

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Chief Executive
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 22 October 2024**

Subject: 2022-25 Council Workforce Plan Annual Update

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council’s 2022-2025 Workforce Plan and associated Action Plan

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 notes the contents of the report; and

2.1.2 agrees amendments to related activities in [Appendix 1](#).

3. Background

3.1 The Council’s current 3-year workforce plan was considered by the Panel on 25 October 2022 and approved by the Cabinet on 29 November 2022.

3.2 Section 9 of the workforce plan contained an Action Plan which set out a broad range of activities that would progress throughout 2022-2025.

3.3 Most actions within the Action Plan have been marked as complete with rationale provided to Panel at previous updates.

3.4 Audit Scotland undertook a thematic audit on ‘workforce innovation’ during January 2024. They presented their recommendations in full directly to the Audit and Governance Panel on 20 March 2024, and are summarised below.

Recommendation	Owner	Due Date
Develop performance measures and targets to monitor the impact of workforce planning, with data on future skills and capacity projections/scenario planning. Workforce data should also be reported regularly to members.	Depute Chief Executive	December 2024

Recommendation	Owner	Due Date
The council should measure and report on the impact that digital technology has on its service delivery and outcomes, including how this can shape its workforce of the future.	Assistant Director (Transformation)	December 2024
The council should prioritise the development of workforce planning reporting tools in Oracle Fusion to aid managers in decision-making.	Assistant Director (Transformation)	May 2025

3.5 As part of the Shaping Our Future Council programme, the Transformation service (created in May 2024) includes the ‘*Our Workforce*’ priority project portfolio, focusing on the following activities:

- Our people are productive and have the right skills to deliver our services
- Our people are empowered to respond to the needs of our customers
- Our people are inspired to identify and make improvements to service delivery
- We value the wellbeing of our people and promote healthy working lives.

3.6 Related projects within the portfolio include:

- Development and delivery of a consistent and efficient Business Support model, driven by the need to work differently with less resource.
- Incorporating Service Design principles into the Service Review process, with greater input from employees.
- Development of a Data Plan that will help increase employee data literacy.
- Development of a digital suite to support service-specific and corporate digital training.

3.7 Other Transformation projects (related to ‘*Our Delivery Model*’, ‘*Our Assets*’, and ‘*Our Technology*’) will also impact on elements of the workforce, and these include future consideration of how we interact with customers and process automation.

3.8 The previous report to Panel highlighted proposals to create Directorate workforce planning groups that would consider a range of workforce planning activities and actions, and report to the newly created Transformation Board.

3.9 As a result of a structural change, corporate workforce planning oversight moved to Human Resources on 9 September 2024.

4. Proposals

4.1 The Panel is requested to:

- 4.1.1 note the progress of the outstanding actions within [Appendix 1](#); and

4.1.2 approve the amendments to actions WOR 06.01 and 09.

4.2 A strategic workforce planning group will be formed, led by the Chief Executive. This will ensure workforce planning considerations are fully considered and move at pace

4.3 The strategic group will:

- Address the findings and recommendations related to Audit Scotland.
- Ensure the 2025-28 workforce plan defines and articulates the size and shape of the workforce required to deliver service priorities within current and future financial constraints. In effect, the future Council workforce (in terms of volume and skills requirements) will look markedly different.
- Ensure that a suite of workforce data is routinely presented to Panel and Elected Members.
- Review the Directorate working groups to ensure workforce issues, themes and trends inform the development of the 2025-28 workforce plan.

4.4 Additional information is provided in [Appendix 2](#), and the Council's 2025-28 workforce plan will be presented to Panel in October 2025.

4.5 The Panel is requested to note that both the Directorate sub-groups and the Transformation Board will progress the recommendations contained within the Audit Scotland report.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 The risks associated with rejecting the recommendations are failure to meet the recommendations related to workforce planning contained within the 2024 Workforce Thematic Audit.

9. Equalities

9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA), (including the Fairer Scotland Duty in respect of any Strategic decision), was completed as part of the development of the 2022-25 workforce plan.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - The Scottish Government Gateway has been contacted regarding this plan, policy, programme or strategy, and it has been determined that an SEA will not be pursued.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Commitment 1 of the Council Plan: Effective Leadership that Promotes Fairness

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and ICT and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

13.3 Consultation has taken place with Trade Unions and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers **Report to Service and Performance Panel of 25 October 2022 – [2022-25 Council Workforce Plan](#) (Action Plan – Section 9)**

Report to Cabinet of 20 June 2023 - [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2023](#)

Report to South Ayrshire Council of 6 March 2024 - [Shaping Our Future Council](#)

Report to Audit and Governance Panel of 20 March 2024 - [Audit Scotland: Workforce Innovation – How Councils are Responding to Workforce Challenges](#)

Person to Contact **James Andrew – Transformation Coordinator (Workforce)**
County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR
Phone 01292 559371
james.andrew@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date **10 October 2024**

Amendments to Related Activities

Number	Action	Due Date	Owner	Current Update and Status
WOR06	WOR 06 Development of Oracle Fusion workforce data reports.	December 2024	ICT Operations	Several working groups have been created to look at a range of corporate reporting requirements. The workforce data group is led by HR (with input from OD/Transformation) and has confirmed data requirements and parameters; HR resource has impacted required testing but will re-commence in Q3. Workforce reports are only one element of wider corporate data requirements and ICT require to consider requirements 'in the round' to ensure best value and maximum impact with Oracle. The Chief Executive will drive forward these groups directly with Service Leads and the proposed strategic workforce planning group. Currently, it is not clear if this action will be fully met by December 2024.
WOR06 (0.1)	M365 Power BI progression.	December 2024	Transformation	The 'Our Workforce' Data Transformation programme includes a Year 1 Data Analytics and Data Maturity (DAMA) project, with a Business Case due by Q1 2025. The DAMA project has a specific action to develop a Council Data Plan which will consider Business Intelligence and not limit itself to only one M365 solution. As this is a Year 1 high priority project, it is proposed that WOR06(0.1) is incorporated into the Data Transformation Programme and reported to the Transformation Board, with an update to Panel in October 2025 when the 2025-28 workforce plan is presented.
WOR09	Review of casual demand, processes, and development of an online sourcing and allocation tool to support future casual work allocation.	December 2024	Transformation	The 'Our Technology' Transformation programme includes a Year 1 project focused on a review of the Council-built online BOB system which sources and allocates casual staff within Education, Sport and Leisure, Libraries, and aspects of Facilities Management. The review will consider wider corporate requirements related to onboarding and deploying casual staff and explore opportunities to link to existing Council platforms such as Oracle Fusion. As this is a Year 1 high priority project, it is proposed that WOR09 is incorporated into the BOB review and is reported to the Transformation Board, with an update to Panel in October 2025 when the 2025-28 workforce plan is presented.
WOR14	Development of internal career pathways within services.	December 2024	Organisational Development	<p>To support Service Leads with workforce planning, OD developed and offered a dedicated Career Pathways facilitated session which has been running throughout 2024 The session focused on four key areas - Entry Points, Opportunities, Skills, and Planning. Each session is followed up with a summary report which includes internal actions for the service and actions that require further Directorate and corporate consideration.</p> <p>As of September 2024, 14 services have taken up the offer: Thriving Communities, Localities Social Work, Information & Advice Hub, Organisational Development, Risk & Safety, Education Support Services, Facilities Management, Professional Design Services, Neighbourhood Services, Trading Standards & Environmental Health, Internal Audit & Corporate Fraud, HR & Payroll.</p>

Number	Action	Due Date	Owner	Current Update and Status
WOR18	Development of thematic and locality-based programmes of online and f-2-f recruitment events and vacancy/job promotion.	December 2024	Service Leads (reported by Organisational Development)	Service Leads are responsible for progressing this action and to continually review their recruitment requirements with support services such as HR and OD. Discussions related to recruitment are also incorporated within the 'Entry' theme of the career pathways session.
WOR 21	Review and streamline 'employee essentials' online courses.	June 2024	Organisational Development	OD has reviewed and made updates to ten of the Core Mandatory online courses and has agreed with HR to consolidate aspects of the Employee Essentials modules into a single programme.
WOR29	Increased undertaking of PDR across all services, and positioning that PDR is the key tool to capture and review corporate and personal objectives.	December 2023	Service Leads (reported by Organisational Development)	<p>Panel was advised in March 2024 that this action was not complete due to a 20% completion rate at that time. A further corporate focus and additional awareness sessions from OD have achieved a current completion rate of 32% (compared against 12% in 2022 and 16% in 2023.)</p> <p>The results from the 2024 Employee Engagement Survey confirmed a positive perception of PDR but highlighted some inconsistencies in delivery and impact. Whilst there has been an increased undertaking there is recognition that the current process requires a more fundamental review. On that basis, Organisational Development has recently been holding a range of engagement sessions with nominated employees (currently 70) from a range of services and job roles (including frontline and operational) to determine alternative approaches that would meet specific needs of services. The feedback will be used to consider options and recommendations of a revised PDR process. Any new process will be referenced in the 2025-28 Workforce Plan which will be confirmed to Panel in October 2025.</p>

Number	Action	Due Date	Owner	Current Update and Status
WOR30	Further recognition for innovation and 'best practice' through award schemes including COSLA, APSE, SAC Outstanding People Awards.	December 2024	Organisational Development	<p>Nominations for the APSE Service Awards closed in March 2024. OD received six nominations across five categories and the submission by Asset Management under the 'Best Climate Action or Decarbonisation Initiative' was shortlisted as a finalist.</p> <p>For the COSLA Excellence Awards nominations closed in May 2024 with seven nominations received across three categories.</p> <p>Nominations are currently open for the Scottish Public Service Awards 2024 (SPSA) and will close on Friday 27 September.</p> <p>The Outstanding People Awards Ceremony took place on Wednesday 29 May at Ayr Town Hall. OD received 239 nominations across six categories, 53 nominations more than the 2023 total. 21 finalists were shortlisted by ELT and invited along to the ceremony where the winners were announced and presented with their award. 27 employees who achieved 40 years' service in 2024 were also invited to the TOPA ceremony to recognise their achievement.</p> <p>An afternoon tea will take place in County Hall in November 2024 to recognise employees who have achieved 35 years' service in this calendar year.</p> <p>Going forward, the Chief Executive has taken the decision that employees with 40 Years' Service will continue to be recognised at the annual TOPA Ceremony and employees with 35 Years' Service will be invited to an annual afternoon tea event to recognise their achievement.</p>
WOR 31	Review and evaluation of Occupational Health services prior to re-tender.	August 2024	Human Resources	<p>As part of a Pan-Ayrshire procurement process, the Council successfully completed the re-tender of the provision of Occupational Health services, with the new provider (PAM Group) commencing August 2024. Whilst service provision broadly remains the same, a benefit of the new contract will be the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme, which will include a 24/7/365 helpline and support related to triage, counselling, wellbeing, signposting, and legal and financial information.</p>

Workforce Plans – Additional Information

It is recognised that both the Council and HSCP workforce plans will have close links and shared outcomes. Governance related to the HSCP 2025-28 workforce plan requires submission to the Scottish Government for review, and then approval by the Integrated Joint Board. Dates for submission of the HSCP 2025-28 plan are still to be confirmed by the Scottish Government.

Although development of Oracle workforce reports is ongoing, this report takes cognisance of the Audit Scotland recommendation that workforce data should be available to elected members.

The data below is presented to Panel for noting, and some aspects compare current workforce data to the position in 2022 when the plan began. (Workforce data related to equality and protected characteristics was presented to Cabinet in June 2023 via the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming report. An update of absence levels was reported to Panel in September 2024).

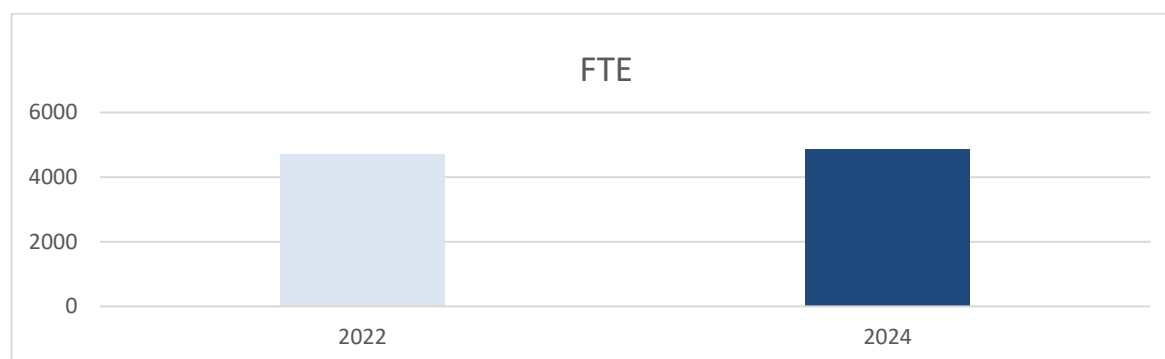
Future data will focus in-depth on themes and trends related to staffing numbers (permanent, temporary, supply), turnover, recruitment, training, absence, and skills gaps. The aim is to deliver a similar level of insight that was available prior to the implementation of Oracle Fusion, and which was contained within the 2022-25 plan,

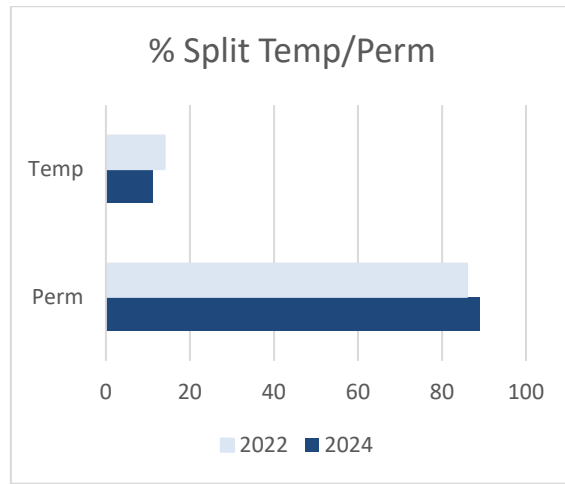
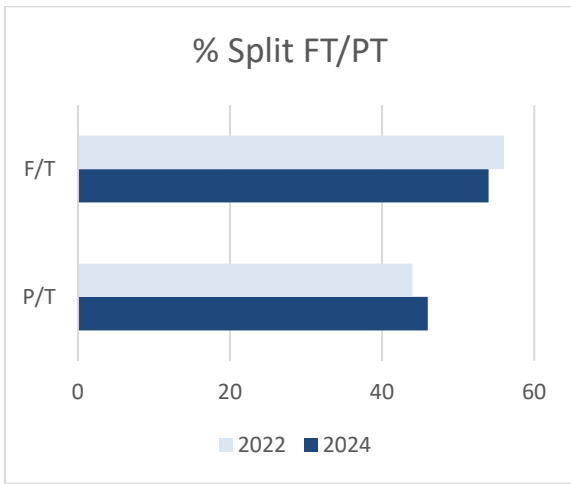
FTE, Full-time/Part-time, Permanent/Temporary

In broad terms, the Council's size has remained unchanged since 2022.

The Council's FTE (full-time equivalent) has risen slightly, and the percentage split related to full-time/part-time and permanent/temporary has minor variances.

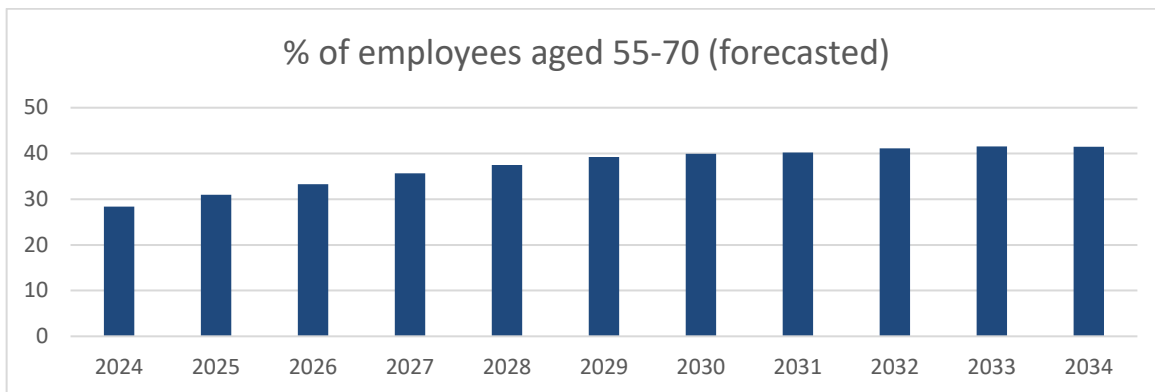
The 2025-28 workforce plan will define the anticipated reduced FTE required to deliver Council services over the next 5+ years.





Age

Updated age forecasting* confirms the trend identified in the 2022-25 plan, reinforcing that 40% of the workforce will be aged 55+ within 6 years. An ageing workforce is reflective of the ageing demographic of the South Ayrshire region as over 60% of employees reside within the South Ayrshire boundary.



*The proportion of staff aged 55+ has been modelled with an assumed static growth rate, that all staff aged 70 and over will retire, only those aged 55 and over are eligible for retirement, and any leavers not of retirement age are replaced by a person of the same age and pay grade.

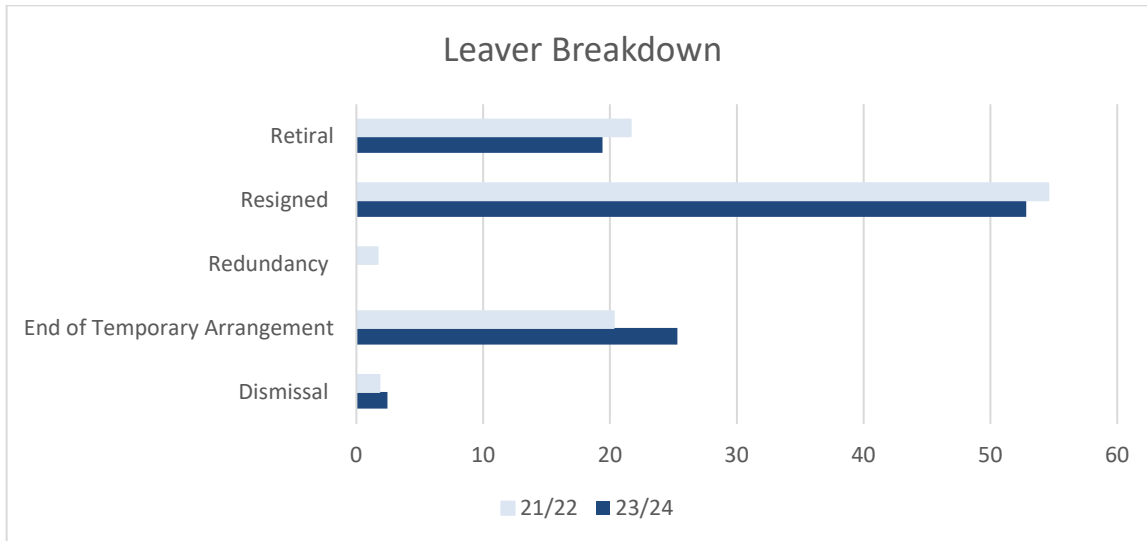
The 2024 Employee Engagement Survey identified 'motivators by generation', confirming that work/life balance and meaningful work are most important to employees aged 30+, and 'feeling appreciated' increases for those 50+.



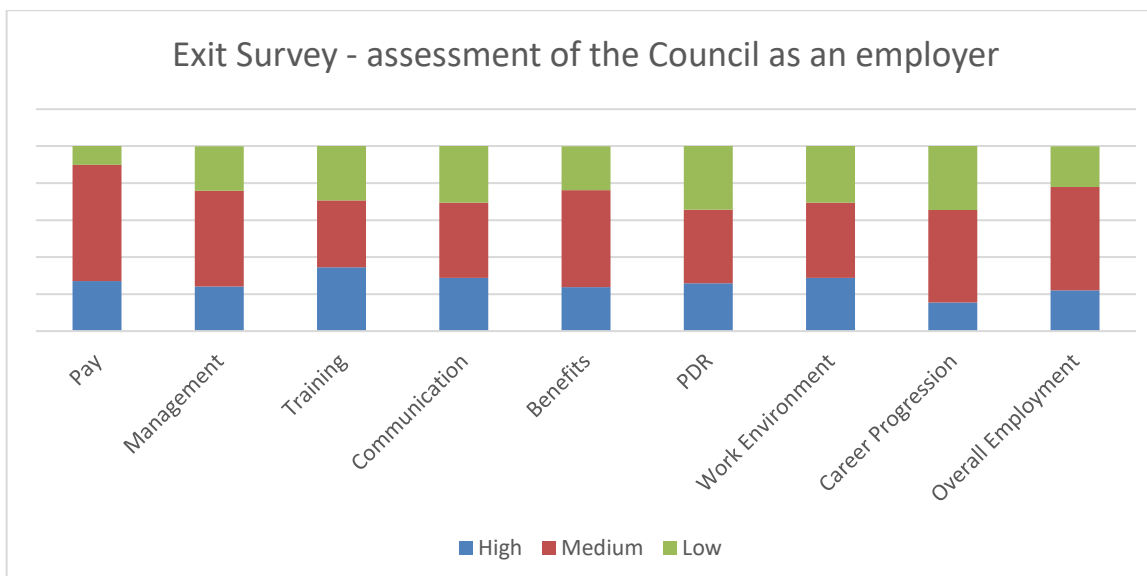
Whilst HR has considered the ageing workforce when reviewing people policies, the 2025-28 workforce plan will further consider the impact, benefits, and risks an ageing workforce brings.

Leavers/Turnover

Turnover has increased marginally (11% in 2022 to 12% currently), affected by a recent increase in temporary roles coming to an end.



The corporate exit survey was refreshed in December 2023, but the themes and trends are consistent since the survey was implemented in 2017. As below, leavers (those who resign/retire) assess the organisation mostly 'high/medium' but career progression continues to be viewed less positively.

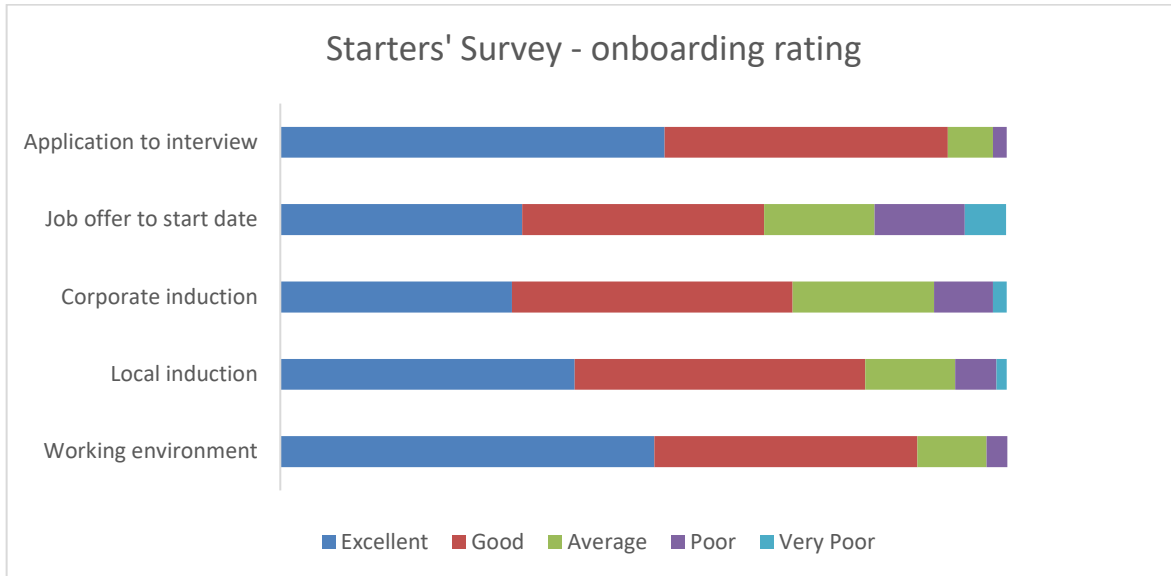


There has been a recent increase from those who resign highlighting morale/lack of recognition as a factor in their decision to leave, and this will be monitored further.

Starters

The starters' survey was re-introduced in November 2023 and asks new employees to rate their recruitment and onboarding experience 3-6 months after joining. Again, results are

broadly positive, and a forthcoming enhancement of the Council’s recruitment portal should provide a more streamlined and positive experience related to job offer and start date.



The survey also confirms that what most attracts candidates is the working patterns/hours offered by the Council.

Engagement

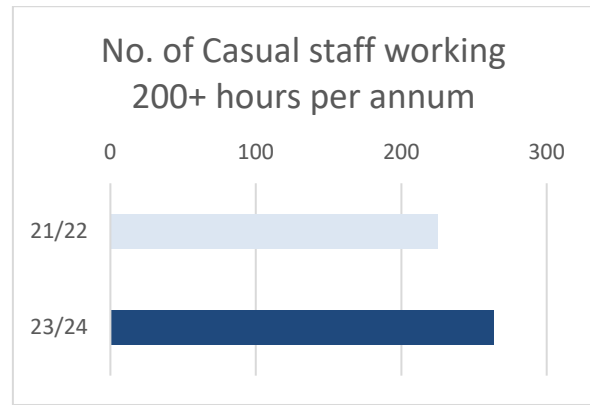
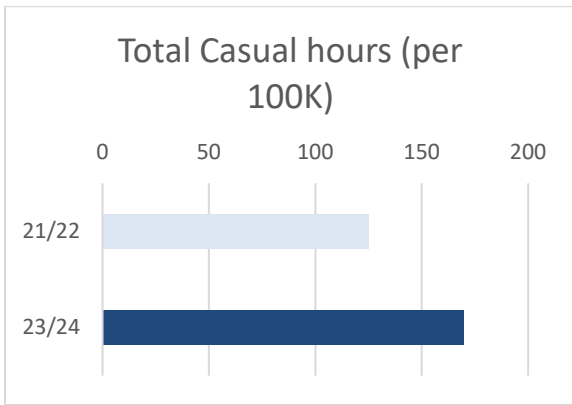
The Employee Engagement Survey results have been shared with employees and full responses can be found [here](#) and aspects will inform the development of the 2025-28 Workforce Plan.

The question that received less positivity from employees related to *‘I am asked for my view and opinion when changes are proposed within my service’*. To help address those concerns, Service Design principles which focus on the importance of employee input into user research, problem definitions, idea generation, and co-design of solutions will be adopted by services within a revised approach to service reviews, now positioned as Service (Re)Design. These principles will be positioned further at the Leadership Engagement Event (CLT and Service Leads) in September 2024.

Casuals

As highlighted in the Council’s Audit Scotland workforce thematic review, there has been an increasing and significant reliance on casual staff. Enhanced workforce reports will provide more accurate reporting going forward, but high-level casual data has been shared with key services for further review and consideration.

Appendix 1 (Action WOR09) confirms steps that will be taken to streamline and improve casual staff sourcing, allocation, and deployment.



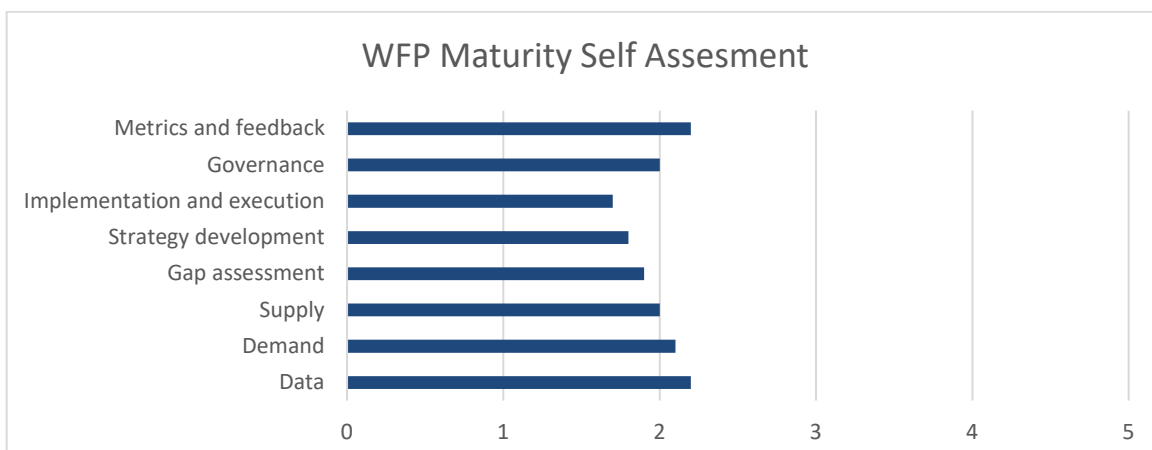
Critical Roles

In early 2024 comprehensive reports were shared with Directorates that collated workforce and succession planning templates completed by Service Leads, which highlighted a range of workforce considerations, insight, and activities.

The succession planning template required critical roles to be identified and risk assessed using recognised criteria from the Local Government Association. Across the Council 142 critical roles were identified, with risks scored 1-5 (1 being low risk, 5 being very high/urgent).



In addition, Service Leads were asked to self-assess workforce planning maturity across key themes using the Local Government Association maturity matrix (0 = no maturity, 5 = integrated/system-wide).



The maturity matrix will be revisited to determine and evidence progress as to how well workforce planning is embedded corporately and locally within services.