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|-------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Report To: | Policy & Resources Committee | Date: | 19 September 2023 |
| Report By: | Interim Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications | Report No: | HR/09/23/MR |
| Contact Officer: | Morna Rae | Contact No: | 01475 712015 |
| Subject: | Update – Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention | | |

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee on recent activity to support employee recruitment and retention and seek approval on a number of related proposals.

1.3 In May 2023, the Policy and Resources Committee considered and approved the report 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention'. This report highlighted the significant recruitment and retention concerns facing local government at a national and local level and outlined the actions and initiatives currently being progressed to mitigate against these issues and ensure effective delivery of Council services. The Policy and Resources Committee approved proposals on additional work and projects and noted an update report would be presented later in the year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee:

- note the work being progressed to support employee recruitment and retention across the Council;
- approves the revised Flexible Working Policy (Appendix 1);
- approves the Positive Conversations Scheme (Appendix 2), and
- approves the recommendation that there is no longer a requirement for performance appraisals to be reported as a KPI.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Workforce planning and the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced employees has become a concern and is placing additional pressure on Council workforce resources. If actions are not taken to mitigate against these issues, this may lead to additional pressure being placed on workforce capacity and therefore place a risk on the effective delivery of Council services.
- 3.2 One of the key themes of the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy 2020/23 is making Inverclyde Council an "Employer of Choice" and this report updates the Committee on some of the key actions and initiatives which have been implemented and progressed to support the recruitment and retention of employees over the past couple of years. The report also provides an update on progress made since consideration of the 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention' report at the May Policy & Resources Committee.
- 3.3 The 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention' report provided detail on a number of actions and initiatives progressed to address recruitment and retention difficulties, these were:
- Recruitment Campaigns and branding work has been undertaken in HSCP Home Support. This has included hosting local recruitment events, involving trade unions, maximising social media, website and fast track recruitment days,
 - Workforce Refresh programme and the Council's Graduate Programme have been successful in attracting new employees into the Council from the local community,
 - Participation in wider recruitment events to promote jobs and careers with Inverclyde Council,
 - Through the Hybrid Working Pilot, reviewing and offering alternative working patterns to employees which continue to support individual and business needs,
 - Expansion of the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Programme and delivering employability skills training and pipelines into employment, such as work experience,
 - Branded and improved recruitment packs for management positions which present the Council in an attractive manner,
 - The redesign and re-evaluation of jobs making the remit and salary more attractive,
 - Consideration and implementation of trainee grades for several professional posts,
 - Promoting the completion of exit questionnaires so as to gather important data on reasons employees might be leaving (currently reported to committee on an annual basis),
 - Improvements to employee terms and conditions including recent changes to atypical allowances paid to part time staff working additional hours. Further to approval from the Policy and Resources Committee in January 2023, this change has been backdated to September 2022 under delegated authority at a cost of up to £25k. This has been contained within existing budgets.
 - Continue to promote flexible retirement options for older employees which can assist staff retention and succession planning.

4.0 UPDATE ON PROGRESS SINCE MAY POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The 'Supporting Employee Recruitment and Retention' report also provided detail on further work being undertaken along with several proposals which were approved by the Policy & Resources Committee. An update on progress to date is provided below:
- 4.2 Flexible Working Policy

A revised Flexible Working Policy has now been developed and is outlined in Appendix 1. The revised policy has merged existing guidance on flexible working, incorporates hybrid working, complies with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and also accounts for pending legislation with

regard to the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Bill. If approved by Committee, the revised Flexible Working Policy will be relaunched using a schedule of communication methods, information and training sessions.

4.3 Reduction in Standard Working Week

A working group has since been established to explore the reduction in the standard working week from 37 to 35 hours and it remains the intention to bring a detailed report back to Committee later in 2023 clarifying operational and financial implications.

4.4 Payment of Professional Qualification Fees for Students

It was agreed that an allocation from existing earmarked reserves totalling £100,000 be made available to support recruitment and retention of professional roles across the Council. The funds would be used as a pilot to ascertain if by paying university fees or professional qualification fees the Council could attract graduates to 'difficult to fill' posts or support the development of existing employees with a 3 year pay back period. There has been engagement with services to invite interest and a cross service panel has reviewed the applications. It would be the intention to monitor uptake and success with a future update provided to Committee at an appropriate time.

4.5 Review of Performance Appraisal

The Council's performance appraisal process has been reviewed. Following research, consultation and benchmarking from other local authorities it was identified that there is a move away from grading systems and formal, annual processes. Across various industries and organisations, there has been a shift towards a flexible and informal approach, focussed on conversations between managers and employees. Current best practice suggests that meaningful conversations held on a regular basis have a greater impact on employee engagement, performance and satisfaction, which in turn, increases productivity and efficiency. Positive Conversations introduces a new approach to performance management at Inverclyde Council. By replacing the existing policy, the previous practice of formal scoring, annual appraisals and lengthy templates have been removed and a simplified process has been designed (Appendix 2). This aims to be more effective and reflective of the practices in the workplace.

4.6 The purpose of Positive Conversations is to enable meaningful conversations between managers and their employees or teams, that are centred on building relationships, motivating, and creating value for employees. Where there are issues with an employee's performance, this will still be managed under the Managing Poor Performance guidance.

4.7 If approved by Committee, Positive Conversations will be implemented Council wide (excluding teachers) and will be launched using a schedule of communication methods, information and training sessions. By the end of March 2024, all employees should have completed an annual individual conversation as mandatory.

4.8 Previously performance appraisals have been a reported KPI (key performance indicator) for Inverclyde Council, with returns processed and recorded by Organisational Development and Human Resources. With Positive Conversations, it is proposed that this will no longer be the case. As the process moves to an informal approach, the responsibility will be with the manager to maintain the process and engage employees in Positive Conversations. They will still be responsible for recording and maintaining records of conversations, as with the current policy.

4.9 To allow the council to measure the impact and results of Positive Conversations, it is recommended that there is a form of data collection carried out. It is proposed that an open survey

is to be completed by managers. This would mean that staff could feedback throughout the year, providing a real-time data capture alongside the adoption of the new format. Additionally, this will identify the total of employees engaged in the process and provide Organisational Development with the data to support training decisions and resources such as Flexible Workforce Development Fund. The survey will focus on gathering information on training and development needs, practices that work and level of engagement. This will also sit alongside related questions in the wider Employee Survey.

4.10 Employee Benefits

In partnership with Vivup, our health and wellbeing partner, we promoted the introduction of an employee benefits platform which as of 1st August, all of employees now have access to. The range of employee benefits are designed to improve employee’s financial, mental and physical wellbeing and are in addition to our existing employee benefits already in place.

4.11 Our employees, who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, will also have access to a new salary sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (Shared AVC) employee benefit that enables them to make cost efficient retirement savings alongside their Local Government Pension. Working in partnership with our Shared AVC provider AVC Wise, promotional material has been launched Council wide and information sessions are scheduled in the month of August and September.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee approve the revised Flexible Working Policy as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the Positive Conversations Scheme is approved and implemented to replace the existing “Appraisals at Inverclyde” Policy. It is also proposed that Committee note that the introduction of Positive Conversations will mean there is no longer a requirement for performance appraisals to be reported as a KPI, however, managers will be expected to engage in data collection to ensure participation and support decisions on training opportunities and resources.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

| SUBJECT | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| Financial | | X |
| Legal/Risk | | X |
| Human Resources | X | |
| Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan) | X | |
| Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing | | X |
| Environmental & Sustainability | | X |
| Data Protection | | X |

6.2 Finance

One off Costs

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | Budget Years | Proposed Spend this Report | Virement From | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| N/A | | | | | |

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | With Effect from | Annual Net Impact | Virement From (If Applicable) | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| N/A | | | | | |

6.3 Legal/Risk

None.

6.4 Human Resources

Appropriate communication, engagement and training will take place to ensure our employees and managers to ensure they are made aware of the revised Flexible Working Policy and Positive Conversations Scheme.

6.5 Strategic

The report helps deliver Council Plan Priority – to develop motivated, trained and qualified employees that deliver services that meet current and anticipated service needs.

6.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

| | |
|---|---|
| X | YES – an EqIA has been developed in relation to the Flexible Working Policy and published on the Council webpage. https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments |
| | NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement. |

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

| | |
|---|--|
| | YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed. |
| X | NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant. |

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

| | |
|---|---|
| | YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required. |
| X | NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights. |

6.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

| | |
|---|---|
| | YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. |
| X | NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented. |

6.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

| | |
|---|--|
| | YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. |
| X | NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. |

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The trade unions are supportive of the proposals outlined in this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

Version 1.0

Produced by:

OD, Policy & Communications

Inverclyde Council

Municipal Buildings

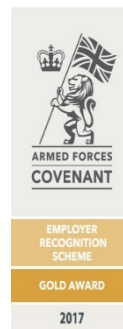
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Appendix 1

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

DRAFT



**INVERCLYDE COUNCIL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER
THIS POLICY BOOKLET IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST,
IN LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, ON AUDIOTAPE, OR CD.**

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DRAFT

DOCUMENT CONTROL

| Document Responsibility | |
|---|---|
| Title | Service |
| Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications | Organisational Development, Policy & Communications |

| Change History | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Version | Date | Comments |
| 1 | 19th September 2023 | Revised policy which merges existing flexible working policies and guides into one document and includes the new option of hybrid working. Submitted to Policy and Resources Committee for review and approval on 19 th September 2023. |
| | | |

| Distribution | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Name/ Title | Date | Comments |
| Corporate Management Team | 21 st June 2023 2 nd August 2023 | |
| Trade Unions (All) | 15 th May 2023 | |
| Staff Disability Forum | 23 rd May 2023 | |
| Inverclyde Trauma Informed and Responsive Practice Strategic Group | 29 th May 2023 | |
| Corporate Workforce Planning and Development Group | 17 th May 2023 | |

Distribution may be made to others on request

| Policy Review | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Review Date | Person Responsible | Service |
| 2026 | Head of Organisational Development, Policy & Communications | Organisational Development, Policy & Communications |

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Inverclyde Council recognises the mutual benefits of having a flexible, effective workforce to deliver the best services to our community, whilst enabling employees to balance their personal, home and work responsibilities more effectively, with a view to achieving greater job satisfaction, motivation, morale and productivity. There are also other benefits in regard to more efficient use of physical resources such as office space and ICT equipment, thus heightening our reputation as an employer of choice.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the range of flexible working options that can be requested at Inverclyde Council and how these requests will be considered, taking into account the demands of the service, customer needs, job role requirements and limitations.

2 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and Flexible Working Regulations 2014, all employees have a statutory right to request flexible working; regardless of whether they are a parent/s and carer/s.
- 2.2 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and employees with protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation will be supported in accessing this policy.

3 SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees of Inverclyde Council regardless of length of service. Employees may submit two requests in a 12-month period. Additional or earlier requests may be considered in exceptional circumstances. Applications can be made by an individual or a group of employees. Note that for Teaching employees, only part-time working and job share requests can be fully considered due to the nature of the profession and delivery of education services.

4 PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The Council is keen to support as many employee led requests as possible and managers will fully consider all requests made. Where a request cannot be accommodated, the reasons will be explained and will normally be in line with the reasons outlined in Section 10 of this Policy.
- 4.2 When a service management led move leads to a different way of working, the objective will be to seek the agreement from all affected employees, and only as a last resort would any change be imposed with due consultation and notice periods and full consideration of the circumstances.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The **line manager** is responsible for:
 - fostering a culture of trust in working relationships;
 - considering flexible working requests fully, fairly, and objectively, seeking to accommodate employees wherever possible. This of course is subject to service provision requirements and implications for customers, team and co-workers;

- consideration of any health and safety requirements;
- giving consideration to alternative options which may provide some level of flexibility requested by the employee in cases where the original flexible working request cannot be justifiably supported;
- seeking approval from their senior management in relation to their decision to support or deny a request;
- discuss with the employee(s) their request within 28 days of receiving the application and provide a written response within 5 days. The written response should provide a clear and detailed explanation of the reasons for the decision, whether approving or denying the request;
- ensuring robust management arrangements are in place for employees who work flexibly ensuring inclusion in communications, business and team meetings as required;
- advising employees of any difficulties arising from their flexible working arrangements, so that these can be addressed.

5.2 The **employee** is responsible for:

- working with management to facilitate a culture of trust;
- outlining and discussing flexible working requests openly with their manager to reach mutual understanding and beneficial solutions;
- fully considering the implications of any flexible working request in relation to effective service provision and impact on their own and their team's performance;
- actively engaging in team, individual and corporate communications, regular one to one support and supervision meetings, performance reviews, and attending regular team and business meetings as required;
- advising their manager of any difficulties arising from their ongoing approved flexible working arrangement, so that these can be addressed and remedied;
- making themselves aware of the terms of this policy recognising flexible working arrangements may require to be amended/ withdrawn subject to the needs of the Service and following full discussion and notice.

6 **SERVICE IMPACT AND CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 Employees and managers should consider the following before requesting or agreeing to a Flexible Working request:

- Customer/client impact;
- Finance/additional costs – normally there should be no additional costs;
- Statutory responsibilities, e.g., Legal requirements, staff to client ratios;
- Size of team, e.g., impact on others/workload if a working pattern is changed;
- Rotas, e.g. would negatively impact on well-established rotas at peak periods;
- Known problematic absence levels/holiday periods;
- Nature of work being undertaken;
- Management or support responsibilities, e.g. does employee support a client who requires services on a specific schedule/cover arrangements;
- The need for managers to be at a place of work to effectively manage;
- Attendance patterns of other employees in teams;
- Impact on the individual employee making the request, e.g. workload;
- Exigencies of the service;
- Practicality of working hours.

The above list is not exhaustive and is provided for illustrative purposes only.

7 TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

7.1 Inverclyde Council offers a variety of flexible working options which are outlined below. It may be possible to combine options, or to have options which are not listed in this section considered. Please refer to the Council's [Flexible Working Procedures](#) for details on the application and procedural process on flexible working.

- Part-Time Working
- Job share
- Term-Time Working
- Compressed Hours
- Homeworker
- Hybrid Working
- Annualised Hours
- Shift/Rota Working
- Flexible Hours
- Flexible and Phased Retirement

7.2 Part-Time Working

Part time working is where an employee's contracted weekly working hours are less than the contracted hours of a full-time employee, i.e., less than 37 hours per week. The salary, holiday entitlement and other conditions of service such as sick pay and maternity, paternity and adoption pay of employees who work part-time are calculated on a pro rata basis, according to the hours worked.

7.3 Job Share

Job share is where two employees share the responsibilities of one full-time post normally evenly. At the point of application, there does not need to be an identified job share partner, but if it is not possible to find a partner within a period considered reasonable by management, then the job share arrangement cannot go ahead.

Salary, holiday entitlement and other conditions of service such as sick pay and maternity/paternity/adoption pay of employees who work job share are calculated on a pro rata basis, according to the hours worked by each sharer. A job-sharer is differentiated from a part-time worker in that a job-sharer has a job-share partner and this is important when one part of the job-share post becomes vacant as the sharing partner has the right to be offered the remainder of the post or if unable to accept it, remain in their post until efforts to recruit a new job-sharer have been exhausted.

7.4 Term Time Working

Term time working is where an employee attends work during the school timetable and does not work during the school holidays. Term time working is most common to services that provide and operate primarily during the school term but is not restricted to these services (for example, an employee in a post not connected to school term but for whom term time working arrangements would suite their personal circumstances).

The employee's salary and holiday entitlement is pro-rata'd based on hours worked and weeks worked and is paid in equal amounts over 12 months. The term-time salary calculation can be found within the Conditions of Service [here](#):

It is essential to stress that in term-time working, except for the floating day, annual leave is allocated during the predetermined school holidays only and cannot be taken at any other time.

7.5 Compressed Hours

Compressed hours are where an employee works their contracted weekly hours over fewer days e.g., a full-time employee may work their contractual hours over 9 days per fortnight instead of 10 days. It is also possible for part time employees to be considered for this type of flexible working, for example 18.5 hours per week - 18.5 hours worked over 2 days rather than the traditional 2.5 days or 20 hours per week – 20 hours worked over 2.5 days rather than the traditional 3 days. Although the working pattern may vary, an employee receives their salary in equal instalments.

7.6 Homeworker

Based at home for at least 90% of working time. Duties can be undertaken out-with an office environment, requiring remote access to ICT systems, equipment, and support. There is no allocated desk within the office environment. Requests must take into consideration potential costs which would be covered by the Service.

7.7 Hybrid Worker:

Hybrid working usually means that employees undertake some of their responsibilities at their contractual place of work and some remotely (usually at home). The exact balance will vary depending on the role and responsibilities and how the team has locally decided to undertake hybrid working. When making decisions, managers need to balance the operational needs of the Service, and office and building capacity, with individual preferences. Hybrid workers will be office based for a minimum 20% of their contracted hours. Hybrid working will be non-contractual.

7.8 Annualised Hours

Annualised hours involve organising working time flexibly across a 12-month period rather than over a fixed standard working week. Although the working pattern varies, an employee receives his/her salary in equal instalments, irrespective of the actual number of hours worked in any given period. Annualised hours are likely to be best suited to posts in which demand varies seasonally, and as such attendance is best suited to particular times of the year.

7.9 Shift/Rota Working

It is important that employees are working at times which meet service demands and any costs associated with changes to working hours are fully considered in line with the Councils agreed working-time envelope.

Shift working can help meet demands placed on services and also provide an opportunity for a greater work life balance as often it means non-working days do not necessarily fall only on weekends. There are numerous models for shift working, but some of the most common are “4 on, 4 off” rotations, split shifts or “earlies/lates”.

Shift working may be suitable if there are demands to be met particularly early in the morning, in the evenings or at weekends. Rotas play a key role in shift working, and rotas are normally agreed some time in advance.

It is likely that any move to shift work will affect a team/group of employees rather than an individual, as such, full consultation will be required with the affected group and HR will be involved in consultations.

7.10 Flexible Hours

Flexible hours is an alternative to the traditional Monday-Friday 9am-5pm workweek in that it provides flexibility in the start and finishing times, e.g. an employee/team might be provided with flexibility to arrive for work between 8am-9am. Flexible hours can be requested on an individual or team basis. Flexible hours are not a replacement of the previous Flexitime Scheme, there is no accrual of time off. It is important that employees are working at the times that meet service demands and that any costs associated with changes to working hours are fully considered in line with the Councils agreed working-time envelope.

7.11 Flexible Retirement

Flexible retirement involves a reduction in your hours/grade and partial/full withdrawal of pension benefits while still being able to continue in employment. Only Local Government Employees, aged 55 and over with at least two years pension membership can apply for flexible retirement. For flexible retirement to be considered the reduction in hours/salary should normally be at least 20% but no more than 50% of the current hours/salary. Approval from the employer is required and requests for flexible retirement must be done so using the form (HR/LGPS) and associated guidance which can be found [here](#).

7.12 Phased Retirement

Phased retirement requires a reduction in salary of at least 25% for a minimum of 12 months. The reduction may be due to either a reduction of hours or salary. Only employees covered by Teaching conditions, aged 55 and over with at least 5 years pension membership can apply for phased retirement. Any applications for such a request must be done so using the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) form which can be reached using this [link](#).

8 **APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS**

- 8.1 All decisions on requests made must be ultimately approved by the relevant Head of Service. Line managers will also undertake discussions with more senior managers as part of their decision making and completing the necessary paperwork. Please refer to the Council's [Flexible Working Procedures](#) for full details on the application and approval process.
- 8.2 The proposed start date of any change should normally be at least 8 weeks from when the written request is submitted to allow time for full management consideration, employee meetings, and any required administrative changes to take place.
- 8.3 All approved arrangements will be reviewed as required to ensure the needs of the service continue to be met, as well as the employees, and may be subject to change giving 12 weeks' notice either by the council or employee for contractual arrangements; and 4 weeks' notice, either by the council or employee, for non-contractual arrangements, i.e., hybrid working.

9 SERVICE LED CHANGES

- 9.1 Service Management may consider posts or groups of posts which may benefit from introducing new ways of working. For example, if there are considerable potential service delivery or efficiency benefits to be gained from making a change to working patterns/methods as well as providing a greater opportunity for Work-Life Balance for employees, but where those employees have not requested a change.
- 9.2 In these circumstances, the proposals will be formulated with the support of Human Resources and include full consultation with Trade Unions, with the ultimate goal being able to gain agreement on any changes.

10. REASONS FOR REJECTING REQUESTS

10.1 The following list, although not exhaustive, are acceptable reasons for rejecting a request under the Policy:

- Insufficient work during the period the employee proposes to work;
- Burden of additional cost – normally requests must be cost neutral to be approved;
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand;
- An inability to reorganise work amongst existing employees;
- An inability to recruit additional staff (e.g. to fill part of a post if employee requests less hours);
- A detrimental impact on quality or performance;
- Inability to effectively manage performance
- Planned structural changes (e.g. the timing is not good as service is reviewing how it operates and no decisions can be made until afterwards);
- Corporate position and wider implications due to volume of requests.
- The post holder has supervisory or line management responsibilities that require them to be available at all working times in line with the attendance of their team or customers;
- Inability to meet Statutory Responsibilities

10.2 The above list is not exhaustive and is provided for illustrative purposes only. Managers are encouraged to contact Human Resource for advice if there are any concern over reasons for rejecting a request.

11. APPEAL PROCESS

- 11.1 Where a request is rejected, an appeal can be made to the next level of manager and should be submitted within 5 working days of the rejection being received. The appeal must outline why the employee believes the rejection is not reasonable. Appeals will normally be heard within 28 days by a Corporate Director and a member of the HR team, neither of whom should have been involved in the original decision making.
- 11.2 The employee may be accompanied by a current work colleague or their trade union representative. The manager who made the decision at the application stage will be present at the hearing to put forward their reasons for rejecting the request.
- 11.3 The final decision will be given in writing within 14 days of the appeal being heard. There is no further right of appeal. Please refer to the Council's [Flexible Working Procedures](#) for full details on the appeal process.

12. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS & CONTRACTUAL STATUS

- 12.1 Any changes agreed under the scheme will be subject to at least annual review. Managers will consider if arrangements are still a best fit and to determine if any changes are required consultation will begin with HR involvement.
- 12.2 In some circumstances, trial periods may be agreed in the first instance, and it is important that a decision is made to either agree to the change or revert to previous way of working at the end of the trial period. An example of a reasonable trial period might be 3 months.
- 12.3 Where there is a large demand or numerous staff wishing to change their hours/working arrangements but not their contractual (paid) hours, it will be acceptable for managers to agree a rota of arrangements, for example if 4 employees request to move to condensed hours, managers may agree a few months each as an operational but not contractual change.
- 12.4 Any arrangements under this policy which are for a reduction in hours are normally permanent, unless otherwise agreed (for example during a trial period). There is no right to revert to full time hours once a permanent change to reduced hours has been agreed.
- 12.5 Requests which do not affect contractual (paid) hours may be agreed on a temporary basis. End dates or review dates should be clearly documented and adhered to.
- 12.6 Any change under this Policy which reduces employee's contractual hours will require an adjustment of annual leave, public holiday entitlement and pay. This is a manual calculation and will normally be carried out by the Service with HR advice as necessary. Balances either owed to the employee or to the service must be taken as annual leave and cannot be given as payment.
- 12.7 The Council, will reserve the right, following consultation and appropriate notice, to end existing arrangements and look into other working arrangements:

Inverclyde Council

Appendix 2

Let's Talk: A Positive Conversation

What are Positive Conversations?

Positive Conversations are about managers and their employee(s) having regular discussions which are focussed on work related goals for the year ahead, providing feedback, agreeing support and identifying development needs for individuals and teams. The approach to these conversations is that it's all about the employee having the opportunity to talk about their job. The process is designed to be flexible to suit the needs of different teams and employees, and to fit into practices already present in services without adding to workload, such as supervisions and regular conversations or team meetings.

What is the purpose of Positive Conversations?

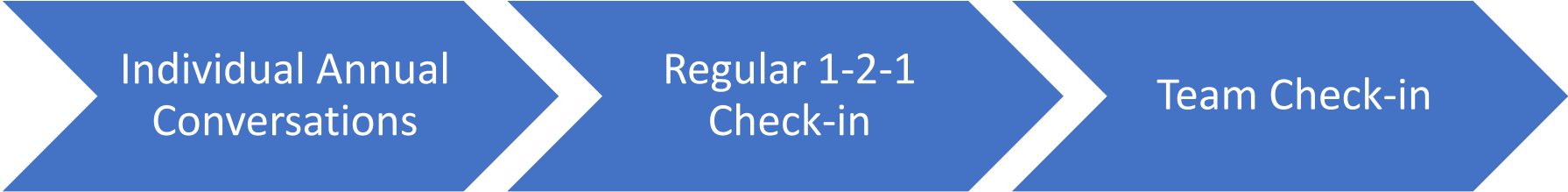
The purpose is to enable meaningful conversations between managers and their employees to support relationship building, motivation, engagement and the creation of value for individuals. The goal of the conversations is to boost confidence and morale, whilst producing high performing individuals and teams. For managers to achieve high performing teams they must consider their individuals, tasks and the team as a whole. It is important to utilise conversations to support workforce and succession planning activity.

Any performance issues should be dealt with appropriately, using the Managing Poor Performance guidance.

What do Positive Conversations look like?

They are a relaxed but focussed conversation between and managers and their employee or team. They should be used to discuss performance and progress, and how can they be the best at work.

The 3 stages of conversations are:



Individual Annual Conversations

Every employee will be invited to attend an annual conversation with their manager, which will be centred around 3 discussion areas. This is an opportunity for reflecting and taking a look over what has been accomplished and what is to come in the year ahead. It is not about completing a form, but instead having a valuable conversation which will be centred around the employee, their role and their goals. This is mandatory for all employees and should be completed on an annual basis.

The 3 areas are: What has gone well over the last year?

What might have gone even better?

What do you want to achieve in the year(s) ahead?

Supporting questions for annual conversations

The below is a list of supplementary questions which can be used to aid conversations and help managers and employees get the most out of the discussion, these can be adapted to suit the individual and job role:

| What has gone well over the last year? | What might have gone even better? | What do you want to achieve in the year(s) ahead? |
|---|--|--|
| What do you feel the proudest of in the last 12 months? | What has been challenging or had you out of your comfort zone? | What do you think your objectives should be? How do you plan on achieving these? |
| What have you enjoyed working on most? | What have you learned from this experience? | What barriers or challenges might get in the way? How do you think these can be overcome? |
| What sense of achievement did you gain this last year? | What support could have helped you achieve your goals easier? | How can I help? What support do you need? |
| Did you feel recognised for your achievement(s)? | | How are you hoping to develop in the next 12 months? Where do you see yourself/career in the future? |

Template for Individual Annual Conversations

| | | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Employee Name | | Employee Number | |
| Job Title | | Date | |

RECORD BRIEF BULLET POINTS - GOALS CAN BE SHORT AND LONG TERM

| | |
|--|--|
| What has gone well this year? (Achievements) | What might have gone even better this year? (Challenges) |
| | |
| Commitments (What do you want to achieve and focus on in the future?) | |
| Objectives | Development |
| | |
| Manager Signature | Employee Signature |

Regular 1-2-1 Check-in

In addition to the annual conversation, it is best practice that managers carry out regular 1-2-1 check-in conversations with their employees throughout the year, this is optional. Check-ins should cover specific topic areas, as identified below. Research shows that regular, valuable conversations between managers and employees leads to improved performance, motivation and productivity within teams.

The conversations can be easily incorporated into scheduled supervision and meetings, or simply be a standalone protected time to catch up. The frequency and topics to be discussed are entirely flexible and can change based on the needs of the individual or what the manager and employee want to focus on - they can also vary from one check-in to another. It would be good practice for managers to hold more regular check-ins with employees they don't often see eg Hybrid Workers.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Life and Wellbeing | This topic focusses on the employee's health and wellbeing. It should cover areas such as resilience and dealing with change. Through the conversation any support the manager can provide in the workplace should be identified. |
| Personal Development | This should cover any development that was planned and any future needs that have been identified, this can be from the annual conversation or points raised in previous check-in. |
| Objectives and Performance | Review of objectives and performance goals agreed at the beginning of the year. This is important to regularly discuss throughout the year to ensure that progress is being made and actions can be taken. |
| Improvements | The focus of this topic is on what the employee thinks about improvements that can be made within the team or service. Is there a new way of working that could support service delivery? |
| Feedback | The conversations within this process should be focussing on the employee's strengths and building on these. The manager should start the conversations by asking the employee what they believe their strengths are and then present their views on the employee's strengths. If there are areas of concern with the employee's performance feedback should be given and if required, the 6 steps included in the Managing Poor Performance Guidelines should be implemented. Where performance is an issue more regular meetings would be beneficial. |
| Council's Vision and Priorities | This focusses on the impact of the employee in delivering council's vision. Through a coaching style, discuss areas with the employee and find out where they think they model the values and where they could improve. Provide context for how their contribution at work impacts the delivery of objectives and priorities. |

Supporting questions for regular 1-2-1 check-in conversations

The below is a list of supplementary questions which can be used to aid conversations and help managers and employees get the most out of the discussion, these can be adapted to suit the individual and job role:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Life and Wellbeing | How do you feel about your work and work-life balance? | What worries or concerns do you have? How can we support your wellbeing? |
| | How resilient do you feel at present? | What impact is hybrid working having on your wellbeing? |
| Personal Development | Have you organised or completed any of your agreed development needs? | What did you find most useful? |
| | What might be an area of development that will help you further in your job? | What support would help you achieve your development needs? |
| Objectives and Performance | How are you progressing with your objectives? | Are any of your objectives causing you concern or might not be met? How could you overcome this? |
| | Which objectives are you able to progress the best? | What support do you need to meet your objectives? |
| Improvements | What, if any, improvements to your job have you identified since our last meeting? | What impact would the suggested improvements make? |
| | What organisational/service improvements would you like to see? | How successfully do you think the improvement could be implemented? |
| Feedback | What has been your biggest achievement so far this year? | What feedback would you like to give me? |
| | What has been your biggest challenge so far this year? | What other feedback would you like/want to discuss? |
| Council's Vision and Priorities | How well do you think your role supports Council objectives? | What can I do to support you model the values/objectives? |

Optional Template for Regular 1-2-1 Check-in Forms

OPTIONAL - MANAGERS MAY WISH TO USE THEIR OWN OR EXISTING RECORDING PROCESS

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Employee Name | | Employee Number | |
| Job Title | | Date | |
| Life and Wellbeing | | | |
| Personal Development | | | |
| Objectives and Performance | | | |
| Improvements | | | |
| Feedback | | | |
| Council's vision and priorities | | | |

Team Check-in

Managers should allow time for check-ins with their team which are focussed on the team working well together. The frequency of team check-ins will vary across the Council; however it is recommended that a minimum of 2 check-ins per year should be completed. The below topics are suggested areas that can be the focus of team check-in conversations. Many teams will have regular team meetings, which managers should continue to have, however, throughout the year it is important that time is dedicated to discussing certain topics as identified below. Team check-in's aim to support succession planning activities and improve team adaptability.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Council's Vision, Values and Priorities What is happening in the service and project work that supports the council's vision and values? How does the team represent these? | 2 | Employee Engagement Every 3 years the employee engagement survey will be completed, this will allow managers to communicate results and findings, discuss actions points. |
| 3 | Celebrating Achievements This is an opportunity to celebrate what the team are doing well, where they have gone the extra mile and reflect on the impact the team has had - any projects achieved etc. | 4 | Current Performance This is an opportunity for the team to review their performance and achievements against action plans and targets. Or take time to establish new goals and actions for the team. |
| 5 | Challenges and Ideas An open forum for the team to discuss challenges they are facing as a team/with work. A chance to explore and try solutions and find ways to support each other and work collaboratively. | 6 | Team Learning This focusses on empowering the team to share knowledge and experiences; from training events, articles found, new tasks or from trying something new. |

Optional Template for Team Check-in

OPTIONAL - MANAGERS MAY WISH TO USE THEIR OWN OR EXISTING RECORDING PROCESS

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| Date of Meeting | | |
| Updates from Previous Meeting | | |
| Topic of Conversation | Key Discussions | Actions |
| | | |

Our Council Vision and Priorities:

Employees at inverclyde play a vital role in the Council delivering the vision and priorities. These are listed here and should be used to support the positive conversations between managers and employees.

Understanding how your role, no matter what grade, plays a part in ensuring the Inverclyde performs to its highest potential, keeping employees engaged and committed to performing, whilst achieving personal development.



We are nurturing

we care, we deliver our work in a supportive way



We are inclusive

we challenge inequalities and ensure that all our citizens can access services



We are focused on wellbeing

we support good health and wellbeing for our citizens and employees



We support empowerment

we believe we can produce better results through collaboration with communities



We are focused on achieving

we are positive and ambitious for everyone who lives in Inverclyde



We are respectful and responsible

we deliver our work with honesty and integrity, we listen



We provide a safe environment

we work with partners to ensure Inverclyde is a safe place to work and live

Process for Positive Conversations:

