



**Melton
Borough
Council**

Consultancy and Agency
Scrutiny Committee
25th July 2022

Scope and Purpose

- To provide an overview of the Council's approach to resource management; including recruitment, retention, vacancy management and the use of consultancy and agency spend in support of the Council's Corporate objectives.
- Seek to demonstrate a flexible, responsible and effective management of capacity and capability.
- To provide details and rationale for where agency and consultancy have been utilised and considered the right solution.



Context

- The Council has made a clear and continuing commitment to building strongest possible in-house team (Way We Work Strategy 2021-24 – approved December 2021).
 - *“...a positive place to work and build a career....where our diverse team...know they are making a difference every day.”*
- To be effective we know we have to recruit and retain best possible talent – employer of choice:
 - Strong focus on purpose, values and culture / modern & flexible working practices / salary benchmarking / wider benefits (leave & pension etc).

Measuring impact

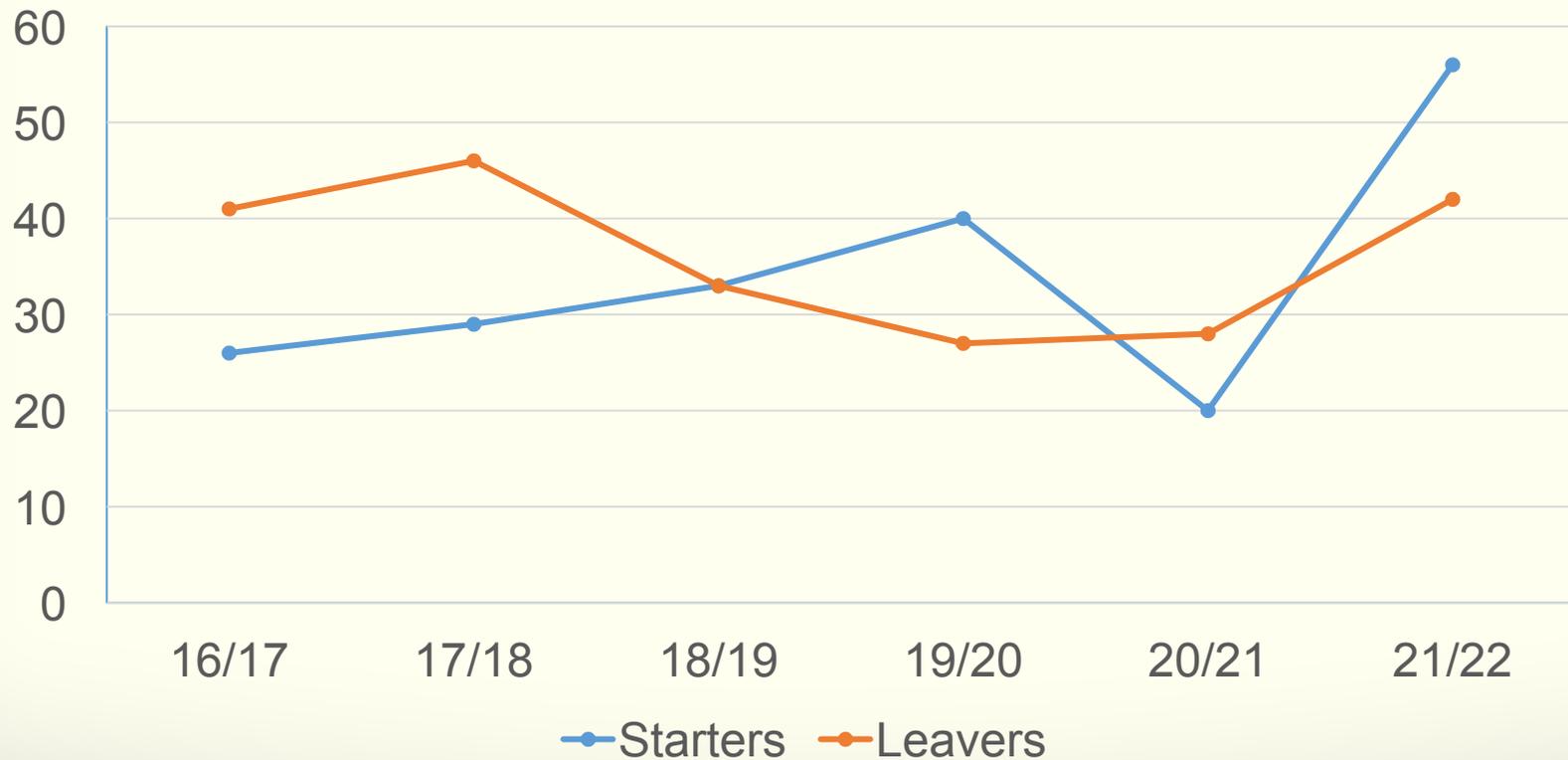
Turnover / retention:

- Reflect on where we've come from:
 - Focus on recruitment and retention nothing new
 - 2016-18 – significant capacity and capability drain – net loss 15% of organisation – significant vulnerabilities – major rebuild required.
 - First Workforce Strategy approved in 2018 – focus on leadership, culture and values, rebuilding capability
 - New teams & structure - big increase in recruitment and reduction in turnover From 18% to 11%.



Measuring impact

Starters and Leavers



Measuring impact

Turnover / retention:

- Turnover has increased in last year
 - national post-covid trend
 - exceptional circumstances – targeted head hunting from neighbouring authority.
- BUT – significant recruitment activity to replace – strong appointments made.
- Feedback from recent recruitment processes and East Midlands Councils – Melton has a strong and positive reputation as an employer across the region.



Measuring impact

- **Staff Satisfaction:** workforce survey – 80% enjoy working at the Council / 86% believe the Council cares for employees / 95% feel trusted.
- **Exit interviews:** main reason for leaving is a new challenge or planned retirement (some reference to rethinking lifestyle post-covid).
- **Benchmarking:** HR colleagues well connected with other councils across the East Midlands – best practice etc.



Vacancy Management

- Turnover natural part of any organisation – desirable at manageable level.
- Proactive approach to vacancy management
 - Assess ongoing need for the role
 - Does it need to be changed?
 - Is the service currently being reviewed (consider temporary resource to maintain flexibility)?
 - Could the role be shared with another team or council to improve efficiency, resilience or make more attractive?
- Requests to recruit signed off by SLT



Vacancy Management

- Vast majority of cases, advertised vacancies filled with permanent recruitment 72% (inc 20% internal progression)
- Those filled temporarily mainly due to requirement for seasonal work, temporary funding (e.g. Covid) or apprentice positions
- 9% unfilled, sometimes necessitating need for wider review or interim resources, particularly in areas where sector-wide skills shortages – e.g. planning and housing.
- Focus on internal development e.g. planning - “grow your own” / career grading / apprenticeships / kickstart



Tactical use of interims

- The Council is committed to developing our in-house skills, capacity and expertise but there are occasions where it makes sense to appoint on a short-term basis:
 - Cover gaps between someone leaving and someone starting (e.g. long notice periods for senior roles)
 - When a manager wants time to review whether there is an alternative option to like for like recruitment (e.g. explore collaborative options with another council)
 - Where a service review is already underway which may change the role and filling on an interim basis retains flexibility (reduce redundancy risk)
 - Where there is a specialist or short term piece of work required



Tactical use of interims

- Appointments undertaken in line Agency and Off Payroll Working Policy and procedure, and contract procedure rules.
- Examples:
 - Interim Senior manager retained in housing management
 - Interim Assistant Director for planning
 - Interim Head of Neighbourhoods
- Summary of agency spend is in the appendix



Consultancy / External Expertise

- Like all districts, in some areas we have small teams.
- Sometimes not possible or good value to directly employ all skills required to deliver corporate aspirations
- If so, consider procuring external expertise / consultancy.
- Number of reasons why we would consider this:
 - Specific expertise required for a specific time – e.g. cemetery development feasibility
 - To secure external accredited validation for key pieces of work e.g. Bottesford Transport Study
 - To secure additional assurance for an in-house plan in a high risk area – e.g. Savills review of HRA Business Plan



Requirement	Example	Value
Work to support funding bids in short timescales	Development of Stockyard proposal - LUF bid	£84,000 (funded through LLEP BRP)
To meet grant funding conditions	Asset Development Programme	£68,000 (cap prog and LLEP BRP fund)
Implement technically complex projects while upskilling existing staff	Implementation of Northgate Housing system as part of HIP	£132,500 (capital programme)
Where a multi-disciplinary approach is required	Health and Leisure Park business case development	£112,000 (funded through LLEP BRP grant funding)
Piggy back on learning from partner rather than start from scratch	New website development and Finance System implementation	£175,000 (finance sys) £18,000 (new web development)



Summary

- We are an ambitious, forward thinking organisation and have a comprehensive approach to resource management
- Strong focus on building best possible in house team
- Recognition of changing national trends, flexible working expectations – need to keeping adapting to the workforce of tomorrow
- Decisions to use interims or consultants are made based on need and best approach to achieve required outcomes.
- They are all properly procured, fully funded and often utilise external grant funding (MBC v. successful securing), and ultimately support delivery of the Corporate Strategy

