UK until 30th June 2021. There does not appear to have been any detrimental impact on the workforce to date although Covid has changed the economic landscape to such an extent that it is difficult to consider what the impact will be going forward relative to previous predictions.
- 4.8 **Spend on agency pay:** The workforce approach at NYCC 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 exceptional circumstances when all other options have been exhausted. Spend on agency staff was £733k in 2019/20 and so far is £350k in the first 3 quarters of 2020/21, so overall agency spend continues to reduce, but as a direct result of Covid pressures agency spend will increase temporarily in Q4. IR35 assignments account for a large portion of total agency spend. For 19/20 the total IR35 was £640k and is currently at £266k in the first 3 quarters of 2020/21. Off-payroll workers such as consultants or interims previously paid taxes directly to HRMC through their business rate set-up or self-assessment. In April 2017 this changed for public sector (from April 2021 this is extended to private sector), off-payroll workers, subject to assessment, must pay tax through a PAYE payroll system. NYCC minimise the use of these and the vast majority of off-payroll (IR35) engagements are for specialist and independent mental health and best interest assessors required due to statute/regulation. Agency spend remains low compared to other local authority spend; agency spend in similar sized authorities is approx. £3-4m.

5.0 Recruitment Developments

Young People's Employment Initiatives

- 5.1 The impact of Covid 19 on youth employment is likely to be significant, with an increase evident in North Yorkshire of young people aged 16–24 claiming out of work benefits; currently 7.6% (9% nationally) compared to 3% the same period 12 months previous. Areas of the county with the highest numbers are Scarborough 11.1% and Harrogate 7.4%. NYCC recognises the need to equip young people for life and work in a strong North Yorkshire economy, and in response is providing employability opportunities for young people. As one of the county's largest employer with a continual need for staff this is an opportunity to develop a pipeline of future talent for the workforce, addressing workplace and labour market demographics.
- 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, and most recently Kickstart Scheme and Traineeships which are detailed below

- 5.3 **Kickstart Scheme (Department of Work and Pensions);** In October 2020 NYCC made an initial application 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. In total NYCC has applied for 347 Kickstart placements, 40 directly with NYCC as the host employer and the remaining 307 with partner employers across the county, where NYCC supports business as a Gateway organisation. These placements are at various stages of the process with 27 appointed to so far.
- 5.4 There are challenges and delays with the national programme. It has taken 2-3 month to gain approval with a 2-3 week lag from submitting the vacancies to them being uploaded by DWP and available for applications. The time from submission of application to being able to start a Kickstart job placement creates planning difficulties and requires additional engagement with participating employers.
- 5.5 There are likely to be challenges attracting eligible young people to meet the requirements of the Kickstart placements as recruitment progresses, and NYCC’s resourcing team are working closely with DWP to maximise the Kickstart opportunities for local young people. As a Gateway organisation, NYCC’s resourcing team will support young people with their employability to help them transition into long-term employment beyond the initial Kickstart placement. Employability provision is an essential element of the programme.
- 5.6 A further 13 new organisations have expressed an interest in providing Kickstart jobs and a further application will be submitted in April 2021. From the DWP approvals there are 347 Kickstart job placements in progress providing £2.3m government funding of salaries coming to local companies. Also the government have announced that Kickstart employers are eligible for the £3k apprenticeship incentive if they successfully transition into an apprenticeship following their Kickstart placement. Where opportunities exist transition will be supported through the resourcing teams employability support.
- 5.7 **Traineeships;** A traineeship is a course incorporating work experience aimed at unemployed 16-24 year olds who have little or no work experience and are not qualified higher than level 3. The traineeship supports participants to get ready for work or an apprenticeship. Traineeships can last from 6 weeks up to 1 year, though most traineeships last for less than 6 months. The government has promoted these to employers as a response to youth unemployment due to Covid, and in response NYCC has hosted the work experience element for 4 traineeships in early 2021 in business support and Technology and Change with a further 2 planned for April 2021.

Resourcing for Health and Adult Services

- 5.8 Recruiting care workers is a national challenge with approximately 112,000 unfilled vacancies nationally and 1,200 in North Yorkshire. In response to this NYCC developed the MakeCareMatter campaign (www.makecarematter.co.uk) to promote careers in care and increase recruitment marketing for the sector, and the Recruitment Hub, launched in October 2018 provides vital recruitment support to the care sector.

- 5.9 The Covid pandemic has increased 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 and initially concerns regarding PPE brought greater difficulties and despite rising unemployment, care work remains unattractive to many job seekers.
- 5.10 To meet the internal and external care sector staff requirement the resourcing team:
- Increased recruitment marketing and attraction, targeting those temporarily furloughed including writing to business across the county, reaching 122,000 in an initial campaign, 230,000 in a second one, resulting in 2,491 applicants and 714 new starters since March 2020.
 - Contacted 157 NYCC leavers/retirees to see if they were able to return to help.
 - In August 2020 planning started to recruit additional staff to provide resilience for Covid and winter pressures with over 6,000 hours recruited to. Recruitment continues to recruit a further additional 1,921 hours.
 - Deployed NYCC staff with a temporary reduction in work due to lockdown.
 - Supported managers by assessing, vetting and arranging start dates for new recruit to free operational manager time.
 - Operated evening and weekend on call arrangements for emergency support.
- 5.11 The outcome of this was:
- No agency workers were required in the initial response to Covid unlike most other local authorities with use only required for Q3 at cost of £31k
 - While many of the relief staff returned to their original jobs after the first Covid wave 38 transferred to permanent contracts and 71 remain active reliefs.
- 5.12 Recruitment to other professional roles continued through the pandemic with response for the first three quarters of 2020/21 as follows:
- Social workers: 162 applications, 72 interviews and 28 new starters
 - Occupational Therapists 21 applications, 13 interviews and 9 new starters
 - Other professional roles recruited to most recently included; 2 health improvement managers, 4 health improvement officers, 5 quality improvement officers, 1 governance manager, 3 supported employment coordinators, 3 team leaders 3 and 1 team manager.
 - Agency spend for other professional roles was zero in Q1 and Q2 but £51,585 in Q3 including spend on OT's, Health Improvement Officers, Public Health Consultant and Intelligence Officers.

External Care Providers

- 5.13 Recruitment for external care providers continues; since August 2020 recruitment attraction through the MakeCareMatter campaign has reached 335k people, resulting in 1034 applicants for the provider sector. Including applicants from previous campaigns, 815 are progressing with providers with 420 interviews and 179 new

starters. The Recruitment Hub is currently working with 50 providers to recruit to 70 vacancies. It has supported 11 care homes with emergency staffing requirements in response to a Covid outbreak that risked not meeting statutory staffing levels, involving expediting new recruits, seconding NYCC staff and arranging urgent agency worker cover.

Resourcing for Education

5.14 Working with the Opportunity Area on the specific challenge to increase the quality of teaching and learning and social mobility in the North Yorkshire Coastal area, NYCCs resourcing team have supported schools involved to secure full staffing since April 2018.

5.15 To date the programme has:

- Worked with 45 primary and secondary schools and continued to build solid relationships with senior leaders, PGCE providers and HR/LA colleagues.
- Dealt with 229 vacancies (171 teaching posts, 57 support posts) with 219 filled first time, the remaining 10 being subsequently filled. Indicative savings on supply costs (based on average cost of £160 a day) on a teacher working in a school for a term (7 weeks) and filling 171 teaching posts means a saving of £958k a term.
- Filled 29 teaching posts from talent pools established from outside the area.
- Filled 57 support roles in 12 schools first time where previous recruitment campaigns had failed for 8 schools
- Filled 40 posts with no advertising costs, saving each school on average £780 per post (based on a Secondary TES bronze online advert). Total saving £31k.
- Attracted and recruited 40 teachers and support professionals from out of the area, who have relocated from Newcastle, Doncaster, Bradford, Wakefield, Leeds, Darlington, London, Redcar and Cleveland, Birmingham, York, Tunisia, Hull, Barnsley and Sweden.

5.16 Traditionally schools recruitment is face to face, but through Covid lockdown and safety restrictions schools have been 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 for launch in April 2021.

Apprenticeships

5.17 2020/21 is the third full year of the apprenticeship levy scheme in operation. Actual spend since April 2019 and committed and forecast for 2020/21 are as follows:

Full year 2019/20 and at Q3 2020/21			
Levy Deduction		Levy Spent	Apprentice starts
Corporate	£1,315,211	£1,047,833	155
Schools	£1,392,288	£155,317	38
Total	£2,707,499	£1,203,150	193

5.18 Since April 2019, 118 apprentices have started, 107 in NYCC roles and 11 in schools in 2019/20. The remaining 75 started in 2020/21 with 48 in NYCC roles and 27 in schools. 131 have completed across apprenticeships in Business Administration,

Health & Social Care and Leadership Management, Legal and Accounting, Digital and Construction.

- 5.19 NYCC's levy spend for 2019/20 and to date in 2020/21 is c£1.2m with £1.05m spend on core council and £155.3k on schools' apprentices. As previously reported, unspent funds started to expire in May 2019. NYCC began returning funds from the levy pot to the treasury in September 2019. A total of c£882.5k has been returned to date of which 100% is schools unspent contributions.
- 5.20 During the Covid 19 pandemic NYCC apprenticeships have continued to be delivered virtually and those unable to continue have being placed on break in learning (BIL) and resumed when services were able to support the learning again. 31 apprentices initially affected, 27 in HAS Adult Care, and 4 in schools. As at the end of Q3 2 apprentices remained on BIL, 1 in Adult Care and 1 Kitchen staff in schools. Also 13 starts in Adult Care were delayed and are now being progressed with 7 apprentices commencing in Q3 and the remaining forecasted to commence in Q4.
- 5.21 In July 2020 the government introduced an incentive payment to businesses who hire young apprentices under the age of 25, with a new payment of £2k per apprentice and an incentive payment to businesses to hire apprentices aged 25 and over, with a payment of £1.5k per apprentice. This scheme covers new apprentices hired from 1 August 2020 to 31 March 2021. At the end of Q3 6 apprentices qualified for this, 4 in council roles and 2 in schools.
- 5.22 **Public Sector Target Report 2019/20;** As per the annual reporting requirements of the Education Skill Funding Agency (ESFA) NYCC reported on progress towards the achievement of the 2019/20 public sector apprenticeship target of 350 apprentices i.e. 2.3% of the workforce including schools. Performance against the target has decreased from 1% in 2018/19 to 0.76% in 2019/20, with council apprentices at 1.5% and schools at 0.1%. NYCC continues to have regard to the public sector target, however it was, and remains unachievable due to the continuing challenges and structural limitations previously reported as;
- The large number of part time workers whose Full Time Equivalent (FTE) makes it difficult to meet the apprentice numbers required, low contracted hours make apprenticeships ineligible or impractical.
 - Most schools are small and rural, with small workforces and a high percentage part time, making an apprenticeship almost impossible due to low contracted hours and 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 the Level 2 & 3 apprenticeships has a negative impact on recruitment and retention. A large proportion of apprentices require functional skills training as they do not hold an equivalent qualification ie GCSE grade 4 or above, particularly in the older workforce with their qualifications not being equivalent. This is having a detrimental effect on some service areas, particularly the care sector.

- The introduction of the occupational specific standards can be restricting for the public sector as the standards are removing the more generic apprenticeships previously seen with the frameworks, 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, specifically affecting opportunities in Business Administration and Schools IT.

5.23 **Priorities for work on apprentices in year** have focused on:

- **Levy Transfer**; as previously reported, from March 2019 NYCC could transfer 25% of its levy pot to non-levy paying employers. Work continues on this as a way to spend the levy and reduce funds returned, whilst also supporting local employers to expand and develop their workforce. Work continues with the York and North Yorkshire LEP and other partners to deliver this. Examples include:
 - The Hambleton Construction Skills Village supports local residents into apprenticeships and jobs within the construction industry locally.
 - Continuation of support to the Scarborough Construction Skills Village, in partnership with Scarborough Borough Council, to support local construction skills agenda.
 - Health Education England are working with local care services to market apprenticeships. NYCC have identified that they will be willing to look to support any local employer that requires transfer levy funds.

26 transfer levy agreements are in place for 71 apprentices at a total value of c£449k (over the life of the apprenticeships), 53 in the Care Sector, 15 in the Construction Industry, 1 in Engineering, 1 in the Voluntary Sector, 1 with Veritau. A further 132 apprenticeship applications are in progress at an additional value of c£555k, 126 in the Care Sector and 6 in the Construction Industry.
- **Engagement with Schools** to optimise levy spend; Work continues with schools with information on apprenticeships and current government incentives promoted on the CYPS schools information website, attendance at the Schools Finance conference, and identifying positive case studies in schools to promote apprenticeships as successful learning and development solutions.
- **Ensuring apprenticeship schemes are of a high quality** and meet NYCC/service requirements. Work continues with providers through procurement and contract management to ensure apprentices are on high quality schemes. NYCC continues to support Coventry University, Scarborough (CUS) through a collaboration agreement, currently on CUS programmes are 11 staff on the Chartered management degree apprenticeship and 8 on the Digital and technology solutions professional degree apprenticeship. In Q3 2020/21 8 digital and technology solutions professional apprentices graduated with outstanding results. There are also 4 Chartered management degree apprentices enrolled with York St. John University and 1 with Serco Education. An additional 9 higher level Apprenticeships include Chartered Legal Executive, Accountancy Taxation Professional, Civil Engineer, Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist, Data

Scientist, Social Worker, Teacher, Senior Leader and Career Development Professional.

- **Continued role mapping and workforce planning** work with directorates; New apprenticeship standards continue to be reviewed and discussed with services as part of ongoing workforce planning. Apprenticeship are considered initially as learning and development solutions in all areas where training needs are identified for individuals/teams/roles. For example the Social Work apprenticeship standard was approved for delivery in 2018. Work continues with CYPS and HAS to look at the integration of this route into the current pathways into Social Work within the organisation. There are currently 12 apprentices on programme; 10 in CYPS and 2 in HAS.

Graduates

- 5.24 The graduate programme continues to be successful with 26 on the programme, 82% retention and 67% of the 2017 cohort remaining at NYCC. A summer 2020 cohort of 15 graduates were recruited, including 4 for Ryedale District Council (RDC), with virtual welcome briefings held to support line managers and their graduates trainees with on-boarding and understanding the graduate scheme corporate minimum standards and ways to access the graduate scheme development offer. New and existing graduates connect through virtual graduate networks. Feedback from services indicates the calibre and contribution of graduate talent is adding value, and Graduate Trainees continue to express positive feedback about their experiences on the council's graduate scheme. Plans for a summer 2021 cohort of around 15 graduates is current underway including 4 for RDC.

Staff advertising

- 5.25 Full year advertising spend was £37.6k for 2019/20, down on the previous year, while spend for the 1st 3 quarters of 2020/21 is just £7.6k, although the 4th quarter is always higher as it includes an annual subscription to online platforms so likely to be nearer £25k.

6.0 Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)

- 6.1 The aim is 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 our 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.
- 6.2 The new D&I programme focuses on four core themes:
Culture, Communication and Connection;
Structure and Governance;
Talent Management;
Teaching, Awareness and Education.

- 6.3 These recognise the need to take a multi-faceted approach to achieve change, with continued engagement with staff central, listening to their experiences, and taking their feedback in to account.
- 6.4 Three **employee networks** have been set up to capture the experiences of colleagues from underrepresented backgrounds: the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Employee Network, the Disabled Employee Network (DEN), and the LGBT+ Employee 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. So far, the [BAME Network](#) has 15 attendees, the DEN has 22 attendees with 41 [Yammer page](#) members, and the [LGBT+ Network Yammer page](#) has 14 members.
- 6.5 Diversity and inclusion is not about ‘tolerating’ difference, but actively celebrating it. Through celebrating awareness days it has been possible to promote and normalise discussions on issues relating to diversity and inclusion. Celebrations have included [National Inclusion Week](#), [LGBT+ History Month](#), International Women’s Day, [Women’s History Month](#), among others. From social media posts, Yammer posts, intranet articles and senior blog features, staff have been engaged in a number of ways. To build on this and diversify ways of engagement in topics relating to diversity and inclusion, the NYCC & Me podcast was developed. The podcast offers a space for deeper conversations about diversity and inclusion, providing a platform for colleagues to speak about their lived experience. The [first episode](#) featured Barry Khan reflecting on 2020 and the creation of the BAME Employee Network. The [second episode](#) features a conversation between Chris Jones-King and local young LGBT+ resident Kate Owen as they reflect on LGBT+ History month and their experiences of growing up as LGBT+ people. [Episode three](#) features Justine Brooksbank reflecting on International Women’s Day and her experiences.
- 6.6 Going forward, there is much to be positive about when it comes to our diversity and inclusion journey. Through engaging with staff and senior leadership support for this agenda, real and lasting change is achievable. Employees can be confident that NYCC is a place that values them and what they bring to our modern council. Future work includes;
- Building on employee networks and enabling groups to shape the change needed
 - Improved 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
- 6.7 **Gender Pay Gap** - The Council’s median gender pay gap is calculated and published annually, and has reduced each year that figures have been reported. The latest figure shows a further reduction from 11.8% in 2017 down to just 2% this year. Job evaluation ensures that all employees are paid fairly according to the job-evaluated value of their role.

- 6.8 In the period since reporting began NYCC have applied the new national NJC pay spine to a new pay and grading structure, with pay at the lowest pay point increasing by 23% from £7.52 to £9.25 per hour in this period.
- 6.9 This significant reduction in NYCC's gender pay gap comes at a time when analysis by the Times suggests that the gender pay gap has widened over the past year, with women earning 89p for every £1 men earn, on average. The study shows that the pay gap widened to 11.1% in 2021, up from 10.6% last year, 9.5% in 2019 and 9.3% in 2018. It was also found that 38% of organisations included in the research had a larger median pay gap than last year. The analysis also shows that the majority of industries pay men more than women on average, with the pay gap widening in nine out of 21 sectors.
- 6.10 NYCC's success in reducing the gender pay gap evidences that the Council is successfully tackling systemic issues such as occupational segregation where traditionally more women have been employed in lower paid care and cleaning roles. Men and women are now employed more evenly across all pay grades. It is also evidence of success in encouraging women into science and technology and that women are supported in their return to work after having children so they do not have to step off the career ladder.

7.0 Engaging the Workforce

- 7.1 The county council's workforce operates in an environment of continual change and is encouraged to challenge how things are done, to improve service delivery and be an active part of the changes underway. How they are engaged is crucial to the success of all change, listening to what staff have to say and responding to their views.
- 7.2 A Pulse Survey took place in summer 2020, with a focus on working through Covid with a 34% response rate. Satisfaction rates amongst the workforce had overall increased since the last survey pre Covid from 71% in 2019 to 83.5% in 2020. Noticeable increases in satisfaction included senior management communications; 53.55% in 2019 to 87% in 2020, and staff having the right resources (such as technology) to support working effectively as a result of new working arrangements; 69% in 2019 to 83% in 2020. A number of initiatives on workplace wellbeing continue to be developed to support staff on health, wellbeing and resilience issues as part of the response to the survey.
- 7.3 There was a 34% satisfaction increase in senior management communications to staff in the 2020 pulse survey (53.55% in 2019 to 87% in 2020). Engagement of staff through senior communication continued to develop throughout 2020, with the greater use of Yammer, as part of the Microsoft Teams roll out. Regular emails and blogs from senior management as well as the introduction of the Chief Executive's webinars were positively received by staff. Feedback from the survey informed that the increase in online communication from management teams increased accessibility to senior managers and provided effective staff support and team building.
- 7.4 A full staff survey is scheduled for summer 2021 to benchmark staff engagement,

wellbeing and resilience and to inform approaches and optimise resources.

- 7.5 Engagement with middle managers continued via 11 virtual sessions throughout October 2020 in 'shared conversations' with Assistant Directors. Over 300 middle managers discussed managing teams under new ways of working. The sessions explored how to continue to build engagement, motivation and trust as well as maintaining relationships through different working arrangements. Managers were able to share their experiences as well as ask questions. Overall, virtual sessions were very successful and widely received with an increase in attendance by 18% from 2019, when the sessions had taken place at venues across the County.
- 7.6 In December 2020, the sixth annual staff innovation awards event was hosted in recognition of the inspiring achievements over the past year. There were 68 entries for the 2020 awards highlighting innovation and achievements across the Council, the largest number of entries since the awards were launched in 2015. The awards ceremony took place virtually with shortlisted teams sending videos to showcase their entries across the categories of Improving the Customer Experience, Improving Efficiency & Effectiveness; Inspiring Change Behind the Scenes; People's Choice; and the Chief Executive's Award: Going the Extra Mile. There was a fantastic response to the virtual event with almost 500 staff attending to support their colleagues' amazing work during a very difficult period.
- 7.7 With the rollout of MS Teams across the organisation, staff engagement has continued to develop with the use of Yammer groups for social group conversations amongst staff. There has been a number of successful Yammer communities established across key development themes such as health, wellbeing & resilience groups; new ways of working; diversity & inclusion; as well as a middle managers discussion group.

8.0 Learning and Development

- 8.1 Strengthening the workforce by developing the requisite knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the workforce priorities is important, and headline data for Q1-3 2020/21 is below:
- 567 classroom training events for 4,937 delegates (incl. 462 from PVI Sectors)
 - 94 started a qualification with 99 completed with 259 on-going.
 - 11,808 mandatory online learning completions (inc 2,757 from PVI Sectors)
 - 23,277 non-mandatory online learning completions (inc 7,091 from the PVI)
 - 987 CPD training/learning activities undertaken
 - A programme of leadership and management webinars were developed in Q1 and delivered in Q2 with 58 webinars delivered to 478 managers including:
 - Leading people through change webinar
 - Values based leadership webinar
 - Managing remote or virtual teams webinar
 - Understanding your team webinar
 - Managing Performance remotely webinar

- Having a difficult conversation webinar
- Talking about mental health webinar
- 23 middle managers completed Middle Management Programme with a further 41 starting as cohort 11 in September.

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

- Ashridge (Learning materials for managers) 2,882 views
- Stream Learning 1,662 views
- Learning Nexus 7,064
- Learning Zone views 769,715

8.3 The key training and learning priorities for 2020/21 included;

- Implement a new, much more blended learning approach incorporating webinars, online packages and classroom workshops as a move away from a predominantly classroom based approach.
- Deliver quality interventions to meet needs emerging from the Beyond 2020 future workforce work, and Covid 19 service needs, plugging skills and knowledge gaps.
- Equip managers with requisite skills to enable them to manage new ways of working, navigate change and manage staff 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.
- Provide necessary training and learning activities to support NY Highways.
- Ongoing training to support organisational development work and service transitions, including team development and behaviour change.
- Support for HAS including a new delivery model increasing accessibility to training, as well as emerging needs resulting from the pandemic.
- 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.
- Further grow ability and scope of virtual learning to enable agile and flexible delivery and expand our offer with different resources and learning tools.
- Continue to support a high number of Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programmes for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS)
- 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.

9.0 Pay and Reward

- 9.1 **Pay Structure** - Evidence suggests the council's new pay structure, introduced April 2019, has been successful in attracting and retaining staff within the relevant pay market for professional and management roles. It has largely removed or reduced the need for market supplements, with successful recruitment, reduced turnover, low use of agency staff and reduced supplementary payments such as recruitment and retention payments. Pay and allowances are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain competitive, attractive and appropriate. Senior pay is benchmarked against both local and comparable national councils, which illustrates for example a management leanness (ratio of headcount to managers earning over £50k) of just 0.9% compared to 4% at similar sized County Councils and at local District councils.
- 9.2 **Employee benefits** - The employee benefit scheme has been reprocurd, with many improved offers on the new platform. The variety of employee benefits include Cycle to Work (now open for orders at any time); green lease cars with Tusker; home technology with Let's Connect; Financial Wellbeing with Salary Finance; and improved health cash plans with BHSF Touchpoint. The benefit platform offers a range of attractive offers for employees.

10.0 Workforce Strategy

- 10.1 The workforce strategy is undergoing a refresh with a renewed focus on new ways of working post Covid lockdown supporting the Modern Council principles:
- Transforming the organisation;
 - Managing and developing talent;
 - Driving performance;
 - Engaging the workforce; and
 - Workplace wellbeing
- 10.2 The workforce plan provides a framework of information, tools, and practical support to enable the workforce to take responsibility for their development, career progression and health and wellbeing, supported by confident managers.
- 10.3 To deliver the Council Plan ambition as an innovative and forward thinking Council, the workforce is being supported to be agile, working in modern and efficient ways, maximising the use and exploiting the full potential of technology and workspaces, to enable collaborative and flexible working in all locations.
- 10.4 During the pandemic a significant amount of the workforce have been working efficiently from home. Working from offices has been limited to those who are unable

to work from home and or essential work that cannot be undertaken from home. Work is now underway to look at what the modern workplace may look like, post Covid, to enable working in a more flexible way. This includes looking at the design of our buildings to include spaces for collaboration and project work as well as individual spaces. Technology to enable flexible working. Engagement with managers and staff will take place to help ensure that best use is made of our spaces and the ways in which we work going forward.

11.0 Conclusion

- 11.1 It has been an extraordinary and unusual year dominated by Covid, with furlough, testing, PPE, vaccinating and homeworking continuing. The working environment and how staff work going forward will probably be changed permanently with greater hybrid working, increased use of technology, and reduced travel. In the coming year there will be further challenges to address the impact of Covid: important work on supporting young people into employment using new government initiatives to good effect, and support to the care and education section with recruitment to the benefit of our communities. Work will continue to support improved diversity and inclusion. The other major challenge is to start to develop the work agenda for Local Government Review once the outcome is known. The focus for this will be excellent communication and engagement as well as support for the workforce to help them remain resilient through a continuing period of change.

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