

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 17 January 2023

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: 2023-2027 Workforce Plan

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the 2023 – 2027 Workforce Plan to Cabinet for approval.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet approve the 2023 – 2027 Workforce Plan.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The 2018-2022 Workforce Plan was approved by Cabinet, 12 June 2018. Updates on progress with implementing the Plan's 27 actions have been presented to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on several occasions. Although progress with several actions has been delayed by the impact of the COVID pandemic, the majority of actions have been completed. Some actions are ongoing and have incorporated into the 2023-2027 Workforce Plan.
- 3.2 Work began in summer 2021 to review the then current Plan and prepare a new Plan. This took account of progress made with the existing Plan as well as the new priorities arising from changing circumstances including the impact of the pandemic on the council's priorities and the council workforce. Whilst it had originally been intended to produce the new Plan in spring 2022 the continuation of the pandemic and council operating in business continuity mode delayed production of the new Plan.
- 3.3 A synopsis of the 2023-2027 Workforce Plan was presented to the JCC on 7th December 2022. Comments received from the JCC have been incorporated in the final draft of the Plan which is presented with this report.
- 3.4 The new Plan has been informed by analysis of the current council workforce profile; a review of the context and drivers of change that impact on the Council's workforce; a survey of Service Managers that identified trends,

challenges and desired actions at both Council and service levels; the results of the latest employee engagement survey; and analysis of the employee equalities monitoring information.

3.5 The Workforce Plan's vision is that:

East Lothian Council will be an employer of choice and our staff will:

- ❖ *have the skills, knowledge, experience and motivation to deliver the highest quality services*
- ❖ *be flexible and adaptable around our changing organisational needs*
- ❖ *take personal responsibility and ownership to be effective in their jobs and take every opportunity to be as productive as possible to deliver their agreed work priorities*
- ❖ *be resilient to change and instigate, as well as adapt to, changes in service delivery*
- ❖ *be satisfied and engaged and feel safe at work*
- ❖ *work in partnership across all services and with the Council's partners and communities to effectively deliver essential services and outcomes*
- ❖ *be customer focused and deliver person centred, trauma informed and inclusive services*
- ❖ *feel valued and recognised for the contribution they make to achieving the Council's vision and objectives*
- ❖ *be supported, empowered and trusted.*

3.6 The Action Plan to deliver this vision and address the issues identified by the needs analysis includes 32 actions based around three themes:

- Sustain a skilled, flexible, high performing and motivated workforce
- Support and initiate transformational change
- Build and sustain leadership and management capacity.

3.7 The Workforce Plan and its Action Plan reflect council's continuing and growing investment in its workforce. Its implementation will rely on continuing positive partnership between the Council, its staff and the Trade Unions.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – there are no direct financial implications arising from adoption of the Workforce Plan. Any actions arising from adoption of the Plan that require amendments to the Council budget will be reported on separately if required.
- 6.2 Personnel – there are no direct personnel implications arising from adoption of the Plan. Any actions arising from adoption of the Plan that require a change in Council policy or have personnel implications will be reported on separately if required.
- 6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Synopsis of 2023-2027 Workforce Plan presented to Joint Consultative Committee, 7 December 2022

Appendix – 2023-2027 Workforce Plan

AUTHOR'S NAME	Paolo Vestri
DESIGNATION	Service Manager Policy, Improvement & Partnerships
CONTACT INFO	pvestri@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	9 th January 2023



East Lothian Council

2023-2027

Workforce Plan

January 2023

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Where are we now?	6
3. What is driving the change?	10
4. The Action Plan	18
Appendix 1: Equal Opportunities Statement	23

1. Introduction

The Council adopted the 2018-2022 Workforce Plan in June 2018. The Plan contained 38 actions based around three themes:

- Sustain a skilled, flexible, high performing and motivated workforce
- Support and initiate transformational change
- Build and sustain leadership and management capacity.

The 2018-2022 Plan has been reviewed and revised¹ in order to take account of progress with its actions² and the changing context and challenges, in particular the impact that the COVID pandemic, has had on the council and its workforce.

In developing the new 2023-2027 Workforce Plan account has been taken of the vision, objectives and values established by the 2022-2027 Council Plan.

The Vision:

An even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian, with a dynamic and thriving economy that enables our people and communities to flourish.

The Objectives:

- + **Recovery and Renewal** – recovering from the COVID pandemic by investing in regeneration and a sustainable future
- + **Reduce poverty and Inequality** – supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality
- + **Respond to the Climate Emergency** – meeting our net zero climate change targets
- + **Grow our Economy** – increase sustainable and inclusive growth as the basis for a more prosperous East Lothian
- + **Grow our People** – give our children the best start in life and protect vulnerable and older people
- + **Grow our Communities** – give people a real say in the decisions that matter most and provide communities with the services, infrastructure and environment that will allow them to flourish
- + **Grow our Capacity** – deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible within our limited resources

The Council Values:

- **Enabling**
- **Leading**
- **Caring**

¹ The development of the new Plan has been informed by analysis of the current council workforce profile; a review of the context and drivers of change that impact on the Council's workforce; a survey of Service Managers that identified challenges and desired actions; the latest employee engagement survey; and analysis of employee equalities monitoring data.

² Although progress with several of the Plan's 38 actions was delayed by the impact of the COVID pandemic, the majority of actions have been completed. Some actions are ongoing and have incorporated into the 2023-2027 Workforce Plan.

The 2023-2027 Workforce Plan aims to support the Council to achieve the vision, ambitions and objectives set out in the 2022-2027 Council Plan and address the challenges it faces by providing a coherent and consistent approach to ensuring a skilled, flexible, high performing, motivated, and well managed workforce. Our staff are our greatest asset and the Plan sets out how the Council and its staff will continue to work together to respond to the challenges we face in achieving our vision.

The Workforce Plan forms a key part of the Council's organisational, service and resource planning to support the delivery of the Council Plan. It will support the achievement of the ongoing transformation programme that is central to delivering the changes required – helping to ensure we have the right people with the right knowledge and skills in the right place at the right time. It will be key to ensuring the Council makes informed decisions about our employees, Human Relations policies and organisational development and training plans.

The Workforce Plan's vision is that:

East Lothian Council will be an employer of choice and our staff will:

- ❖ *have the skills, knowledge, experience and motivation to deliver the highest quality services*
- ❖ *be flexible and adaptable around our changing organisational needs*
- ❖ *take personal responsibility and ownership to be effective in their jobs and take every opportunity to be as productive as possible to deliver their agreed work priorities*
- ❖ *be resilient to change and instigate, as well as adapt to, changes in service delivery*
- ❖ *be satisfied and engaged and feel safe at work*
- ❖ *work in partnership across all services and with the Council's partners and communities to effectively deliver essential services and outcomes*
- ❖ *be customer focused and deliver person centred, trauma informed and inclusive services*
- ❖ *feel valued and recognised for the contribution they make to achieving the Council's vision and objectives*
- ❖ *be supported, empowered and trusted.*

The Workforce Plan and its Action Plan reflect council's continuing and growing investment in its workforce. Its implementation will rely on continuing positive partnership between the Council, its staff and the Trade Unions.

Following this brief introduction, the Plan is set out as follows:

Section 2: Where Are We Now? provides a summary of East Lothian Council's Workforce Profile.

Section 3: What Is Driving The Change? provides a summary analysis of the changing context, pressures and challenges which inform the Workforce Plan's objectives and actions.

Chapter 4: The Action Plan sets out 32 actions to deliver the workforce vision and address the issues identified by the needs analysis based around three themes:

- Sustain a skilled, flexible, high performing and motivated workforce
- Support and initiate transformational change
- Build and sustain leadership and management capacity.

2. Where Are We Now? East Lothian Council's Workforce Profile

Headcount and Grading Breakdown

As at 31 March 2022 the council employed a total of 4,890 staff. Since not all staff are full time this equates to 4,032 full time equivalent (FTE) staff. This is an increase 494 FTE over the past 5 years. Most of this increase in staffing has been in the Education service with additional teachers in schools and additional staff to deliver the Scottish Government's commitment to provide 1140 hours Early Learning and Childcare.

Grade	Sum of FTE		
	Female	Male	Total
Teacher	851.68	272.97	1124.65
Grade 04	302.80	192.27	495.07
Grade 07	313.84	93.15	406.99
Grade 06	287.07	114.63	401.70
Grade 05	325.33	61.64	386.97
Grade 08	220.58	106.11	326.68
Grade 09	159.06	89.57	248.63
Grade 10	101.34	59.39	160.73
Craft Worker	-	145.22	145.22
Grade 01/ 02/ 03	123.06	21.16	144.22
Grade 11	44.76	41.10	85.86
Grade 13	10.60	23.60	34.20
Apprentice	7.00	16.00	23.00
Grade 12	9.60	5.86	15.46
Executive	9.00	3.00	12.00
Paid Work Experience	6.58	2.28	8.86
Kickstart	0.71	7.86	8.57
External Secondment	2.00	1.00	3.00
Total	2775.01	1256.80	4031.81

Just under 40% of council staff are employed in schools. Teachers account for the largest number of FTE staff across the Council. Local Government Grade 4 is the grade with the largest FTE across Local Government roles. Just over half (51%) of staff on this grade are based within our schools.

Further detailed analysis shows that a higher proportion of part-time and low paid staff are female, working mainly in Health and Social Care, Education and Facilities services.

Equalities Monitoring

The Council publishes an annual Equality in Employment Monitoring report, providing details of the current workforce according to the protected characteristics

set out in the Equality Act 2010. The data shown below is taken from the latest report for the year 2021/22 that was published in December 2022.

Age

An aging workforce has been a risk acknowledged by the Council in previous Workforce Plans and the Council has implemented a number of youth initiatives which along with recruitment and succession planning form part of the Council's strategy to retain skills and knowledge whilst developing and attracting young talent into the workforce.

The latest monitoring data shows that there has been an increase in staff in the younger age groups. Although it has decreased over the last three years, the age group with the highest percentage of employees remains the 46-55's. However, in line with the previous two years we have seen a further increase in employees in the lower age groups (16-25, 26-35 and 36-45). The proportion of council staff aged under 46 increased from 44.7% in March 2020 to 48.1% in March 2022.

Age Group	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
16-25	207	4.53	225	4.80	282	5.68
26-35	808	17.68	836	17.83	927	18.67
36-45	1028	22.49	1064	22.69	1179	23.74
46-55	1402	30.68	1417	30.22	1426	28.72
56-65	1034	22.63	1057	22.54	1059	21.33
>66	91	1.99	88	1.88	91	1.83

Sex

The sex profile of the council workforce has remained fairly static over the last three years and is still predominately female (73% female and 27% male).

Sex	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Female	3293	72.06	3401	72.53	3623	72.96
Male	1277	27.94	1288	22.74	1343	27.04

Disability

The number and percentage of staff who identify as having a disability has increased slightly over the last three years from 154 (3.37%) in 2019/20 to 213 (4.29%) in 2021/22.

Disability	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	154	3.37	165	3.52	213	4.19
No	3656	80.00	3798	81.00	4062	81.80
Unknown	760	16.63	726	15.48	691	13.91

Sexual Orientation

There has been a slight increase in the number and percentage of staff who identify as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual from 77 (1.69%) in 2019/20 to 103 (2.07%) in 2021/22.

Sexual Orientation	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Bisexual	16	0.35	17	0.26	33	0.66
Gay	36	0.79	41	0.87	47	0.95
Lesbian	25	0.55	25	0.53	23	0.46
Heterosexual	4015	87.86	4120	87.87	4350	87.60
Unknown	478	10.46	486	10.36	513	10.33

Race

Since the categories used in the survey in 2021/22 changed it is not possible to draw a direct comparison with previous years. However, around 92% of council staff identify as being white and just over 1% of the council workforce identify as non – white or other ethnic backgrounds. This aligns with the 2011 census data for East Lothian, although it does not take account of the background of those who preferred not to answer the question. Also, since there is likely to have been an increase in non-white residents in East Lothian since the last census the council’s workforce is likely to be under-representative of the non-white communities living in the county.

Race profile	2021/2022	
	Count	%
Asian or Asian British	32	0.64
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	-	-
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	11	0.22
Other ethnic group (including Arab)	18	0.34
Prefer not to answer/ unknown	331	6.66
White	4565	91.93

Equal Pay/ Gender Pay Gap

The Council addressed the historical issue of equal pay through its Single Status Scheme implementation in 2008 and has no live equal pay claims.

The Council also has a relatively good record in regards to the gender pay gap. This is the difference between men’s and women’s earnings measured as the average (mean) hourly rate of pay excluding overtime payment for female employees divided by the average hourly rate for male employees. A figure of zero shows no gender pay gap.

The Council’s 2021-2022 Equal Pay Audit (analysis of the average hourly rate paid to female and male staff) showed that the mean (average) gender pay gap is 4.15% - for every £1 a male employee earns, on average a female employee earns 4p less.

The reason for the pay gap is highlighted by analysis of the breakdown of female and male employee by pay quartile. The expectation would be that the gender breakdown in each quartile is reflective of the overall gender breakdown of 72.78% female and 27.22% male. As is shown in the table below, the quartile analysis fairly

represents the gender spread in the Upper Quartile. Since 2012/13 over 50% of the Council's highest 5% paid employees have been women. In 2022 around three quarters of the Council's Chief Officers (Council Management Team) are female.

However, in both the Lower Quartile and the Lower Middle Quartile the ratio of males-to-females is reduced. This is explained by the high proportion of care and support workers in this quartile – roles which are predominantly undertaken by female employees. In the Upper Middle Quartile, the ratio of males-to-females is increased. This is explained by the high proportion of craft workers and managers in this quartile – roles which are predominantly undertaken by male employees.

Pay Quartile	Female Employees	Male Employees
Lower Quartile	76.53%	23.47%
Lower Middle Quartile	79.92%	20.08%
Upper Middle Quartile	60.76%	39.24%
Upper Quartile	73.90%	26.10%

3. What Is Driving Change?

This chapter will summarise the context and key challenges which impact on the council's workforce requirements – the impact of the COVID pandemic and systemic (long-term) challenges such as the council's finances and population growth. It will then set out the workforce related priorities identified by council Service Managers and issues raised by staff in the most recent employee engagement survey. The final section identifies issues raised by the equalities monitoring and equal pay data analysis outlined in the Chapter 2.

Impact of COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic forms the backdrop for the 2022-2027 Council Plan and the 2023-2027 Workforce Plan. Whilst the long term impact of the pandemic will not be known for some time, it is already clear that it has had significant impacts on society, the economy, health and wellbeing of citizens, and on public services.

The risks that COVID has created in relation to the Council workforce – sickness absence, staff mental health and fatigue and issues around recruitment and retention of staff – have been highlighted in the Council's Corporate Risk Register. The latest (December 2022) Corporate Risk Register³ increased the Workforce Challenges risk to a 'High Risk' and highlighted the reduced ability to provide a full range of services to the public and to provide internal support services. Some services continue to operate in Business Continuity mode due to staff shortages, with only critical activities being provided in some areas.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of the council workforce, which adapted to new ways of working, new demands and expectations, due to the pressures caused by lockdown. During the first lockdown, over 2,000 council staff were working from home, and after schools went back there were still around 1,000, previously office based staff, who worked from home throughout 2021 and 2022.

In recognition of the changes in working patterns that arose in response to the pandemic lockdowns the council adopted new Homeworking and Flexible Working Policies in April 2022. The benefits of homeworking are summarised in the Homeworking Policy:

'Homeworking forms part of the council's range of flexible working policies and potential benefits include flexibility of working times; improved service delivery; increased productivity, motivation and morale; potential for employee retention and recruitment; reduced travel time and costs; savings on office space and servicing all of which help achieve the aims of the East Lothian Council Plan, the Council Asset Strategy and Management Plan and the Climate Change Strategy.'

As of December 2022 305 staff have formally contracted to work from home and a further 40 have applied for Hybrid Worker status.

³ [ELC20221213_05_Corp_Risk_Register.pdf](#)

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Local Government Survey Post-COVID Return to Work (September 2022) highlighted the need for councils to adapt to new ways of working arising from previously office based staff working from home and / or in a hybrid way. The analysis arising from the survey focussed on three issues:

- Workstyles – focus on staff health and wellbeing, skills and capabilities
- Workspaces – the right spaces for hybrid working
- Worktools – the right technology

It identified a series of issues around these themes including:

- The need for managers and staff to adapt to ‘remote working’ – supervision and management of remote staff and teams is crucial; more 1-1s, support and supervision, need for face-to-face interaction between staff
- Additional support for managers in supporting and managing staff and teams working from home and in hybrid ways/ different locations
- Support for staff being managed remotely
- Greater awareness staff wellbeing
- Need to avoid appearance of two-tier culture between staff in job roles able to work from home and those unable to work from home
- Informal collaborative workspaces to allow conversations to take place
- Agile working policies for all staff
- The effective use and roll out of digital technology and software.

Systemic (long-term) Challenges

As well as responding to the challenges posed by the pandemic the Workforce Plan also needs to take account of the systemic, long-term challenges faced by the council, its communities and citizens. These were clearly set out in the 2022-2027 Council Plan and are summarised below.

➤ Financial Constraints and Uncertainty

The budget gap between spend and funding received by the council is expected to exceed £40 million over the period of this Plan. Given the scale of the funding pressures, it is increasingly challenging to make the required level of savings without having an impact on local services and doing things differently. These change options will have an impact on the Council’s workforce – its size, shape and deployment.

Since staffing costs account for over 65% of the Council’s revenue budget, any significant reduction in the Council’s budget cannot be met without changes in the level of expenditure on staffing. The pressure to reduce staffing costs to meet any budget gaps over the next few years will come at the same time as pressure to increase staffing in services such as education and care services.

As was highlighted in the Council Plan, the continued uncertainty about the level of Local Government funding and continuing cost pressures the Council will have to continue to control expenditure and review how services are delivered (including

developing digital services and its online customer platform) in order to live within its means. These change options will have an impact on the Council's workforce – its size, shape and deployment.

The Workforce Plan does not include specific proposals to alter the current structure of the Council's services. However, service reviews which will be carried out as a result of budget decisions or the requirement to review services plans may result in some alterations to the Council management, service structure and workforce profile.

➤ **Population Growth/ Pressure on Council Services**

East Lothian continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in Scotland, with the population projected to grow by about 1% a year over the next 20 years. Significant growth is projected across all age groups but particularly among children and older people – the age groups which rely most heavily on council services – education and social care. Therefore the growth in the council budget and workforce in Education and Adult Care services seen over the last few years will continue in coming years.

➤ **Climate Emergency**

East Lothian Council has declared a Climate Emergency that requires urgent action to make all Council services net Zero Carbon as soon as possible and in any case by 2045. The Council has also committed to work with its communities and partners towards making East Lothian a carbon neutral county. Sustainability is embedded within the Council's [Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025](#) with the commitment to continue to reduce its carbon footprint and the environmental impact of service provision.

The move to home and hybrid working supported by the Homeworking and Flexible Working policies will reduce the Council's carbon footprint by reducing the number staff of staff commuting to work and contributing to a reduction in the council office estate.

➤ **National Care Service**

The Scottish Government is intent on progressing with the creation of a National Care Service. The Scottish Government's proposals as set out in the [National Care Service Bill published - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\) \(June 2022\)](#) would result in the largest reorganisation of local government services since 1996.

Audit Scotland summarised the concerns around the National Care Service proposal in the Local Government in Scotland Overview 2022: *“Scottish Government proposals for a new National Care Service are still at an early stage but will have a substantial impact on local authorities' responsibilities. Such a significant programme of reform brings challenges and risks.”*⁴

The creation of the National Care Service as envisaged by the Bill will have a direct impact on all social work staff – possibly requiring their transfer to the new national service with all the uncertainties that will hold. However, it would also impact of other council services, in particular support services such as Finance and Human

⁴ [Local Government in Scotland Overview 2022 | Audit Scotland \(audit-scotland.gov.uk\)](#); May 2022

Resources. The potential impact of the National Care Service will need to be carefully monitored and, where possible, action taken to mitigate any risks to the council and its staff.

➤ Transformation

As the squeeze on public sector resources intensifies, the Council recognises that a focus on efficiency alone is no longer sufficient or sustainable and that, given the scale of the financial and demographic challenges ahead, more radical and sustainable solutions are required. The Council will need to focus on doing more with less – being more efficient and effective with fewer resources.

The Council has embarked on a Transformation Programme, which includes the following key elements:

- Review of Council accommodation requirements and new ways of working including technology and partnership arrangements
- The redevelopment of the Council's website and provision of on-line services.
- Exploiting opportunities for income generation and reducing expenditure; for example from exploiting renewable energy sources and developing the Council's expertise in 'trading operations'
- A programme of service redesign, including the Transforming Children's Service project, to be more efficient and effective with fewer resources.

The Council Plan commits the Council to becoming a Digital Authority – making services accessible to customers/ service users wherever they choose, whilst delivering operational and cost efficiencies through improved and streamlined business processes. The Digital agenda is enabling service redesign to give staff the capacity to deliver services digitally thereby ensuring efficiencies are realised from changes in processes. Access to digital technology across all service areas and staff groups will also assist in enabling flexible working and generating increased capacity from reduced 'waste' such as travelling to and from office bases.

The transformation in the way the Council operates and delivers its services – streamlining of processes and eradicating unnecessary bureaucracy – will have an impact on the Council workforce. Change is a stressful process for organisations and for individuals who are affected by it. The transformational change programme will require staff training, management development and support in relation to wellbeing and resilience. The Council will need to support managers and staff through the process; empowering staff to promote and embrace change, developing managers' capacity and ability to manage change; and supporting staff in adapting to and being resilient to change.

The Council will need to ensure that its workforce can support the roll out of new technology to provide digital services; for example, ensuring that all council staff have basic digital skills and have access to digital technology.

Managers' Priorities

A survey of Service Managers carried out in spring 2022 asked for their views on the workforce issues their services will face over the next three years. The most common issues raised were:

- Staff recruitment
- Staff morale and health and wellbeing
- Digital skills
- Challenges for staff and managers arising from new ways of working/ hybrid working
- Succession planning
- Ageing workforce
- Gender imbalance in some services
- Pay inequality/ salary expectations
- Lack of resources/ time / capacity for staff training and development

The results of the survey emphasise the need to make East Lothian Council an attractive place for people to work which will require consideration of pay, terms and conditions, employee benefits, work life balance / agile and flexible working and flexible retirement options.

These issues are all reflected in the Workforce Plan's Action Plan.

Staff Engagement

The last staff engagement survey was carried out in May 2021. A total of 1,435 employees completed the survey. Although the overall response rate (32.2%) was significantly lower than the response in previous surveys (46.6% in 2019) the survey provides a good indication of the workforce's engagement with the council and on the impact of the COVID pandemic and health and wellbeing of the workforce.

As is shown in Table 1 below the responses to the eight core employee engagement questions asked in every staff survey show employees were more positively engaged in 2021 than in 2019. Six questions show a higher positive engagement level (Strongly Agree and Agree) than in 2019; in particular, Q3: *The council is a great place to work* (+5.5%) and Q.7: *I am aware of the East Lothian Way* (+8.9%).

Only two questions recorded a lower positive engagement than in 2019. Q2: *I am encouraged to offer new ideas for improvement* – was only 0.2% lower. Only one question, Q.8: *I have had a personal/ professional/ performance review on the past 12 months*, had a significantly lower positive response than in 2019.

Comparison of Strongly Agree and Agree results for core engagement questions, 2019 – 2021

		2019	2021	2021 - 2019
1	I know how my job / individual objectives contribute to the Council's objectives	94.6	96.4	+1.8
2	I am encouraged to offer new ideas for improvement	84.0	83.8	-0.2
3	The council is a great place to work	80.4	85.9	+5.5
4	I have a manageable workload	60.7	62.4	+1.7
5	I am treated fairly	87.4	87.9	+0.5
6	Change is managed well in my school/ business unit/ service	70.2	71.3	+1.1
7	I am aware of the East Lothian Way	83.2	92.1	+8.9
8	I have had a personal/ professional/ performance review on the past 12 months	67	53	-14

The 2021 survey included 15 questions on the impact that the COVID pandemic and lockdown had on employees. The results to this question showed some differences in the experience of employees who have been working from home throughout the pandemic and those who were working as they did before. For example, just over 51% of employees working as before expressed general anxiety about the impact of the virus on their life compared to just 42% of homeworkers. Perhaps not surprisingly, less than 10% of homeworkers said they are spending less time with their family compared to 22% of employees working as before.

Staff were asked several questions about the level of support they receive from their manager and how they feel. Around nine out of ten employees feel they are getting the support they need from their manager; eight out of ten feel connected to their team; and, nine out of ten have clarity around what is expected of them. There was no significant difference between homeworkers and staff who are working as before.

Three questions about health and wellbeing suggest that a large majority of employees feel fairly positively about their health and wellbeing and work-life balance. However, around 20% of employees across the council have concerns. One in four employees said their work-life balance is Poor (20.5%) or Very Poor (4.6%) compared to three quarters who said their work-life balance is Good (61.2%) or Very Good (13.7%). Just over three quarters of employees rated their wellbeing as either Very Good (10.9%) or Good (65.9), whilst 20.8% rated their wellbeing as Poor and 2.3% rates it as Very Poor.

However, 90% of employees said that they are aware of the support the council provides for their health and wellbeing, and over eight out of ten either strongly agreed (32%) or agreed (52.8%) that they feel able to discuss any health and wellbeing issues with their manager.

The results of the staff engagement survey suggest that the council needs to:

- Continue to work to maintain the positive view of working for the council that a majority of council staff have
- Address concerns about social networking and communications with co-workers being more difficult post-COVID, especially among home workers
- Continue providing advice and support for managers to provide the level of support staff require; and for staff to work collaboratively and effectively in their teams
- Continue providing advice and support on health and wellbeing and ensure that this is available to all staff.

The next staff engagement survey in 2023 will focus on staff mental wellbeing.

Equalities

The 2021-22 employee equalities monitoring information highlights the importance of the work that the Council does to ensure that it meets the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010, and, that it is an employer of choice; provides modern and fair employment opportunities and experiences; and is committed to robust self-evaluation and proactive improvement action. East Lothian Council has continued to encourage employees to feel confident about declaring their disability, sexual orientation or information about other protected characteristics. This is reflected within the equalities monitoring data, with more employees volunteering information about their sexuality and race.

East Lothian Council has a good record on equalities and pay equality and has no live equal pay claims. However, as the workforce profile and equal pay data shows there are still key issues that need to be addressed by the council.

However, the analysis of the latest information highlights a number of areas for the Council to focus on.

For example, the Council's workforce is still traditionally gender defined – care and clerical posts predominantly held by women; crafts, manual and technical posts held by men – and this has meant that the council still has an equal pay gap of over 4%. Further attention needs to continue to be given to 'breaking down' these traditional gender stereotypes in different sections of the workforce, including employee and role profiling in Council recruitment, staff communications through the Inform staff e-zine and public communications.

The Council adopted an Equality Plan in October 2021. The Equality Plan includes the commitment to the council being an Equal Opportunities employer with the aim of ensuring that our workplace feels inclusive to staff with protected characteristics and is a positive workplace for all employees.

Equalities initiatives the council already has in place include:

- Using the 'Integrated Impact Assessment' framework and guidance
- Signed up to use the Disability Confident Symbol

- Signed up to become a Carer Positive Employer
- Taken the See Me campaign pledge
- Taken part in the, now disbanded, Healthy Working Lives National Award Scheme
- Flexible employment policies and practices
- An Equality Training Plan
- Increased the renewal frequency of the mandatory Equality and Diversity training course to annually
- Paying council staff the real living wage and preparing to apply for accreditation as a Living Wage employer.

All East Lothian Employees have access to:

- A comprehensive Employee Assistance programme including counselling, occupational health and physiotherapy provision
- Educational and Personal Development Training Courses – via both face-to-face sessions and remote learning
- Online learning resources via LearnPro
- Free Period Products in Council Buildings
- Sign Language Support
- Online Recite Function – In both English and other additional languages
- Listening Ears Service
- Carers Hub
- A Flexible Family Leave Policy

In May 2022 the Council adopted an Equal Opportunities Statement (Appendix 1) that outlines its commitment to being an Equal Opportunities employer with all aspects of employment and associated policies underpinned by equal opportunities.

Further actions to address the issues arising from equalities monitoring and the equal pay audit and to support the fulfilment of the Equal Opportunities statement are detailed in the Action Plan.

4. The Action Plan

The 2023-2027 Workforce Plan aims to support the Council achieving its vision of being an employer of choice where.

Our staff will:

- ❖ *have the skills, knowledge, experience and motivation to deliver the highest quality services*
- ❖ *be flexible and adaptable around our changing organisational needs*
- ❖ *take personal responsibility and ownership to be effective in their jobs and take every opportunity to be as productive as possible to deliver their agreed work priorities*
- ❖ *be resilient to change and instigate, as well as adapt to, changes in service delivery*
- ❖ *be satisfied and engaged and feel safe at work*
- ❖ *work in partnership across all services and with the Council's partners and communities to effectively deliver essential services and outcomes*
- ❖ *be customer focused and deliver person centred, trauma informed and inclusive services*
- ❖ *feel valued and recognised for the contribution they make to achieving the Council's vision and objectives*
- ❖ *be supported, empowered and trusted.*

The analysis of the council's workforce profile and what is driving change and future needs set out in the previous chapters and the desire to meet this ambitious vision raise several questions that are addressed in the Action Plan.

- Do we have the right size of workforce to meet the public's need and do we have the right staff in the right places?
- How can we meet the financial challenges and the demand for new services and fulfil the need to 'do things differently – doing more with less'?
- How do we meet the challenges we are facing in staff retention and recruitment?
- How do we meet the challenges of an ageing workforce with a high proportion of staff likely to retire within the next five years?
- How do we ensure we have a workforce with more balanced age and gender profiles?
- How do we support staff to maintain their mental health and wellbeing?
- How do we fulfil our commitment to being an Equal Opportunities employer?
- How do we recognise the contribution of our staff?
- How do we support managers and staff to support, embrace and be innovators and instigators of change?
- How does the Council workforce support the development of the Digital Authority?

The Action Plan to deliver the workforce vision and address the issues identified by the needs analysis includes 32 actions based around three themes:

- Sustain a skilled, flexible resilient and motivated workforce
- Support and initiate transformational change, encouraging and supporting staff to work in a more agile way
- Build and sustain leadership and management capacity

1. Sustain a skilled, flexible resilient and motivated workforce

Ref	Action
1.1	Support services to include a Training and Development Plan within their Service Plans – identifying training and development needs of staff and how these will be met and ensuring the Council has a cohesive and coherent approach to planning organisational capacity and skills that support the delivery of council and service objectives
1.2	Review service training and development plans, requirements and budgets
1.3	Keep the <i>East Lothian Way</i> under review to ensure the council staff behaviours reflect the Workforce Plan vision, and in particular the emphasis on delivering customer focused, person centred trauma informed and inclusive services
1.4	Continue to promote the values and behaviours we expect of all staff through the <i>East Lothian Way</i> through embedding them into staff induction, management webinars, and regular communications about good practice.
1.5	Continue to develop an improved, flexible Personal Review and Development (PRD) process and promote the benefits of regular 1-1s and team meetings that meet the needs of all services
1.6	Support the development of a person-centred, trauma informed and responsive workforce, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is informed by people with lived experience • recognises the importance of employee wellbeing • recognises where staff and service users are affected by trauma and adversity • responds in ways that prevent further harm and supports recovery, and • can address inequalities and improve life chances
1.7	Continue to explore options to address issues around recruitment market conditions and challenges and the need to retain existing employees
1.8	Keep Council Terms and Conditions under review to respond to current employment market conditions and to ensure they are aligned to achievement of the Council Plan and the Workforce Plan
1.9	Continue to develop measures aimed to meet the Council’s commitment to be an Equal Opportunities employer including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a review of recruitment procedures and practice against the Scottish Government’s Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit and make any necessary changes • Review the Annual Equal Pay Audit in line with Government guidance to assess whether it should include information and actions to address pay gaps faced by employees with protected characteristic groups along with the gender pay gap; for example Ethnicity & race and Disability Pay Gap audits • Carry out a stress and mental health audit of employees correlated against the protected characteristics as part of employee engagement surveys; and use the results to inform the development of mental health and wellbeing training and support services • Become an “Equally Safe at Work” accredited employer and progress the development of a gender based violence policy • Update the Post-employment Equalities Questionnaire to mirror the current ‘myjobscotland’ questionnaire • Promote Stage 3 Data Collection by increasing the frequency of alerts sent to employees reminding them to update their Equalities Information on myHR and the introduction of an additional reminder into the mandatory Equality and Diversity elearning module • Make appropriate adjustments to support neuro divergent employees • Increase the number of targeted recruitment initiatives to promote employment with the Council to people from underrepresented groups and address traditional gender stereotype roles in employment • Further enhance employee engagement in relation to equal opportunities to gain a more qualitative insight into any issues concerning employees – including barriers to disclosing equalities information.
1.10	Continue to support and encourage our young workforce; attracting, recruiting and retaining young people through creating employment and training opportunities through appropriate training schemes and supporting Modern Apprenticeships in various occupational areas
1.11	Support the improvement of Digital literacy skills in the workforce including conducting Digital Skills audits where required and working with the relevant teams/ Service to build capability in implementing and using new systems and digital tools. Consideration will be given to addressing the specific needs of staff affected by the ‘digital divide’ that may arise from dyslexia or low literacy/ numeracy skills
1.12	Continue carrying out annual employee engagement surveys with a focus on health and wellbeing
1.13	Develop an active approach to succession planning including job shadowing and short term secondments, that enables the Council to manage the loss of skills, experience and knowledge, build experience and new skills and flexibility to respond to business need as well as motivate staff to remain council employees

1.14	Continue to explore strategies and initiatives to improve employee attendance and wellbeing
1.15	Keep the Council's Health and Safety Policy and Management Arrangements under review and continue to embed best practice in health and safety across the Council
1.16	Continue to review staff recognition, rewards and benefits (including the range of non-cash employee benefits in terms of salary sacrifice schemes and discount scheme) to ensure the Council recognises and promotes the success, achievement and commitment of its staff
1.17	Continue to develop and implement an effective staff communications plan, including encouraging and supporting the sharing of ideas and best practice, which will reach all staff, to ensure staff feel engaged with, understand and contribute to the change agenda
1.18	Procure a new Learning Management System for on-line learning that is user friendly and can more effectively engage staff in using e-learning modules and digital learning

2. Support and initiate transformational change, encouraging and supporting staff to work in a more agile way

Ref	Action
2.1	Support service re-design through the provision of project support, improvement methodologies and change management training and support
2.2	Reshape the council workforce profile in the light of demographic, financial and other pressures and to align with alternative service models such as the development of digital services and the wider transformation programme
2.3	Review the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures to support the Council's transformation agenda and support effective people management practice at a time of change, including ensuring effective management of issues of grievance, underperformance and capability
2.4	Monitor the proposal to create a National Care Service to understand the implications of the proposal not just on adult and children's social work staff but on staff across all services; and, where possible, take actions to mitigate negative impacts on council staff
2.5	Continue to provide ongoing development ideas/ learning via Manager's monthly on how to support hybrid working and staff health and mental wellbeing
2.6	Provide training, advice and support for staff in adapting to new ways of working such as Hybrid Working

2.7	Continue to grow and develop the Digital Champions network to ensure employees have the required knowledge and skills to use Microsoft 365 and other relevant applications
2.8	Promote flexible approaches to learning and building capability for succession planning and for emergency situations and business continuity - e.g. job shadowing, short term secondments, re-skilling of employees for deployment.

3. Build and sustain leadership and management capacity

Ref	Action
3.1	Continue to deliver leadership development programmes for all people managers (CMT/ SMT/ Team Leaders and first line managers) to ensure consistent modelling of leadership behaviours across the council and to further enhance our culture of empowerment and continuous improvement
3.2	Continue to provide a blended programme of learning for managers via webinars, face-to-face sessions and mentoring for new and existing people managers on topics to support them with individual learning needs and core manager skills
3.3	Continue to provide introduction to management learning options e.g. webinars, e-learning and videos to those who are keen to develop into a managerial position in the future to support career progression
3.4	Develop interventions to support managers and staff supervisors in communicating and engaging with staff to support effective team management, team building and team relationships
3.5	Ensure all managers receive training on how to deliver PRD's, give effective feedback, support staff development and tackle staff and team performance issues early on
3.6	Ensure all managers have information and access to learning resources and development and learning opportunities so they can support and advise staff with identified development requirements

Appendix 1: Equal Opportunities Statement

East Lothian Council is committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer with all aspects of employment and associated policies underpinned by equal opportunities. We aim to ensure that our workplace feels inclusive and is a positive workplace for all employees, where individual differences and the contributions of employees are valued.

The council takes a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, on any grounds, but in particular, in line with the Equality Act 2010, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

We endeavour to ensure current and prospective employees are treated with dignity and respect, receive equality of opportunity and do not experience discrimination because of who they are.

We aim to attract and retain a diverse workforce to support us to deliver the best services and achieve our business ambitions. We welcome and encourage applications from all suitably qualified candidates and believe that a more inclusive workplace, where people of different backgrounds and experiences work together, ensures better outcomes for our employees and the people of East Lothian.

We take positive steps to ensure that our employees, colleagues, stakeholders, contractors and service users experience fair, equitable treatment, free from discrimination in their dealings with us.

The Council supports equality in our work and employment practices in a number of ways including those below:

- Flexible working employment policies and practices
- Provision of a comprehensive Employee Assistance Programme including Occupational Health and Physiotherapy services
- Disability Confident Employer accredited
- Committed to the See Me campaign pledge
- Healthy Working Lives accredited
- Equality training and development for all employees
- Carer Positive accredited

To help us achieve our goal of having a diverse and inclusive workplace, we have a range of employment policies promoting and supporting equality along with a range of published strategies, plans and reports:

