

People Management Update

Date: 17th July 2023

Report of: Chief HR Officer

Report to: Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

The report provides an overview and update on a number of key people management activities, particularly the Council's approach to performance management and the work taking place to develop a supportive approach – Let's Talk Openly About Performance. The approach aligns with our values and behaviours and will support managers with all aspects of performance management which will enable the delivery of the People Strategy to provide the best employee experience and respond to some of the initial findings from the recent staff survey. The report also provides a progress update following Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board in March 2023 regarding the management of attendance.

Recommendations

Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board is asked to:

- a) Note the content of the report and the ongoing work to develop a Performance Management toolkit that will support managers to build a culture where everybody is comfortable having regular open conversations about performance.
- b) Note the progress made in reducing levels of sickness absence.
- c) Identify any actions arising from Scrutiny's consideration of this report.

What is this report about?

- 1 The report provides an overview of the Council's current approach to performance management and the steps being taken to strengthen our approach to performance management by creating a culture that supports managers and colleagues to regularly talk openly about performance. The approach aligns with our values and behaviours and will support managers with all aspects of performance management, which will enable delivery of the People Strategy to provide the best employee experience.
- 2 The new Organisational Plan (Being Our Best) clearly outlines four manager expectations (see figure 1 below). One of the expectations makes specific reference to the management of staff performance so it is timely to refresh our approach.

Figure 1 – Managers expectations from the organisational plan.



- 3 It is proposed that a performance management toolkit is developed to support managers to deliver against the manager expectations. This builds on the work already progressed through our leadership and management development offer - Be Your Best.
- 4 The proposals within this report will also respond to initial highlights from the recent staff survey by responding to elements such as progression, workload and wellbeing.
- 5 The aim of the performance management toolkit is to bring together existing tools, guidance, and measures, building on what we already have in place. In addition, the toolkit will provide a reference point for managers to help support the delivery of the organisational plan by encouraging regular open conversations regarding all aspects of performance.
- 6 We are currently engaging with managers on the outline proposals to ensure the toolkit includes the right support, which can be accessed easily and sets out clear expectations.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 7 Performance management needs to be considered as a whole, aligning the different aspects of performance management under a toolkit will ensure we incorporate organisational, team and

individual performance, as well as considering the measures, and how we approach performance, to help support the delivery of our City Ambitions.

- 8 It is critical that the toolkit recognises all performance. This includes high achievers, those that are performing at expected levels and those that require additional support whether that be at a team or individual level.
- 9 The Council already has all the elements that you would expect to ensure we can monitor and manage performance; the toolkit will help highlight this.

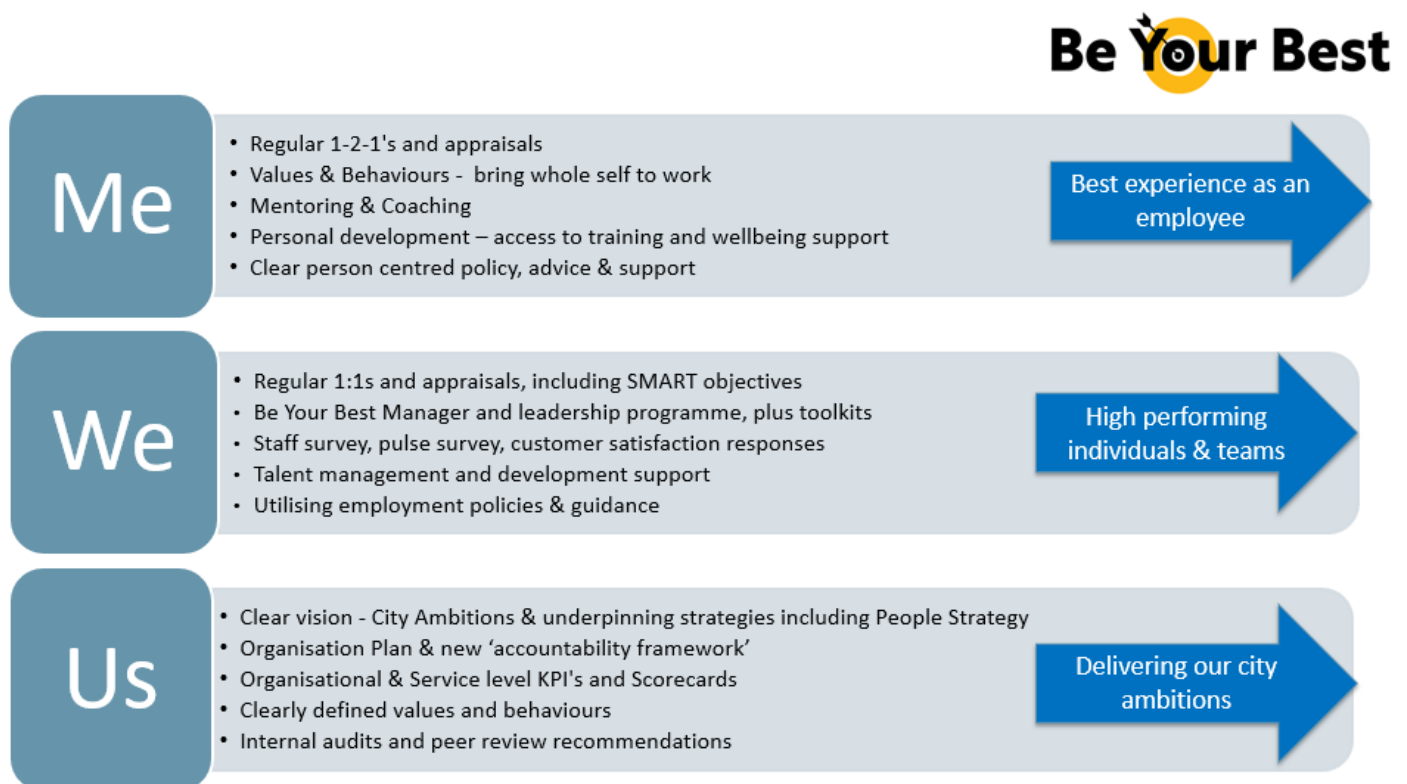
Development of the Performance Management Toolkit

10 The People Strategy clearly sets out three tiers across the organisation.

- Me - Individual,
- We - Managers and Leaders and,
- Us - Organisational

11 This was used as a basis for mapping our existing approach to performance across the organisation. Figure 2 provides a high-level overview to provide an example of the key aspects that support performance management across the organisation. This has been summarised for the purpose of the report, a more extensive list has been developed as part of the mapping.

Figure 2 – High-level mapping of key components of our approach to performance management



12 This demonstrates some of the different measures and approaches to help manage performance across the organisation. To ensure we deliver against our City Ambitions we need to ensure that we fully exploit all these methods.

Managing team and individual performance

- 13 Performance management is the on-going communication process in which managers help employees by setting clear expectations, setting goals, providing feedback and reviewing progress to ensure any development support is put in place and support individuals to progress.
- 14 Managing staff performance can be complex and challenging, one size will not fit all, both the context and the individual should be considered. Employees have different ways they like to be motivated, receive feedback and be recognised for a job well done. Managers need to be aware of this and tailor feedback, where individuals feel their contributions and strengths are valued and understood they are more likely to be engaged, it will lead to increased job satisfaction, and stronger performance.
- 15 It is widely reported that a collaborative, transparent and supportive performance management practice, which is continuous, will lead to more engaged and successful employees. However, this does require employees to engage, managers to provide regular feedback and coaching, and that leaders continuously advocate regular open conversations.
- 16 Our general approach to performance when developing the toolkit has centred around
- Being driven by our values and behaviours
 - Ensuring all performance is covered
 - Ensuring appropriate measures are in place
 - We develop a culture that talks openly about performance
 - Creating capability and confidence within staff through constructive feedback
 - Encouraging two-way engagement and conversations.
- 17 Figure 3 provides an overview of the key components of the toolkit to support team and individual performance. Behind each of these components, additional information and guidance will be available to support managers.

Figure 3 – Key component when managing team and individual performance



18 Creating a culture will come from embedding the toolkit to normalise frequent conversation about performance management with all staff on a regular basis. When considering the wider team as well as individuals.

Managing Attendance

19 Managing attendance is one element of managing team performance. In March 2023 an overview was provided to Scrutiny Board in relation to the work underway to support the management of attendance. The update centred around:

- renewed and robust management reporting of attendance management to leadership teams
- the prioritisation of HR support to thirteen service areas that experienced higher levels of absence
- specific focus on the management of long-term sickness cases
- efforts to address the primary reasons for ill-health in the workplace, particularly mental and emotional wellbeing
- building manager capacity and capability in this area and
- continued effort on building the overarching staff health & wellbeing offer (under the brand of #BeWell).

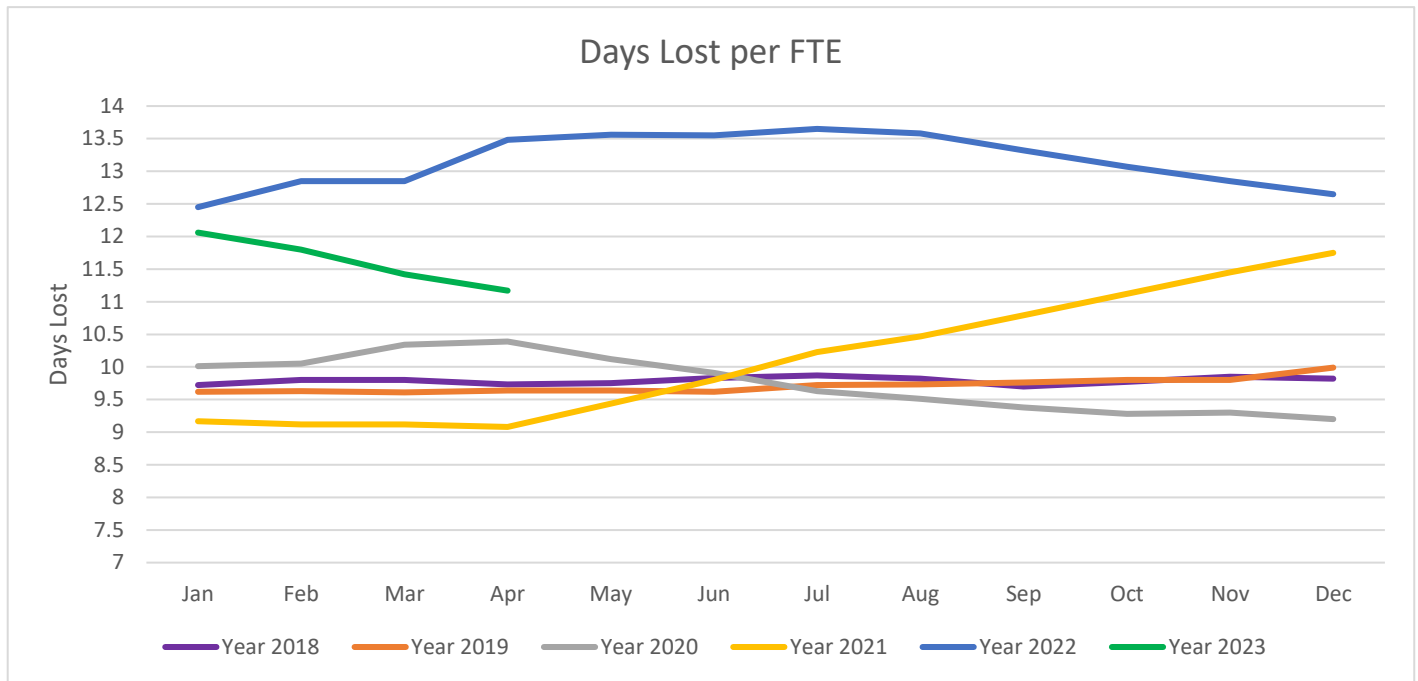
20 Whilst work continues in relation to all aspects mentioned above, further progress is being made in this area with the development of the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Framework which can be shared in more detail at a future Board.

An interim update on the progress made to reduce levels of sickness absence

21 In July 2022 we saw a peak in sickness absence across the organisation at 13.65 days lost per FTE. Since planned interventions have taken place the level of sickness has now reduced by 18.17% (a further decrease of 6.57% since March) to 11.17 days lost per FTE in April 2023. This shows a continued downward trajectory since we reported in March 2023. All directorates are showing their lowest levels of sickness absence for the last thirteen months.

22 Figure 41 shows, in 2022 we experienced the highest number of days lost in comparison to the previous four years. However, days lost per FTE has been reducing since August 2022 which reflects the additional support that has been in place both through HR and locally within services. Comparing sickness to pre pandemic levels, we can see in April 2023 days lost per FTE (11.17) was 1.53 days higher than 2019, reducing the gap further by 0.90 days since we reported in March 2023.

Figure 4 – Days lost per FTE 2018 to date



Targeted Service Support

23 As previously reported, manager and HR support was re-prioritised to specifically support certain areas which has notably higher levels of absence. The service areas are set out in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Thirteen priority service areas identified for additional support – detailing the percentage decrease in days lost per FTE

Service Area	Percentage reduction in days lost per FTE since August 22 – Jan 23	Percentage reduction in days lost per FTE since August 22 – April 23	This equates to a further % reduction between January 23 and April 23
Cleaning/ FM	-10%	-17%	7%
Catering	-7%	-10%	3%
Fleet	-10%	-19%	9%
LBS	-24%	-32%	8%
Passengers	-14%	-15%	1%
Contact centre	-11%	-23%	12%
Housing	-5%	-12%	7%
Environmental Services	-15%	-15%	0%
Parks	-8%	-10%	2%
Customer Access and Welfare	-11%	-22%	11%
Looked After Children	-11%	-24%	14%
Care Delivery (OPS, MH, PI)	-1%	-5%	4%
Assessment / Provisions	-7%	-14%	8%

24 Figure 5 shows that progress has been made in all areas with positive reductions in the level of sickness absence since targeted work first began in August 2022. Since August 2022 there has been a 17% reduction in the number of days lost per FTE across the thirteen areas.

25 The most significant impact has been within Leeds Building Services (LBS) where there has been a 32% reduction since August 2022. This has been achieved through collaborative working between colleagues within HR and senior management within the service on long term sickness cases. Further success has been achieved via early intervention and proactive conversations being undertaken with colleagues as soon as a period of absence occurs reducing the overall number of days sickness absence.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

26 Having a fully engaged and productive workforce will support the delivery of all aspects of the City Ambitions. The toolkit is intended to support managers to get the best from their team and individuals which will impact on our overall delivery.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

27 Early engagement with a number of different groups has taken place to help to socialise the suggested approach. Reflecting that we have all the key components in place to support performance management but would like to encourage a culture where there are more frequent conversations, and we talk openly about performance through regular 1-2-1s avoiding any delay by trying to link to the appraisal cycle. Whilst it is recognised that this does happen in many teams there are opportunities to further develop as an organisation within this area.

28 Initial engagement has taken place with the Best Council Leadership Team. We have initially engaged a small group from the Be Your Best Community at in person events as well as the Strategy and Resources Leadership Team.

29 The suggested approach was well received with many suggestions about what support managers would like to see included, the recognition that one size will not fit all, and that the toolkit will need to reflect this. We are currently working through the feedback to feed into the next steps and further development.

30 Trade Unions colleagues have also been engaged through the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee. Trade Unions were supportive but recognised the need to manage messaging sensitively and were happy to see that performance conversations were as much about those that are performing as expected and high achievers as well as those that needed additional support. Some concerns were raised about workloads and whether it would be perceived that this would be used to get people to do more. Trade Unions were reassured that the toolkit is about giving everybody the opportunity to be their best and could support the balance of workloads within teams through more frequent, open conversations which could support individuals to help manage things like workload.

31 Further engagement will continue with a wide group from the Be Your Best Community and then a small working group will come together to further develop the toolkit based on feedback received. The team will connect with different services and teams to test approaches in different settings, which can then be used to help share examples of what works well.

What are the resource implications?

32 Representative from across the HR team will come together with representatives from across the business to help shape guidance and materials to support managers. Existing forums such as the Be Your Best Community will continue to be engaged.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

33 Managers not engaging with the toolkit – the team will plan communication and engagement with managers linked to the manager expectations in the Organisational Plan to ensure the toolkit is seen as a useful tool to support managers. We will look to utilise any early engagement and successes to help sell the approach as well as selling the benefits of overall increased team performance and improved satisfaction for employees.

34 Worries among the workforce – this will be mitigated by reassuring staff that the drive behind improving our offer to support managers is to ensure managers support staff to be their best ensuring they are clear in terms of what is expected of them, they receive any support they need and support progression.

35 Trade Unions concerns regarding additional pressures linked to workload – similar to above this will be mitigated through effective communication and engagement to reassure that the approach of talking openly about performance will ensure that people get any support they need but more importantly there is recognition for a job well done.

What are the legal implications?

36 No legal implications

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

37 We already have a strong approach to performance management across the organisation as detailed in figure two above. The toolkit will simply complement and strengthen our approach. Other options have therefore not been considered at this stage. However, as the toolkit develops an iterative approach will be taken by testing new approaches and adapting as required to ensure we have tools available to support all managers working in different teams and contexts.

How will success be measured?

38 Monitoring well established KPIs at team and organisational level

39 Monitoring outcomes on future staff surveys

40 Monitoring completion and quality of appraisals

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

41 We are currently finalising the plans and timescales; however, we intend to take a phased approach releasing content as it is developed with an iterative approach to developing the toolkit.

Appendices

- None

Background papers

- None