Workforce Innovation - how councils are responding to workforce challenges

Best Value thematic work in South Lanarkshire Council 2023-24

AUDIT SCOTLAND

Contents

Key facts

Workforce

15,173	Number of people working for the council – headcount
12,490	Number of people working for the council – full time equivalent
5.1%	Turnover of staff in last six months
5.7%	Percentage of days lost due to absence in last year

Age profile

0.5%	Under 20
12%	20 to 29
21.5%	30 to 39
23%	40 to 49
28%	50 to 59
15%	60 and above

Sources:
- Headcount, FTE and absence: *Council-wide Workforce Monitoring – October to December 2023, Report to Finance and Corporate Resources Committee - 6 March 2024*
- Turnover: *Employee Workforce Monitoring Information, Report to Executive Committee – 22 November 2023*
- Age profile: *Information provided to Audit Scotland by South Lanarkshire Council*

Key messages

1   The Council's Workforce Plan 2022-25 is supported by detailed service level plans, however there is an opportunity for this to have a more strategic focus. The Council has not had a corporate level workforce strategy since 2019.

2   The Council and service-level workforce plans capture the workforce challenges however actions need to be SMART to allow progress to be monitored and reported.

3   While the Council's service-level workforce plans contain workforce data, there is no workforce data included in the Council-level Workforce Plan.

4   The Council has developed a comprehensive toolkit to help services with workforce planning.

5   The Council is using digital technology to support new ways of working but has not yet set out how it plans to use digital technology to shape its future workforce. The introduction of Oracle Fusion provides the Council with opportunities to create efficiencies and the increased use of digital technology in education is providing more choice for pupils.

6   The Digital Strategy 2022-27 sets out an intention to address digital exclusion. Around ten per cent of employees who responded to a digital skills survey identified that they do not have basic digital literacy.

7   The Council recognises the need for innovative skills and capacity measures in light of the workforce recruitment and retention challenges it faces. The Council uses a number of approaches to improve the skills and capacity of its future and existing workforce.

8   The Council reports detailed council-wide and resource-level workforce monitoring information to Committee quarterly although there is scope for the content to be further developed.

Scope of the audit

1. The 2023 Local Government Overview (LGO) notes that councils have never faced such a challenging situation. Service demands have increased after the Covid-19 pandemic and funding is forecast to reduce in real terms. Workforce pressures including recruitment in a competitive labour market, employee retention and high sickness absence levels are putting councils under continued pressure.

2. This report sets out how South Lanarkshire Council is responding to current workforce challenges through building capacity, increasing productivity and innovation.

3. The Accounts Commission's Strategy (2021-26) sets out its priorities to focus on inequalities, funding, communities and recovery. The Code of Audit practice sets out the Best Value work required to report on these priorities.

Code of Audit Practice 2020 Best Value reporting requirements

> **Best Value reporting – extract from the Code**
>
> The Accounts Commission's approach to Best Value involves reporting on individual local government bodies and thematically across the local government sector through performance reports:
>
> - As part of their integrated wider-scope annual audit work appointed auditors use a risk-based approach to assess and report whether the audited body has made proper arrangements for securing Best Value and is complying with its community planning duties, including reporting progress against previous Best Value findings and recommendations.
>
> - The Accounts Commission also requires the Controller of Audit to report to the Accounts Commission on each council at least once over the five-year audit appointment on the body's performance on its Best Value duty. This enables the Accounts Commission to make findings for improvement where appropriate.
>
> - The Accounts Commission reports nationally on thematic aspects of local government bodies' approaches to, and performance in, meeting their Best Value and community planning duties. Local government appointed auditors report locally on any such Best Value thematic work prescribed by the Accounts Commission.

4. This report covers the thematic aspect of the Best Value audit requirements. The Commission has directed auditors to report on workforce innovation and how councils are responding to workforce challenges. In carrying out the work auditors have considered the following questions:

- How effectively are the council's workforce plans integrated with its strategic plans and priorities?

- How effectively has digital technology been used to support workforce productivity and improve service quality and outcomes?

- How effectively is the council using hybrid and remote working and other innovative working practice such as a four-day week to achieve service and staff benefits?

- What innovative practice is the council using to develop its future workforce capacity and skills needs and manage staff reductions in line with its priorities?

- What progress has the council made with sharing roles or functions across its services and/or with other councils and partners?

- How effectively is the council measuring the impact of its workforce planning approach?

5. An improvement action plan is included at Appendix 1 of this report. This sets out audit recommendations in key areas, and the Council's planned response including responsible officers and dates for implementation.

6. The coverage of the work is in line with the expectations for council's arrangements for the seven Best Value themes in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, Best Value Statutory Guidance 2020.

1 Workforce strategy and priorities

7. A council focused on achieving Best Value will have a workforce strategy that sets out expectations on how the local authority's staff will deliver its vision, priorities and values.

8. To be effective, workforce planning must be integrated across the organisation. Workforce strategies need to support the council in achieving its strategic priorities. They must support other key plans including financial, asset, digital and transformation planning. They need to be under-pinned with detailed workforce plans within services.

The Council does not have a corporate level workforce strategy, with the last strategy covering the period 2016-2019

9. South Lanarkshire Council employs over 15,000 people at a cost of nearly £700 million, including pension contributions. Staff costs equate to around 44 per cent of the Council's overall expenditure. Forty-three per cent of the Council's workforce are aged over 50.

10. The Council has a shared vision to improve the lives and prospects of the people living in South Lanarkshire. Its three priorities are:

- People – *we need to put people first*
- Planet – *we need to work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places*
- Progress - *We need to recover, progress, and improve*.

11. The Council's last corporate level workforce strategy (People Strategy) covered the period 2016-19. Although the Council has confirmed the principles of workforce planning set out in the People Strategy remain valid, the context in which councils operate has changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and other external factors.

The Council's Workforce Plan 2022-25 is supported by detailed service level plans, however there is an opportunity for this to have a more strategic focus

12. We reported in our 2022/23 Best Value thematic report on Leadership that the Council renewed its council-level workforce plan in 2022. The Workforce Plan 2022-25 was approved by its Executive Committee in November 2022.

13. The Council-level Workforce Plan outlines the main workforce challenges as having access to a reduced workforce pool, the ability to grow and develop talent and skills and maintaining employee wellbeing. It notes that delivering the plan will need the right people with the right skills in the right place.

14. The Council-level plan is four pages long, with an associated action plan taking up just over an additional page. It does not include or refer to workforce data, such as the age profile of its workforce, the number of casual staff used or indicators of staff wellbeing. Nor does it include any information on what it is currently doing to address any workforce capacity issues or how it plans to develop its future workforce.

15. The Council-level workforce plan is based on the content of workforce plans developed in its five combined service level areas (referred to as resources by the Council):

- **Community and enterprise resources** (made up of facilities, waste and grounds services, planning and regulatory services, roads, transportation and fleet services and enterprise and sustainable development services)

- **Education resources**

- **Finance and corporate resources** (made up of administration and legal services, communications and strategy, finance services, Information Technology services, Personnel services and Audit and compliance services)

- **Housing and technical resources** (made up of housing services and property services)

- **Social work resources** (made up of South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Children and justice services and performance and support services).

The Council and service-level workforce plans capture the workforce challenges however actions need to be SMART to allow progress to be monitored and reported

16. Workforce plans for each of the five service levels, covering 2022-25, were approved by respective resource committees in September and October 2022. The Council identified common themes across these, summarising them as follows:

- increased demand and a reduced workforce pool

- demographic challenges – increased turnover, employees retiring earlier than expected and succession planning

- ability to grow and develop talent and skills

- ongoing requirement for efficiency savings

- digital developments and new Information Technology (IT) systems

- maintaining employee wellbeing.

17. Exhibit 1 sets out the action areas included within the Council level Workforce Plan 2022-25. These actions were informed from a review of the five service level workforce plans. It also has columns for the anticipated outcome from completing the action, lead officer, support required, timescale and financial implications.

Exhibit 1
Actions included in the Council's Workforce Plan 2022-25

- **Revised recruitment practices**

- **Development of 'grow our own' approach to attract and retain employees**

- **Robust succession planning practices**

- **Managing employee impact of ongoing requirement for efficiency savings and service redesign**

- **Support and development for digital and IT developments**

- **Maintain employee health and wellbeing**

Source: South Lanarkshire Council Workforce Plan 2022-25

18. As outlined above, each service level developed its own workforce plan, covering the period 2022-25 with each having the following structure:

- An overview of what services are included within each service level

- The main challenges, risks and new developments for the services

- Strategic drivers, e.g. financial savings and efficiency, recruitment and retention. This includes a list of relevant strategic plans.

- Current workforce – includes workforce information (age, absence, turnover) and lists workforce challenges

- Objectives of the workforce plan

- Key actions

- Action Plan – containing the same headings as the council-level action plan.

19. The service-level plans provide a detailed overview of the challenges individual services are facing and set out what they are planning to do to address these challenges.

20. Both the Council-level and service-level plan action plans are not SMART. For many actions, the timescales are 'ongoing' making it difficult to measure and report on progress. There is an opportunity for the Council to set clearer milestones to monitor progress.

The Council has developed a comprehensive toolkit to help services with workforce planning

21. The Council has a comprehensive workforce planning toolkit for services to use. The toolkit includes an assessment tool and action planning templates. It is designed to assist services in identifying supply and demand issues and consider the emerging objectives and actions within their areas. It also suggests a variety of information sources, including workforce data provided by Human Resources, employee audits, absence levels and profiles, and performance review and training records.

22. The toolkit refers to key objectives for the Council's workforce, including maximising the potential of digital and agile working, effective recruitment processes and employee supports, practices and policies that support employee retention and wellbeing.

While the Council's service-level workforce plans contain workforce data, there is no workforce data included in the Council-level Workforce Plan

23. Workforce planning involves identifying and addressing future capacity and skills gaps, at operational and leadership levels. It requires strategic thinking, comprehensive workforce data (such as wellbeing, projected skills and capacity, vacancies, labour market context) and ongoing consultation and engagement with staff and trades unions.

24. Each of the five service workforce plans includes a short section on workforce data. For example, the Community and Enterprise service workforce plan, which includes facilities, waste and ground services, and roads, transportation and fleet services noted the following:

- the number of staff (FTE) across the four services in its area

- the most up-to date figures (2021/22) for absence and staff turnover

- 58 per cent of its workforce was 50 years old or over.

25. Although the Council's Workforce Plan 2022-25 does not include or refer to any council-wide workforce data.it does state that each service within the Council has reviewed its workforce data and each service level workforce plan contains a *detailed analysis of the data and the potential implications for the service and the Council*.

Recommendation 1

The Council should develop a corporate level workforce strategy to demonstrate a clear link to the Connect Council Plan 2022-27. The Council should build on the workforce planning to date and implement a more strategic, data-driven approach to workforce planning, with SMART action plans, setting out how Council level and service level actions are being progressed.

2 Digital technology and the workforce

26. The LGO notes that digital technology will make councils' future workforces look and work quite differently. In order to achieve the change required, councils need to make good use of digital technology and use the workforce in flexible ways.

27. Digital technology has a strong bearing on a council's workforce needs. It can be used to re-shape jobs to increase productivity and reduce back-office functions while improving service quality. Technology solutions include online services, customer relationship management systems, mobile digital devices and more recently, artificial intelligence (AI) applications.

28. The Accounts Commission's 2021 Digital Progress in Local Government report highlighted that Covid-19 accelerated the use of digital technology in councils. Councils need to be innovative in their use of technology and build on new working practices that emerged during the pandemic. In doing so, they must also consider service quality and the needs of people experiencing digital exclusion.

The Council is using digital technology to support new ways of working

29. The Council approved its Digital Strategy 2022-2027 in June 2022. It sets out how the Council aims to exploit new technologies to help deliver its vision of improving the quality of life for everyone in South Lanarkshire.

30. The Digital Strategy 2022-27 also includes examples of how the Council aims to improve workforce productivity through the use of digital technology to date. For example, the rollout of Microsoft 365 software has improved collaboration and enabled virtual meetings using Teams. There has been an expansion in the number of mobile devices and apps increasing flexibility for the Council's workforce.

The Council has not yet set out how it plans to use digital technology to shape its future workforce

31. The Digital Strategy 2022-27 sets out to focus on service transformation using digital technologies. In terms of workforce planning, it confirms that the Council is at an early stage in establishing links between workforce planning and digital technology:

- *Future council workforce planning will require to take account of how new technology is changing both how services are delivered, and the roles required to deliver those services in future.*

The introduction of Oracle Fusion provides the Council with opportunities to create efficiencies

32. The Council is currently implementing new systems including Oracle Fusion - a cloud-based employee system that aims to provide better reporting and efficiencies, a new social work system (Liquid Logic), a homecare scheduling system (Total Mobile) and a new housing management system. These are all long-term multi-year projects, all due to be in place by the end of 2024/25.

33. Once the new systems are in place, employees and elected members will be able to securely access systems from any authorised device and from any location. The Council anticipates increased productivity, reduction in travel time and more efficient use of property as a result and intends to quantity benefits and impact once the new systems are implemented.

34. To provide employees with access to council systems the Council has installed 'Kiosk computers' in various locations. These allow employees access to systems they need, such as e-learning and Oracle Fusion.

Recommendation 2

The Council should develop measures to capture and monitor the impact of digital technology on workforce productivity and service outcomes. It should also set out how it expects digital technology to shape its future workforce.

The increased use of digital technology in education is providing more choice for pupils

35. The Council is aiming to deliver digital technologies to support imaginative, innovative learning environments suitable for learning in the 21st century. The Hybrid Learning Academy pilot commenced in August 2023 with nine secondary schools delivering nine individual Advanced Higher courses, and one Higher course. Subjects range from graphic communication to psychology to politics. Learners from across South Lanarkshire join lessons in-person, or online from a remote location, if their school is not able to deliver the course locally. Fifty-two learners are currently enrolled.

36. The pilot involved equipping each of its 17 mainstream secondary schools with the necessary IT equipment to facilitate learning to be delivered from schools to learners across South Lanarkshire. The investment costs for the supply and installation of the equipment costs were estimated at £11,500 per school.

37. Anticipated benefits of the pilot include reductions in the environmental impact of travel and the costs transportation involved for students to attend other schools. Attending another school two to three times a week also has implications for the learners' other subjects in their base school. Regular reviews and feedback from schools, teachers, learners, and their families is to inform and shape the development of the programme with the intent on establishing an extended SLC Hybrid Learning Academy from 2024-25.

The Digital Strategy 2022-27 sets out an intention to address digital exclusion. Around ten per cent of employees responding to a digital survey identified that they do not have basic digital literacy

38. Digital inclusion is one of 21 principles set out in the Digital Strategy 2022-27 and is also one of eight themes. The Council is aiming to ensure that "No One is Left Behind" as take-up of digital services increases. It intends to design digital solutions to maximise access for all citizens and for those unable to access services digitally, alternative access will be made available.

39. Between May and October 2022, the Council undertook a digital skills employee survey to explore the potential barriers and skills gaps its workforce was facing in relation to the use of technology. Although this was an online survey, the Council recognised that those most likely to lack skills would not be able to complete it. To address this site visits from learning and development staff to support completion were offered and taken up by building services workers. Paper copies and telephone completion were offered by exception but were not taken up.

40. The response rate was approximately 15 per cent of all council staff, with 2,178 responses received. Nearly half the responses were from users who did not use a computer in their day-to-day work. The key findings were:

- 60-90 per cent of all survey respondents are operating within the essentials level of digital literacy

- 10 per cent of survey respondents are not fully operating at the foundation level of digital literacy.

41. To help address these results we understand the Council intends to:

- include digital enablement in future appraisal discussions

- provide guidance notes for identified process difficulties

- signpost employees to existing learning and development on Teams

- target provision of supported sessions to the those who are currently not meeting the foundation level of digital skills.

42. In areas where employees are unlikely to have access to digital devices, such as in schools, the Council makes use of in-service days to provide training. Employees can request in-person training in digital skills tailored to their needs.

Recommendation 3

The Council should develop an action plan to allow it to monitor progress in addressing digital exclusion in its workforce and for its citizens.

3 Flexible working and other innovative staff deployment

43. During the pandemic councils needed to make the best use of their existing workforce while continuing to monitor employee wellbeing. Councils continue to look to new ways of working to improve job satisfaction, reduce sickness absence and staff turnover.

44. Home-working and hybrid working (a combination of office and home-based working) have now become commonplace. Some councils are also considering more radical working practice such as a standard four-day working week. However, whatever the working practice, employers need to ensure that service quality and productivity are maintained.

The Council has adopted agile working. The introduction of Oracle Fusion provides further flexible working and staff deployment opportunities

45. During the pandemic the Council put in place agile working and established alternative shift patterns to ensure services were still able to be delivered. Staff are now categorised as fixed, flexible, mobile or remote. The Council is currently undertaking an exercise on work patterns to understand what proportion of its workforce is in each category.

46. As detailed in paragraphs 32-34 above, the Council is currently implementing a number of new systems, including Oracle Fusion, which are long-term multi-year projects, all due to be in place by the end of 2024/25. The Council anticipates increased productivity, reduction in travel time and more efficient use of property as a result and intends to quantity benefits and impact once the new systems are implemented.

47. The Council has implemented a four-day working week and a nine-day fortnight for some office-based roles. Services continue to work with employees to consider optimum working patterns.

The Council offers employees a variety of wellbeing support

48. The Council's Workforce Plan 2022-25 includes an action to *enhance staff wellbeing support as part of increasing staff resilience and furthering our ambitions as an excellent employer*. The Council introduced additional support for employees through a 'New Deal for Employees' report that went to the Council's Executive Committee in September 2022. This offered a variety of initiatives for employees including improved paternity leave, a right to disconnect policy and consideration of a four-day working week.

49. The Council offers employees various training. This is not restricted to job-related learning but includes mental health, suicide prevention and budgeting / cost of living support. There is a wellbeing calendar where employees can sign up for different sessions. Topics include mindfulness, weight loss and men's mental health. There is also signposting for employees to external self-help groups.

4 Developing future skills and capacity

50. Councils need to find innovative ways to ensure the workforce capacity and skills they need to deliver services in the future. Training and development opportunities can help to attract and retain employees and ensure skills are in place. Many councils work with their partners to offer apprenticeship schemes or vocational qualifications. Succession planning is also important to develop future leaders and ensure that essential skills are in place.

51. Jobs can be re-designed to optimise the workforce and improve services, for example the introduction of generic roles across health and social care disciplines. Leaders need to engage with staff and trade unions over fundamental workforce reform. This is particularly challenging in an environment of potential job losses.

The Council recognises the need for innovative skills and capacity measures in light of the workforce recruitment and retention challenges it faces. The Council uses a number of approaches to improve the skills and capacity of its future and existing workforce

52. The 2022-2025 Workforce Plan identifies the workforce capacity and skills challenges that the Council and each of its five service level areas face. These challenges include difficulties in recruiting and retaining employees and the ability to grow and develop talent and skills. Exhibit 1 sets out the council-wide actions the Council has developed to address these challenges.

The Council provides several apprenticeship schemes to help it fill skills and capacity gaps in its workforce

53. The Council operates three apprenticeship schemes in partnership with Skills Development Scotland - Modern, Graduate and Foundation Apprenticeships.

54. Modern Apprenticeships: These are aimed at those who are 16 years or older and who have left school. Apprentices are employed by the Council for the duration of their apprenticeship, which can last between 12 months and four years. Modern Apprenticeships are a key element of the Council's 'grow your own' approach, and recruitment to the programme reflects the forecasted workforce needs of the Council. In February 2023, the Council employed 184 Modern Apprenticeships in a number of key occupational areas, including construction, social care, child care, business and administration and digital apps and IT support.

55. **Graduate Apprenticeships:** These are open to over-16s who are new or existing employees of the Council and run for four to five years. These apprenticeships are delivered in partnership with a learning provider, usually a university or college, and apprentices work towards a qualification of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 8 to 11 (equivalent to a master's degree). Graduate Apprentices are employed by the Council for the duration of their apprenticeship, but the qualification element of the scheme is funded by Skills Development Scotland. As of February 2023, the Council had 39 Graduate Apprentices across all five council resources in areas that have been identified as potential gaps in the council workforce's skillset.

56. **Foundation Apprenticeships:** These are targeted at those still in school, usually in the Senior Phase. The Council delivers these apprenticeships in partnership with South Lanarkshire College and New College Lanarkshire. Apprentices spend time learning with one of these colleges and then spend time applying this knowledge in a working environment with an employer. The Council holds a commitment to joining up the Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship schemes and offer a guaranteed interview for any Foundation Apprentice who wishes to pursue a Modern Apprenticeship with the Council. Pupils have access to eight subject frameworks all delivered at SCQF level 6, the equivalent of a higher:

- Accountancy

- Business Skills

- CDM

- Mechanical Engineering

- Engineering Systems

- Civil Engineering

- Financial Services

- Software Development

- Children & Young People

- Healthcare.

The Council has redesigned some roles in social work to enhance future capacity and staff retention

57. In June 2023, the Social Work Resources Committee approved proposals to redesign some front-line roles in social work. This was to address recruitment and retention challenges, including having to compete with nearby councils, for Qualified Social Worker (QSW) roles. The Council identified that high vacancy rates, which reached 50 per cent in some offices, for QSWs risked compromising public protection and other statutory duties.

58. The existing Team Leader roles were replaced with an expanded number of Operations Manager positions, reporting to Fieldwork Managers. The Operations Managers will manage the operational service and contribute to strategic and governance activity. They will also assume wider public protection responsibilities through chairing Adult Protection, Child Protection and high-risk Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, increasing overall capacity.

59. The creation of the new Operations Manager posts were accompanied by an expansion of the number of Senior Practitioner posts, with up to a third of existing Social Worker and Occupational Therapist roles to be advertised and recruited to as Senior Practitioners. These Senior Practitioners report directly to the new Operations Managers.

60. The Council hopes these changes to social work roles and line management arrangements will assist in the recruitment of experienced staff and improve staff retention by creating a clear development and career pathway for existing staff to remain within South Lanarkshire.

The Council has activities in place to support succession planning

61. In addition to the Council's employee performance appraisal process, the Council offers three levels of management development training in conjunction with the Chartered Management Institute to support succession planning:

- Ambition (entry) level for employees managing small teams

- Consolidation level for employees who are practising managers or team leaders

- Development level for senior managers. This includes training on project management, coaching, collaborative working and managing change.

62. The Council also runs leadership development activities, referred to collectively as the Leadership Challenge. Executive Directors select employees to take part in this. It includes skills and attitudes tests, access to speakers to help participants think beyond their current role, participation in service reviews in a different part of the Council and mentoring and coaching. The purpose of the Leadership Challenge is for the Council to ensure its leaders and managers can adapt to different situations and changing circumstances, and can inspire, challenge and encourage.

There is open dialogue between union representatives and senior management

63. The Trades Unions take an active role in formal processes of change such as service redesigns and report effective, open dialogue between union representatives and senior management. Union representatives felt there was opportunities for more dialogue between managers and shop stewards in relation to operation changes.

5 Joint workforce arrangements across services and partners

The Council has limited formal arrangements in place for sharing services with other councils or partners to create workforce benefits

64. Councils should look to work collaboratively with their partners to make the best use of their existing workforces and plan for the particular workforce needs in their areas. They should also work across traditional service department roles within councils to deliver improved services and outcomes.

65. Examples of this include generic working across health and social care, professional posts or functions shared between councils, and services delivered through empowered communities.

66. The Council has limited formal arrangements in place for sharing services with other councils or partner bodies.

Work is underway to establish the Lanarkshire Care Academy in South Lanarkshire to help the Council 'grow its own' social care workforce

67. The establishment of a Lanarkshire Care Academy in South Lanarkshire is a key action in the Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Integrated Workforce Plan 2022-2025. Once established, it will promote social care as a vocation, establish routes into a career in social care and provide a framework that enables the Council to 'grow its own' workforce.

68. The North Lanarkshire Care Academy currently operates across the North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership. South Lanarkshire Council intends to link into this existing framework, creating a single Lanarkshire Care Academy that operates across North and South Lanarkshire.

69. Once implemented, the Lanarkshire Care Academy will consolidate a range of social care workforce activities and programmes currently operated by South Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire. Workforce skills and capacity measures that will eventually be captured under the banner of the Lanarkshire Care Academy in South Lanarkshire include:

- the provision of placements in social care settings to South Lanarkshire College students

- the provision of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) for existing employees

- the Council's Developing the Young Workforce programme, including Foundation Apprenticeships in social care

- the work of the Employability Team in supporting routes to employment in health and social care, including Modern Apprenticeships in social care.

70. Once established, the Lanarkshire Care Academy, will be a joint venture between NHS Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council and their respective IJBs.

71. The Council has a service level agreement in place with South Lanarkshire Leisure Trust that allows the Trust to access the Council's redeployment arrangements. They worked closely during the pandemic and Leisure employees were redeployed to work in residential homes, care at home, children's residential and in administrative roles.

6 Measuring the impact of workforce planning

72. Councils should monitor the impact of their workforce planning and delivery approaches. This should include cost, service quality and productivity benefits as well as employee wellbeing. This in-turn should inform their workforce planning approach. Councils and their partners should also understand the wider impact of their employment practice on the local economy.

The Council reports detailed council-wide and service-level workforce monitoring information to Committee quarterly although there is scope for the content to be further developed

73. The Council reports council-wide and service-level workforce monitoring information to the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee on a quarterly basis and to the Executive Committee on a six-monthly basis. These reports provide comprehensive information on the council's workforce, and include data on:

- attendance statistics

- employee development (take-up of learning and development)

- turnover/analysis of leavers and exit interviews

- recruitment monitoring

- staffing (headcount and FTE).

74. While the information reported is comprehensive, and previous years' data is also provided for comparison, no regular information is reported by the council on its vacancies, its use of temporary and casual member of staff or the skills and capacity of its workforce. There are also no targets in place for any of the measures.

See Recommendation 1 above

Appendix 1

Improvement Action plan

Issue/risk	Recommendation	Agreed management action/timing
1. Corporate level workforce strategy supported by clear reporting on actions The Council does not have a corporate level workforce strategy. The Council level workforce plan does not include or refer to workforce data, such as the age profile of its workforce, the number of casual staff used or indicators of staff wellbeing. Nor does it include any information on what it is currently doing to address any workforce capacity issues or how it plans to develop its future workforce. **Risk –** There is a risk that the Council is not using workforce data to inform workforce planning that links to its strategic priorities.	The Council should develop a corporate level workforce strategy to demonstrate a clear link to the Connect Council Plan 2022-27. The Council should build on the workforce planning to date and implement a more strategic, data-driven approach to workforce planning, with SMART action plans, setting out how Council level and service level actions are being progressed. Paragraphs 9 to 20 and 73-74	**Management response** The Council will complete an updated Workforce Strategy for 2025-2027 with accompanying workforce plans to align to the Council Plan Connect Business Planning Cycle. The Council will create a strategic workforce plan for 2025– 2027 to align with the Council plan and will also create workforce plans for this period and reference the data analysis and findings more clearly to show both the high-level actions and specific resource actions. **Responsible officer** Head of Personnel Services **Actioned by** 31 March 2025
2. Digital technology The Council is at an early stage in establishing links between workforce planning and digital technology **Risk –** There is a risk that the workforce planning is not fully utilising the benefits of digital technology.	The Council should develop measures to capture and monitor the impact of digital technology on workforce productivity and service outcomes. It should also set out how it expects digital technology to shape its future workforce. Paragraphs 29 to 34	**Management response** The Council will include links in the 2025-2027 workforce strategy and plans to digital technology. The Council will include measures to capture and monitor the impact of digital technology. **Responsible officer** Head of Personnel Services Head of IT Services **Actioned by** 31 March 2025

Issue/risk	Recommendation	Agreed management action/timing
3. Digital Exclusion Digital inclusion is one of 21 principles set out in the Digital Strategy 2022-27 and is also one of eight themes. The Council is progressing a number of initiatives to support digital inclusion. **Risk –** There is a risk that without a SMART action plan to monitor progress the Council cannot demonstrate it is achieving the principles set out in the Digital Strategy.	The Council should develop an action plan to allow it to monitor progress in addressing digital exclusion in its workforce and for its citizens. Paragraphs 38-42	**Management response** The Council will develop an action plan within its workforce plans that will detail the next steps in progressing digital inclusion in its workforce. For its citizens, this will be captured within the digital strategy action plans. **Responsible officer** Head of Personnel Services Head of IT Services **Actioned by** 31 March 2025

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