

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – People & Technology

Corporate Services Committee: 22nd May 2024

Subject: Council Workforce Plan 2022-2027: Update & Annual Action Plans 2023/24

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's workforce planning activity for 2023/24.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note progress during 2023/24 in delivering against the Council Workforce Plan within the People First Strategy and 5-year plan;
- Note the workforce profile as at 31st March 2024 and key changes; and
- Note progress within the Workforce Plans for each service.

3. Background

3.1 The Workforce Planning Strategy and Framework 2022 - 2027 reflects the 5-year People First Strategy and incorporates the Council's Strategic Planning Framework.

3.2 The Council Workforce Plan is subject to monitoring and evaluation to ensure that it remains effective in delivering required outcomes and is responsive to any changes in circumstances, which subsequently arise. This report contains 2 sections and associated appendices:

- The progress and achievements made over the last year (Appendix 1);
- The current workforce profile and monitoring, examining any changes (Appendix 2).

3.3 Service annual action plans are scoped under the four Workforce Planning Priorities from the Corporate Workforce Plan outlined at 4.1 for each Chief Officer Area and are submitted to the relevant Committee as part of the Delivery Planning process. Separate delivery reports are tabled at this committee.

3.4 Whilst separate planning processes exist in relation to West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP), appropriate alignment is in place including attendance at the Health Care Staffing and Workforce Planning Oversight Group to ensure that Council employees working within HSCP are

included and benefit from all Council Wide initiatives and relevant workforce planning requirements.

4. Main Issues

4.1 The attached (Appendix 1) updates on the annual action plans at Chief Officer Service level for 2023/24 under the 4 Priorities:

Priority 1. Our People (Workforce Profile): Ensure resilience and engagement of the workforce;

Priority 2. Recruitment & Retention: Current and predicted future workforce gaps are addressed and core skill sets retained;

Priority 3. Structure & Roles: Service structures and delivery model/s are stable, fit for purpose and future requirements;

Priority 4. Skills & Capabilities: Current and future skills gaps and capabilities are addressed.

These 4 priorities are formed from the Corporate Workforce plan which reflects the People First Strategic Plan.

4.2 Key Achievements

4.2.1 Key achievements over 2023/24 for workforce planning within the context of the People First Strategy are outlined in the sections below.

4.3 Workforce Planning Strategy & Framework

4.3.1 During 2023/24, efforts were concentrated around further supporting the embedding of workforce planning. The Council's Best Value Audit noted the practice in relation to work force planning including our overarching People First Strategy, individual service workforce plans and the real time data available on the workforce planning console.

4.3.2 Following a manager's survey, to gain feedback and benchmark knowledge on workforce planning, a workforce planning toolkit was developed to support managers and close the identified knowledge gaps, improve understanding, inform future development of content and supports required. It is expected this toolkit will be added to, in order to continue to support managers.

4.3.3 Survey results in relation to the workforce planning console and the provision of real time data across the Council have informed future developments for the console and these are outlined within this report.

4.3.4 To support the launch of the WFP Strategy & toolkit, information sessions were held, for managers, these were well attended and feedback positive with ideas to inform future developments. The sessions were timed to be ahead of the end of year updates and creation of 2024/25 workforce plans to ensure managers are appropriately skilled and supported to undertake workforce planning.

- 4.3.5 Embedding the Strategy and Framework has seen the continuation of Chief Officer and Manager Information packs being issued at key stages with discussions taking place in management meetings to support workforce planning activity and reporting requirements at Service level.
- 4.3.6 This year has seen further engagement in external groups to ensure the Council has input to national and local strategies and can benefit from initiatives and joint working. This has included a national survey completed by all 32 Local Authorities in relation to workforce planning in October 23 through the Society of Personnel and Development Scotland (SPDS) and involvement with Glasgow City Region Skills Local Government Skills Working Group where career pathways are currently being developed. Outcomes from these will be shared with Chief Officers to inform future direction and progress.
- 4.4 Priority 1. Our People (Workforce Profile):** Ensure resilience and engagement of the workforce.

Equalities

- 4.4.1 Progress of the Council's equality action plan has continued to reflect the People First Strategy and employee life cycle concentrating on recruitment including methods, in the first instance, to increase the diversity of our workforce.
- 4.4.2 Recognising the importance of diversity and inclusion, and a workforce which is reflective of our communities, focus has continued to be given to actions to support this, supported by a recruitment audit and equal pay audit both completed this year. The findings of these have further informed strategic actions and recommendations for improvements.
- 4.4.3 It is recognised that the Black and Minority ethnic (BME) workforce profile is an area for improvement for the Council' as we look to 'attract more diverse talent'. The Council has recently signed the Race at Work Charter to make a public commitment to improving equality of opportunity in the workplace. There are several actions including Executive Sponsorship with the Council having Joint Sponsorship from our Chief Officer, People & Technology and 2 Elected members. The action plan and launch of this Charter will be carried out in early 2024/25.
- 4.4.4 Understanding the makeup of the workforce is imperative to understand future workforce needs however gathering the necessary employee data surrounding equalities, remains a challenge. Although data verification exercises have been carried out these have only seen slight improvements and the exercises have not provided an adequate response for meaningful analysis in some areas. A further data verification exercise is therefore planned for 2024/25 highlighting response rates and gaps coupled with clear engagement as to why this data is important, what it is used for, to provide reassurance and confidence.

- 4.4.5 Focus has been given this year to progressing and achieving the Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) programme Development Tier. ESAW is an innovative employer accreditation programme to address sex inequality and violence against women and girls, aiming to support employers in reviewing workplace culture and ensuring that policies and practices are enhanced to address the barriers that women face at work. The accreditation brought key actions into place to address the issues faced by women which included the introduction of a Gender Based Violence Policy, the review of the Organisational Change Policy with a Gender based lens and the launch of 2 e-learning modules 'Together for gender equality' and 'Gender Based Violence' which will be mandatory for all.
- 4.4.6 The Council has held the Armed Forces Gold Award for actions in support of Armed Forces, reservists and their family members since 2019. Work has continued to support the maintaining of this award, with re-assessment scheduled later this year including an Armed Forces support Group, consideration to how support can be extended to Cadets and reviewing the activity which services are undertaking in support of the award for further improvements and joint working opportunities.
- 4.4.7 The Council continues to consider its terms and condition considering the recent Equality Review. Consultation continues and work is currently underway to understand the workforce position on public holiday entitlements through an employee survey.
- 4.4.8 The Council is committed to fulfilling the elements of the public sector equality duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and undertook an Equal Pay Audit this year. The outcome of this audit provided the following recommendations:
- Continue to promote the annual data verification exercise with the Trade Unions.
 - Continue to promote the Council's commitment to 'make TIME for disability' through the Employee Wellbeing Group.
 - Undertake a recruitment and selection audit to identify any barriers impacting on disabled people entering employment with or progressing within the Council, females accessing full-time employment and females undertaking traditionally male gendered roles.
 - Continue to scrutinise the use of multi-posts in the organisation.
 - Promotion of flexible working in traditionally male gendered roles.

Wellbeing

- 4.4.9 The priority relating to Wellbeing activity in 2023/24 was to complete the launch of the new employee benefits platform Vivup. This launch strengthened the wellbeing supports available to employees through the provision of additional employee counselling, self-help resources, sign posting to financial wellbeing supports in addition to a range of supports to aide physical wellbeing, victims of domestic abuse, advise on energy bills etc.

Vivup has been promoted through all communication channels including mental health first aiders and wellbeing advocates, Trickle, workforce updates and the intranet newsfeed. The regular wellbeing round up has also been spotlighting specific supports for employees each month to raise awareness of the content contained within the platform. Employees can access it using an app or website and posters were shared with establishments who have front line employees that don't often work at a computer to help to ensure that as many employees as possible are aware of the support available.

4.4.10 The platform was launched alongside AVC Wise, a new platform that supports employee's financial wellbeing through additional voluntary contributions to the pension scheme. Whilst AVC's were already available to employees, AVC Wise have enhanced this offering with a range of educational resources available to employees to help them better understand how to get the most out of their pension and plan for a better retirement. There is now a rolling schedule of financial wellbeing webinars and 121s available to employees to help them maximise this element of their financial wellbeing.

4.4.11 It had been hoped that improvements would also be made to the stress risk assessment form in 2023/24 but resource restrictions within the Strategic HR team have meant that this work has not been able to be progressed and will be carried over into 2024/25 and captured as part of a wider piece of work that is ongoing to digitise the delivery of HR services. In addition to the above, work commenced on the re-tender of the Occupational Health, employee counselling and physio contracts.

Employee Engagement

4.4.12 Research has shown where a workforce is highly engaged it tends to be more productive, with reduced absence and employee turnover. Through the 'People First' Strategy, the Council has committed to developing and improving employee engagement by building on existing good practice. The Council already has a number of initiatives to support employee engagement including Trickle, 1-2-1 (Be the Best) conversations to support workforce development, recognising success and value through employee recognition awards and understanding the workforce voice through Trickle Moodsense.

4.4.13 The Council's main tool for employee engagement is a digital platform called Trickle, available via the website or App which enables inclusivity as it is accessible to the whole workforce. This enables the workforce, including front line employees, to raise issues and access information via the App on their phone. Recognising the benefits of this employee engagement tool, our aim is to improve the level of engagement with Trickle across existing and new users and the number of users is currently 1974, which is an increase from 1316 from September 2022.

4.4.14 Demonstrating that the Council values employees and celebrates success is an essential component of employee engagement. There are many

activities currently underway to support this, including a redesign Recognition Awards, aligning these to our core ACHIEVE values and will be launched in 2024. The revised categories are detailed below:

Award Category	Description
Trailblazer Award	Celebrates individuals who exhibit exceptional ambition and visionary thinking, pioneering new directions in their work and inspiring others to pursue excellence.
Doing the Right Thing Award	Celebrates ethical conduct, integrity, and a commitment to doing what's morally right
Innovative Solutions Award	Recognises individuals who demonstrate a remarkable ability to think creatively and develop innovative solutions to complex challenges, contributing to more efficient and effective processes.
Teamwork Excellence Award	Celebrates outstanding collaboration and the promotion of a unified and effective team environment.
Empowerment Champion Award	Celebrates the proactive empowerment of others and support for their growth and development.
Community Appreciation Award	Celebrates community recognition and appreciation for exceptional service and contributions.

Work Styles/Flexibility

4.4.15 Monitoring working environments continues as employees are supported to work more flexibly, from various locations, whilst balancing their service delivery, digital security and personal commitments. Ensuring work styles and patterns are considered as part of organisational transformation, service re-design and flexible working continues and has been imperative to workforce planning for services. This is essential not only in supporting employee's wellbeing but key to improving productivity, recruitment and retention.

Policy

4.4.16 The Council's employee policy base has seen the launch of the Violence against Women Policy in support of the Equally Safe at Work Programme and the review of the Organisational Change Policy through a gender lens which

saw changes being implemented to the policy providing further supports and considerations to women and other minority groups.

- 4.4.17 The need to make budget savings during 2023/24 saw the implementation of a Redundancy Procedure and Guidance in August 2023. The launch of this policy was accompanied by management information sessions to support implementation of the policy, budget savings and workforce planning considerations, these were well attended and received.
- 4.4.18 Due to an increased workload, there was a need to review resources within the Strategic HR team and introduce new practices in relation to the provision of HR support and advice to ensure key priorities, workstreams and projects can be progressed in 2024/25. A number of policies were updated to reflect these changes including the Supporting Employee Wellbeing and Disciplinary Procedures. Due to other policy and legislative changes, best practice and Council decisions a number of policies were amended to reflect these new requirements including the Special Leave Schemes, Bereavement Leave, Maternity Leave Scheme, Trade Union Learning Agreement, Domestic Abuse Policy and Switch Policy.
- 4.4.19 The Respect at Work Policy was completed along with a supporting toolkit and was launched in early 2024 to ensure the prevention of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are mitigated, supports received and effective channels to resolve are present, for all employees, supporting our equality agenda.
- 4.4.20 Further progress has been made in relation to a Resolution Framework which will simplify the policy base for employees and managers who raise concerns with a focus on early intervention, informal (where appropriate) and effective resolution of concerns. A survey was carried out to gain feedback in relation to our policy base including the structure, language and ease of use. This was followed up by a design workshop involving managers, employees and Trade Unions to consider the make-up of policy frameworks for future consideration. The drafting of a Resolution Framework will commence in 2024/25.
- 4.4.21 The review of the job evaluation processes as outlined at section 4.5.4 led to the Job Evaluation Policy and Process being revised and re-launched with training taking place for Strategic HR and Trade Unions in relation to job evaluation and the role of job analysts to ensure consistency of this function.
- 4.4.22 Although delayed due to demand on resources, work continues around a flexible/hybrid working policy to reflect the current workstyles and culture of the Council. A further review of the policy timetable for the revision and drafting of policies will continue ensuring our policies meet legislative requirement and support our workforce needs.

4.5 Priority 2. Recruitment & Retention: Current and predicted future workforce gaps are addressed and core skill sets retained

Year 1 People First – Employee Life Cycle - Recruitment

4.5.1 The People First Strategy in relation to the employee life cycle commenced with a focus on recruitment and work remains on-going. The intention is to create a positive inspiring, informative and seamless journey from application to appointment, attract the right candidates, aid retention and in turn support the workforce planning and equalities agenda.

4.5.2 Following a full review of the process and findings being presented in ‘show and tell’ session for the People and Change Teams, a number of work streams were set up to progress this agenda including process and policy review, talent management, job quality and workforce planning initiatives, equalities actions and engagement to bring about improvements to the recruitment process for services. Improvement workstreams are ongoing.

4.5.3 A recruitment working group has been established incorporating the requirements of the recruitment audit related actions to improve the recruitment process and attracting diverse talent. Linking with the Corporate Workforce plan this has included discussions with working 4U to provide better connections to current and potential talent pools.

Job Evaluation

4.5.4. The new Job Evaluation Policy and Procedure was agreed by the Trade Unions and Council in November 2023. Training has taken place for all existing and new job analysts (Management, Trade Union and Strategic HR) late in 2023 and early in 2024 to ensure a consistent application to all posts within the Council.

4.5.5 Further work has commenced to ensure all data relating to job evaluation is robust and fit for purpose. This essential work will lead to improved job design and compliance with the Strategic Operating Model (SOM) and provide structured governance moving forward to any proposed changes in line with the Workforce Plan.

Career Pathways & Succession Planning

4.5.6 Recruitment and retention remain challenging for certain roles within the Council, in particular Social Care and Social Work which follows national trends. The development and mapping of career’s pathways has commenced with the HSCP to outline the entry requirements for roles, routes into employment and development opportunities/supports for future progression through the career structure. It is expected that this template can be utilised across the Council for other roles aiding the development of new talent pools and routes into Council employment at the same time facilitating cross service skilling and links into other career pathways.

4.5.7 To support future retention and forecast workforce requirements the Council's Succession Planning Framework is in the process of being reviewed and updated. This will be launched alongside manager information sessions/workshops and form part of the Workforce Planning Toolkit.

Apprentice Remuneration

4.5.8 A new pay remuneration for apprentices' paper was approved at Council late last year. This has seen a significant increase to the majority of apprentice's salaries regardless of age which goes beyond the national requirements. This positive decision taken by Council will provide a positive destination for all apprentices and provide sustainability for the delivery of future services

4.6 Priority 3. Structure & Roles: Service structures and delivery model/s are stable, fit for purpose and future requirements

Budget Savings

4.6.1 Following the announcement of budget savings, priority continues to be directed to supporting services across the Council to make the relevant savings. Whilst services have been continuing to embed the changes made as part of the budget savings 2022/23, they have also reviewed their workforce planning requirements and explored opportunities to deliver services differently and more effectively whilst making proposals for savings for 2024/25.

4.6.2 Strategic HR continue to support services with the introduction of the Redundancy Procedure and Guidelines, including a selection matrix, if required. Lessons learned around previous year's savings processes have led to improvements to the Voluntary Severance and Voluntary Early Retirement processes, data links to Strathclyde Pension Fund ensuring consistency, accuracy, improvements in SWITCH processes for redeployment and the control of external recruitment.

4.6.3 Whilst savings to date have led to a number of employees leaving the workforce, on a voluntarily basis, through various means, the focus for workforce planning has shifted to stabilising the workforce and work priorities. With future budget gaps predicted, longer-term workforce planning remains difficult.

4.6.4 Affected services are currently entering a further formal consultation period, the effective use of the workforce console and data continues to be imperative to inform and fully understand the implications of proposals for service delivery, the workforce and ensure accurate notification of the potential impacts. Focus will continue around employee engagement supports with promotion of our current support mechanisms and the introduction of PACE (Partnerships Action for Continuing Employment) support the Scottish

Government's initiative dedicated to helping people with advice and support when faced with the possibility of redundancy if required.

SOM (Standard Operating Model)

4.6.5 Work is under way to ensure that the spans of control and ratios of employees to managers is correct and fit for purpose, to ensure service delivery moving forward. This includes the SOM principles and a tier by tier approach reviewing Chief Officers and Service Managers to ensure that we have compliance and a consistent structure in place to deliver the services required in the future. Governance arrangements are ensuring role profiles are updated to reflect current responsibilities and duties.

Fit for Future (FfF) Service reviews

4.6.6 Seven services were reviewed as part of FfF with the last review completed in December 2022. No requests for new FfF reviews have been received this year with services concentrating on budget savings and subsequent service reviews and embedding changes. As services review the way they deliver their services resources from the Digital Team have reviewed the FfF approach and continue to support services with digital solutions, service re-design processes, project support, training & development opportunities and automation of process and forms.

Information & Data

4.6.7 Service level workforce Plans are embedded within Service Delivery plans and work has continued to promote the use of monitoring these within the Council's performance management system 'Pentana'. Awareness sessions on this, alongside cross services views of workforce plans has enabled joint working with visual progress reporting through management information sessions and packs. Further analysis will be undertaken of service workforce plans for 2024/25 through the platform to inform future supports and opportunities of efficiency.

4.6.8 The workforce planning console continues to be the key source of workforce information for managers using real time data. Further developments have taken place in relation to this console including the introduction of Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Severance application monitoring.

4.6.9 The console has been developed to show spans of control in a more concise and dynamic way to support the Strategic Operating Model (SOM) principles for easier review of structures and anomalies to be rectified in addition to prompting recommendations for structure improvements. Further information of the SOM is outlined in section 4.6.5.

4.6.10 It is recognised that further developments of the Workforce Planning Console are required and work has continued in relation to the scoping of possibilities

and requirements around workforce projections, trends and the possibility of automation of workforce plans linked to data insights.

- 4.6.11 Feedback from the survey and workforce planning sessions provided useful insights in relation to the use and understanding of the console. Based on this feedback, console information sessions specifically linked to workforce planning are being developed and will be rolled out in 2024/25.
- 4.6.12 Data and analytics continues to play a key role in considering future resource requirements and supported the People & Change function, leading to a review of the workload and support the team provides.
- 4.6.13 Surveys, self-evaluation, service design and quality improvement exercises and workshops continue to provide beneficial insight into areas for enhancement and have informed associated action plans.
- 4.6.14 The Local Government Associations workforce planning maturity matrix has also been undertaken to understand further how developed our workforce planning is at a Council level and provide insights into areas of development. This will be considered over 2024/25 alongside other key data sources to inform future actions and developments to further embed workforce planning.

4.7 Priority 4. Skills & Capabilities: Current and future skills gaps and capabilities are addressed.

Learning & Development

- 4.7.1 A new 'learning basket' concept has been introduced which offers more flexibility for employees to choose what development is required and when. There is a choice of flexible modular content and complete programmes so everyone is in charge of their own development.
- 4.7.2 This modular approach has been applied to:
- Be the Best at Managing People
 - Peer Coaching Circle
 - Future Leaders Toolkit
 - Core Strengths: Results through Relationships
 - Modern Leaders (a new programme with 6 flexible modules).
- 4.7.3 The new Modern Leaders programme provides leaders with a year-round programme of modules that they can select from. Each module has 4 short episodes on an aspect of modern leadership practice.
- 4.7.4 Online learning via our iLearn platform has continued to go from strength to strength with an overall increase of +825 modules completed as compared to the previous year. The iLearn platform has been upgraded with additional

functionality and improved layout and imaging. New reporting options are also being developed and will be made available through the year.

4.7.5 During 2023/24 the Service Re-design training was reviewed, re-vamped and rolled out with positive feedback. On-going support and coaching is made available to support leaders with their re-design projects.

4.7.6 Through the workforce planning survey and manager sessions a number of supports for managers were identified in relation to workforce planning including succession planning, career pathways, talent pool development and workforce planning console data insights. Development opportunities and support materials are currently being developed with the longer term vision of building a toolkit and library of resources and training modules.

Digital Transformation & Skills

4.7.7 The Digital Transformation Board will be relaunched in April 24 as the People First Innovation Board with a different digital theme each quarter:

- Theme 1 (Apr to Jun) – Putting People First:
This will focus on DigiChamps, the development of digital skills and it will also emphasise the importance of service users.
- Theme 2 (Jul to Sep) – Turning Data into Diamonds:
This will focus on data and how we can use and develop it into useful management information which supports decision making.
- Theme 3 (Oct to Dec) – Maximising Technology through M365:
This will focus on M365 SharePoint rollout and the subsequent introduction of Microsoft business applications.

4.7.8 The 2023 digital skills survey ran from October to November 2023. It contained a simplified question set with some questions from the 2019 survey kept for comparison purposes. The survey focused on awareness, digit champs, learning information and topics, skills ratings, barriers, opportunities to improve and what support are required. It was promoted via newsfeed, emails and Trickle. Digital Skills remains a priority for the Council and PMRG have been asked to promote the DigiChamps(s) role within their service and nominate DigiChamps(s) where none are in place.

4.8 The current workforce profile

4.8.1 The workforce profile as at 31/3/24 is attached in Appendix 2, with comparisons made against the previous year and commentary on trends. The main observations are detailed below.

4.8.2 There has been a 4% decrease in Headcount and working hours. When compared to the same period last year, there has been a headcount reduction of 172 across the council. This change is mainly accounted for by the implementation of savings options and recruitment restrictions.

This year has seen an increase in fixed term contracts and an increase of 7 apprenticeships this year, with the casual/supply pool headcount increasing. Reviewing the comparison data the overall workforce has steadily declined with the bulk of the reductions in Housing & Employability and Resources with People & Technology (P&T) and Roads & Neighbourhood increasing, due to the transfer of Business Support Staff to (P&T) re-distribution of Supply Distribution and Property Services

- 4.8.3 Whilst the percentage reductions have been across permanent contracts (3%) fixed term contracts have increased by 4% indicating a correlation between the figures. This is likely due to services implementing budget savings and bridging gaps during this transition. In addition the percentage of apprenticeships has increased by 1% from last year indicating the continued trend of workforce planning and development of future talent pools.
- 4.8.4 The percentage split of full time and part time contracts has remained largely unchanged with the same reflected in the overall sex profile with a static overall split of 26.4% male and 73.6.% female.
- 4.8.5 Whilst the age distribution has also remained fairly static, it can be noted that there is a slight increase in the 16-19 age group indicating the increase in Modern Apprenticeships and a reduction in those working past 65, particularly in Education Services.
- 4.8.6 Turnover has increased to 15% from 13.2% from last year with the highest turnover remaining in Citizen, Culture and facilities. However other services are indicating higher turnover such as People & Technology, Regulatory and Regeneration. High turnover also remains in Education and Community Health Care and is featured for Mental Health, Addition and Learning Disabilities. Turnover has significantly increased from previous years as predicted and can be attributed to the impact of budget savings, evidenced in the sharp increase in Voluntary Severance and Voluntary Early Retirement from 9 last year to 48 this year. This is also reflected in an increase in the number of people taking early/flexible retirement from age 55.
- 4.8.7 This year has seen a further reduction in the sickness absence figure from 14.00 full time equivalent work-days lost per employee to 13.74. Although the same reasons of minor illness, personal stress and acute medical conditions remain the highest with front line employees having the highest levels of sickness. Employee wellbeing and engagement supports will continue to be developed and deployed.

4.9 Workforce Planning Actions for 2024/25

- 4.9.1 The Corporate Workforce Plan for 2024/25 has been reviewed and updated. Key areas for progression and continued development are outlined in the sections below and build on many of the actions outlined for 2023/24. It is noted however that many of these areas are interdependent contributing to the People First Strategy as a whole.

4.10 Priority 1. Our People (Workforce Profile): Ensure resilience and engagement of the workforce

Equalities

- 4.10.1 With the undertaking of a recruitment and equal pay audit this year, focus on the outcomes and recommendations from these, alongside continued progression of the Equality Plan, demonstrate our commitment to ensure there are no barriers to entering our employment. Attention will be being given to advertising, application and assessment, use of data for monitoring and consideration how to remove unconscious bias.
- 4.10.2 A further equality data verification exercise will be undertaken as outlined above with additional mechanisms for the safe and secure collation of data being considered along with how to reach front line and non-pc users in the workplace.
- 4.10.3 Following successfully being awarded the Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) Development Tier Accreditation in October 2023 time will be dedicated to promoting this and embedding the mechanisms to support this cultural change within the Council and considering how impacts can be monitored and assessed prior to moving on to the Bronze Tier. Work is underway to support the Council's re-submission to re-validate the Armed Forces Gold Award which will take place in August 2024.

Wellbeing

- 4.10.4 Improvements to the stress risk assessment form will be carried forward into 2024/25 and work will continue to raise awareness of the new Vivup employee benefits platform and AVC Wise partnership. This has become particularly important given the decision to withdraw from the counselling contract as employee counselling provision is available through Vivup.
- 4.10.5 To support this work and improve the monitoring of the impact on employee wellbeing, improvements will be made to the workforce planning console in relation to absence information provided to managers. This will help to ensure that employees are being offered support in a timely manner and in accordance with the Support Employee Wellbeing policy.
- 4.10.6 Now integrated into the organisational priorities, the Employee Wellbeing Strategy continues to focus on priority areas, responding to the needs of the organisation. There will be regular progress reports to PMRG and JCF including monitoring the impact of the resulting actions. A focus on supporting employee financial wellbeing will continue.

Employee Engagement

- 4.10.7 As the Council is facing significant financial challenges it is crucial that we continue to support employee engagement and ensure all employees have a platform where their voices can be heard and that they are fully aware of where supports can be accessed and in times of change feel supported and valued. Therefore, continued support of employees in a virtual environment using MS Teams, trickle, webinars, on line training, surveys, employee forums and support to ensure that employees feel engaged, supported and valued will continue. Peer support groups/communities have been developed to allow for collaboration and networking e.g. wellbeing advocates and MS Teams ambassadors, digital champions.
- 4.10.8 The established communication frameworks for national and local messages to be shared will remain and there will be an increased focus on further embedding the one-to-one/Be The Best Conversations in areas where we have feedback that these could be improved.
- 4.10.9 To compliment this and to provide further insight into levels of employee engagement, additional data sources will also be considered, in particular information from Exit Surveys to inform an action plan for improvement. This further supports the Council's commitment to the principles of the Fairwork Convention, in particular ensuring employee voice.

Work Styles/Flexibility

- 4.10.10 Varying work styles have embedded in the Council and we continue to pride ourselves as being a flexible employer. This will continue to be promoted with development on a flexible/hybrid working policy underway.

Policy

- 4.10.11 Best practice and legislative changes will influence the review of several policies in the coming year including Domestic Abuse, Flexible Working, Paternity Leave Guidance and the progression of a policy/guidance for sexual harassment. Consideration is also being provided to neurodiversity and gender transition policies and guidance, to support our equality framework.
- 4.10.12 Following the launch of the Respect at Work Policy and Toolkit further efforts will be focused on commencing policy frameworks commencing with a Resolution Framework, this will act as the template for future policy frameworks as we progress.

4.11 Priority 2. Recruitment & Retention: Current and predicted future workforce gaps are addressed and core skill sets retained

Year 1 People First – Employee Life Cycle – Recruitment

4.11.1 The 5-year People First Plan will continue to focus on key improvements of the Employee Life Cycle with spotlights on the following:

- Year 1 – Recruitment
- Year 2 – On Boarding
- Year 3 – Development
- Year 4 – Retention
- Year 5 – Recognition

4.11.2 Work will remain focused around progressing recruitment within the workstreams including the recruitment working group. Progress has been made in relation to scoping guidance requirements for managers, building talent pools, selection processes and consideration of streamlining processes and associated forms.

4.11.3 Although delayed due to other priority work including budget savings, commitment remains to bringing efficiencies around recruitment processes. It is expected that this workstream will further progress this year and run concurrently with the scoping and analysis of data and processes around all aspect of 'Onboarding' for new employees entering the Council's employment.

Workforce Planning

4.11.4 Following the Council's Best Value Audit a further piece of audit work on workforce planning and innovation is planned for 2024. Given the current and anticipated financial position for the Council, the requirement for re-structure, developing different working methods and technological developments, effective workforce planning will be imperative in ensuring tools and resources are maximised and skills gaps met.

4.11.5 Following the launch of the workforce planning tool kit, the coming year focus will be on embedding and upskilling of strategies to support efficient workforce planning.

4.11.6 A core feature of workforce planning is quality data on which to base workforce decisions thus developing the workforce planning console further in relation to workforce data, trend analysis and forecasting to aid the development and possible automation of service workforce plans for managers to understand where their 'reg flags' are for action and where their successes are, to build on.

Job Evaluation

4.11.7 Training has taken place to increase the amount of Job Analysts. We now need to ensure that they are all applying the SJC Job Evaluation Scheme consistently through new job analysts being supported by experienced job analysts. The SJC approved the 3rd Edition Amended Scheme in February 2024 and this has now been issued to all Councils.

4.12 Priority 3. Structure & Roles: Service structures and delivery model/s are stable, fit for purpose and future requirements

SOM

4.12.1 Once work is completed at level 2 (Chief Officers) and level 3 (Service Managers) of the SOM we will continue to ensure levels 4,5&6 have the correct spans of control and ratios required for future delivery.

Budget Savings

4.12.2 Priority will remain to supporting services into 2024/25 to implement the required budget savings, review structures and service delivery requirements in line with the Organisational Change processes whilst continuing to support employee's wellbeing and engagement during this time.

Data & Information

4.12.3 The rollout of M365 continues with users moving over to a cloud platform. The introduction of M365 will bring many opportunities and access to tools. It will be key to ensure the council is able to maximise benefits from the available applications. A 365 Centre of Excellence will be set up to ensure safe and good practice of this exciting and innovative tool.

4.12.4 A number of surveys on MS Outlook, MS Teams chats, posts on MS Teams channels have been conducted and have helped form decisions about retention policies. An approach to the roll out of SharePoint (for storage of files and folders) is being developed.

4.12.5 Continuous improvement initiatives, service design and leadership development will continue through the year ahead as core organisational deliverables. Services will continue to promote and engage in cross organisational working, and explore the opportunities this provides, including

the potential for retraining of employees into other areas, this particularly relevant in supporting the Switch Policy.

- 4.13 Priority 4. Skills & Capabilities:** Current and future skills gaps and capabilities are addressed.

Learning and Development

- 4.13.1 In 2023/24, the Council used funding from the apprenticeship levy to deliver Excel and Outlook courses through West College Scotland. Unfortunately, this funding is no longer available so alternative sources of training are being investigated for this coming year.
- 4.13.2 The focus on digital literacy and skills will continue with Digital Skills building blocks the basis of the first quarterly digital theme (which commenced in April 2024).

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Integration of workforce planning within wider organisational planning processes ensures that workforce issues are effectively identified and addressed. This supports the Council's commitment to its' employees in relation to all aspects of their employment, ensuring that employees' needs are met, and that efficient and modern services are effectively delivered both now and in the future.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no additional financial or procurement implications associated with this report. There are funding streams associated with the initiatives mentioned in this report, but these are already secured.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** A robust approach to workforce planning ensures that the Council identifies current and future needs and identifies potential risks to the council at an early stage. This proactive approach allows strategies and policies to be developed that ensure the continued delivery of best value services.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** A full EIA is not required in relation to the Council Workforce Plan as individual assessments will be undertaken in relation to each area of work referred to as it is progressed.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The Strategic Leadership Group have been involved in the development of the plan through preparation of the Delivery Plans and this report and associated appendices have been provided to the relevant trade unions on 26th April 2024.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1 The contents of this report and the workforce planning process supports the Council's Priority 4, 'Our Council', Objective 10 'Our workforce is resilient and skilled where digital technology supports service delivery for our residents' to make the best use of both financial and human resources resulting in a positive impact upon service provision.

Victoria Rogers

Chief Officer - People & Technology

Date: 22 May 2024

Person to Contact:	Lisa MacGregor, People and Change Partner 16 Church Street, Dumbarton Tel: 07949800801 Email: Lisa.MacGregor@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Council Workforce Plan Progress update 2023/24 Appendix 2 – Workforce Profile and Monitoring 31 st March 2024
Background Papers:	Council Workforce Plan 2017-2022: Update & Annual Action Plan 2022/23 Strategic Lead Area Workforce Plans (as part of Service Delivery Plans) 2022-2027 The Workforce Planning Strategy and Framework 2022 – 2027
Wards Affected:	None

