

Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026

1. **Introduction**

Good health is a combination of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Many factors can influence each of these factors. Work can be a positive driver for developing an individual's potential, for enabling people to make a distinctive contribution to society, and our workplaces can be places where we can receive affirmation, encouragement and support. We spend a lot of our time at work. Playing a valued part within a team that is striving to improve places and community for tens of thousands of people is a wonderful thing. Many people within our organisation can look back at a lifetime of public service and feel that all their hard work has been worthwhile and much of what they have achieved will stand the test of time. This strategy aims to ensure that we create the conditions for people to flourish in our organisation, in order that they can do their best work, enjoy what they do and find it fulfilling. It also aims to help us as colleagues to care for each other increasingly well during the bad times as well as the good.

Ruth Hyde OBE Chief Executive

2. What is Health and Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual's experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values.

Wellbeing exists in two dimensions:

Subjective wellbeing (or personal wellbeing) asks people directly how they think and feel about their own wellbeing, and includes aspects such as life satisfaction (evaluation), positive emotions (hedonic), and whether their life is meaningful (eudemonic).

Objective wellbeing is based on assumptions about basic human needs and rights, including aspects such as adequate food, physical health, education, safety etc. Objective wellbeing can be measured through self-report (e.g., asking people whether they have a specific health condition), or through more objective measures (e.g., mortality rates and life expectancy).

3. Benefits to the Employee and the Council

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), fostering employee wellbeing is good for people and the organisation. Promoting wellbeing can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive.

Kind and compassionate workplaces which practice high quality wellbeing support experience competitive advantages through

- Higher levels of innovation (because a wellbeing centred approach fosters psychological safety)
- Better service quality (because employees who feel cared for are more likely to be motivated by a philanthropic approach to customers)
- A better culture of collaboration (because wellbeing builds trust and respect)
- Higher retention of talented people (people who feel supported and cared for have increased organisational loyalty and commitment)
- Higher levels of employee and customer engagement (people feel listened to)
- Better adaptability to change (because an active support for wellbeing alleviates the pain caused by change processes and sparks passion that motivates successful change)

4. Employee Survey

The June 2022 Employee Survey indicated the following results:

- 90% understood the Council's values
- 88% are aware of what means of support are available through work
- 86% believed that the Council respects individual differences (e.g. culture, backgrounds, ideas)
- 79% believe the Council supports a balance between work and personal life
- 76% felt supported at work in relation to mental health and wellbeing
- 70% felt able to disclose a mental health issue to their Manager.

The Council recognises that its employees are its greatest asset and are key to being able to undertake and implement the strategic aims and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. We believe that it is our people that give us a competitive advantage and help us strive to become an employer of choice. We are proud of our diverse workforce and are committed to the positive and continual development of all staff who work here, enabling us to provide excellent service delivery and endeavour to provide best value to all of our residents and customers.

5. The Pillars on which the Wellbeing Strategy is based.

Whilst there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, the Council recognises that there are several ‘pillars’ on which a successful wellbeing strategy can be built.

Health

This comprises of physical health and safety and mental health. The Council provides Health promotions and health checks for employees, wellbeing benefits through its Employee Assistance Programme, options to purchase health insurance via Payroll, Occupational Health support and managing and supporting disability across the workforce.

Good Work

The Council has invested in new office space including new chairs, desks and décor encouraging an open, agile and inclusive environment for all employees. Policies and procedures are in place to support all employees in their work and Line Managers are trained to implement these at the ground level. Job Evaluation is in place to ensure fairness, eliminate equal pay issues, and ensure fit for purpose job design and structures to promote job satisfaction. Change is managed effectively through collaboration and consultation with employees and trade unions and communicated via appropriate channels. Pay and reward is fair and transparent in line with local and national policies.

Values/Principles

The Council prides itself on its ‘GREAT’ values, instilling these in employees and embedding within the organisation’s culture. Values-based leadership is led by GMT and clear objectives and organisational goals are communicated regularly, building trust and encouraging corporate responsibility across all employees. The Council encourages dignity at work and ethical standards, training all employees regularly to ensure compliance. Diversity and inclusivity is promoted to ensure equality and that cultural differences are valued.

Collective/Social

Positive management styles promote teamworking, collaboration and consulting – giving employees a voice and involvement in decision-making. This also includes dialogue with Trade Unions to encourage healthy communication and relationships across the Council.

Personal Growth

Within the umbrella of career development, the Council facilitates personal and professional growth through training opportunities leading to vocational qualifications, along with an annual performance appraisal to identify areas of growth and skills improvement. All employees have access to training and development opportunities.

The Council has a culture of 'life-long learning' demonstrated by its Apprenticeship Programme through to Senior Managers undertaking degree courses. A Coaching and Mentoring programme is also now in place facilitated by HR. Succession Planning is an integral part to the Council's success and 'growing our own' has proved a positive initiative.

Lifestyle

Good lifestyle choices are encouraged, with employees having access to reduced Leisure Centre membership. The Council operates a 'Live Well' initiative, supporting smoking cessation along with signposting to organisations to support a generally healthier lifestyle.

The Mental Health Employee Champions Group consists of Mental Health First Aiders to support employees and various initiatives throughout the year are promoted. The Council's Employee Assistance Programme also enables employees to seek advice on lifestyle and wellbeing, free of charge.

Financial Wellbeing

The Council is a Living Wage employer, ensuring that our pay rates are higher than the National Minimum Wage. We also ensure our annual pay increases are in line with those negotiated at National level within Government. Employee benefits are on offer through Brock's Benefits, providing discounts at supermarkets and major retailers. A flexible retirement scheme is in operation to ensure a phased transition into retirement is available. The Council also pays for employees considering retirement to attend a Pre-Retirement course which covers financial planning.

The Employee Assistance Programme offers debt counselling and signposting to external advice if required.

The Council implements the nationally agreed Local Government pay award each year (usually April) and applies the percentage agreed to our Broxtowe Local Pay Scales in-line with the collective agreement between the national Employers and the Trade Unions.

In addition, employees are offered a cash option for long service at 25 years and each subsequent 5 years of service.

Burnout

In 2019, 'burnout' was recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an 'occupational phenomenon'. As lockdowns have drastically affected our work-life balance and working environments, we've conducted regular research to ascertain the public's perceptions of burnout and the contributing factors, considering the pandemic.

'Burnout' is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion. It can occur when you experience long-term stress in your job, or when you have worked in a physically or emotionally draining role for a long time.

Common signs of burnout:

- Feeling tired or drained most of the time
- Feeling helpless, trapped and/or defeated
- Feeling detached/alone in the world
- Having a cynical/negative outlook
- Self-doubt
- Procrastinating and taking longer to get things done
- Feeling overwhelmed

To support employees who may be suffering from burnout, Managers should meet with them at the earliest opportunity and complete a Stress Risk Assessment (Appendix 1) and a Wellbeing Plan (Appendix 2). The Manager should also contact HR to discuss additional support mechanisms such as counselling, occupational health etc.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Manager's Role

The role of Managers in Wellbeing is crucial to its success. Employees are more likely to engage in Wellbeing initiatives if Managers are leading and actively participating and encouraging their teams. Line Managers are strategically positioned to cascade Corporate objectives direct to employees at ground level and should therefore be ideally placed to implement and embed wellbeing initiatives in day-to-day operations and departmental culture. Managers should be responsible for fostering an inclusive and positive management style within their teams, that reflect the goals and Corporate objectives of the Authority. Managers are provided with training and given the tools to positively impact the wellbeing of their teams and should intervene at the earliest opportunity.

HR Role

HR play a lead role in the Wellbeing agenda across the Council. They are responsible for day-to-day wellbeing practices and for promoting initiatives to improve wellbeing for all employees. HR should provide Managers and employees with tools, opportunities and advice in relation to wellbeing and work closely with both to identify early intervention and longer term support. HR are responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are fit-for-purpose and should be progressive and supportive, in addition to being implemented with compassion and understanding.

Trade Union's Role

The Council works closely with our Trade Union colleagues to ensure positive working relationships that are mutually beneficial to both employees and the organisation. Trade Unions have access to a wide range of tools for their members

and can assist with signposting to relevant and appropriate support. The Council will engage with the Trade Unions for additional support wherever appropriate.

7. The Wellbeing Strategy's alignment with the Corporate Plan and People Strategy

The Corporate Plan's vision confirms that 'Broxtowe will be a great place where people enjoy living, working and spending leisure time'.

The People Strategy's Vision for the Council is that 'all employees are positively developed, successfully equipped and actively encouraged to contribute to the organisation's success through flexible and agile working, partnership working and adapting to a fast-changing business environment'.

The Council intends to achieve both the corporate and the people vision by:

- becoming more business-oriented and commercially-minded
- striving to become more agile, flexible and adaptable
- ensuring succession planning for the future
- promoting employee engagement and **investing in wellbeing**
- partnership working and sharing services with other local authorities
- equipping employees with transferable skills
- training and developing employees to encourage 'life-long learning'
- celebrating success
- actively promoting equality and diversity
- encouraging accountability and promoting good stewardship of resources and assets

The People Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan, and Business Strategy are aligned to ensure the aims and objectives of the key supporting services are mutually reinforced to achieve greater impact and more focused results. Whilst the Corporate Plan sets out '*what*' we are going to do, the People Strategy sets out '*how*' we are going to do it.

The People Strategy consists of the following strategic themes:

- **building inspirational leadership and celebrating success**
- **developing an agile and flexible workforce**
- **investing in life-long learning and succession planning**
- **promoting diversity and equality across our workforce and borough**
- **working with partnership agencies to deliver second to none services**

These themes are part of the Council's mandate to actively 'do' and achieve its aims and objectives over the next four years.

8. The Wellbeing Strategy's vision

The vision of the Wellbeing Strategy is that

Employees will feel highly satisfied with the support the Council gives for their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing, using a variety of personal

support, external and internal resources, tools and mechanisms, and will feel that the Council is continuously looking to improve existing support offered.

This strategy is intended to work alongside the Council's existing policies including:

- Attendance Management
- Stress Management
- Alcohol & Substance Misuse
- Smoke-free Site Policy
- Family Friendly Policies including Agile Working, Compassionate Leave, Emergency Time Off for Dependents
- Supporting Employees with Long-term Health Difficulties
- Career Break Policy
- Carer's Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Neurodiversity Policy
- Salary Sacrifice (Childcare Vouchers, Cycle to Work, Lease Car)
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Dying to Work Pledge
- Disability Confident Leader status

9. Aims of the Wellbeing Strategy

The aims of the Wellbeing Strategy are:

- **To implement the Council's 'GREAT' values by 'valuing employees' through wellbeing support**
- **To support all employees to maintain a balanced lifestyle and a healthy work environment**
- **To invest in the wellbeing of our employees to continue to make Broxtowe an 'employer of choice' and to attract/retain talent**
- **Supporting Managers to manage effectively to ensure every employee can flourish and fulfil their potential**

10. Action

We intend to take action to implement our aims in the following ways:

- A. To implement the Council's 'GREAT' values by 'valuing employees' through wellbeing support**

Already we:

- Provide access to a range of "well person" checks and flu vaccinations and use of a health and wellbeing budget.
- Use of an occupational health service and implementation of reasonable adjustments when required

- HR policies including the absence management policy which supports people on short term or long term sickness.
- The implementation of a mental health action plan and a mental health champions group, who are qualified mental health first aiders.

We intend to:

- Extend the range of options available to support employees with mental health challenges, for example through the use of wellbeing apps, training in managing stress and anxiety; and relaxation training.
- Review the employee assistance programme and explore options which may improve the content, availability and reach of this service.
- Improve our expertise in supporting employees who have terminal illnesses, or whose family members have life limiting conditions, including access to bereavement support.
- Explore the potential of provision of benefits in kind through co-location of voluntary sector partners using surplus office space, thereby providing access to advice and support for employees experiencing mental health or domestic violence issues
- Explore the provision of hardship grants and loans for employees on grade 7 and below to support them with cost of living pressures.

B. To support all employees to maintain a balanced lifestyle and a healthy work environment

Already we:

- Have invested in our office workplace to modernize the work environment; provide flexible spaces for different working style needs and preferences; kitchen facilities, wellbeing room and prayer room spaces.
- Provide a range of flexible working practices including remote working; flexible retirement; term time working; part time working, flexible working hours.
- Have a range of supportive HR policies including emergency time off; paternity and maternity leave; tax free vouchers for child care; adoption leave; holiday purchase, career break; job sharing; and compassionate leave.
- An active approach to stress management, a stress management policy and wellbeing action plan
- Half price leisure centre health and fitness memberships for employees

We intend to:

- Develop more practical support for employees who have elder care responsibilities.
- Consider how we can best support and encourage employees who are foster parents.

- Support employees to become more physically active to counteract increases in online working through exploring ways to support physical activity during the working day, eg standing desks and walking meetings.
- Explore a new employee volunteering scheme.
- Develop our approach to supporting employees with anxiety problems

C. To invest in the wellbeing of our employees to continue to make Broxtowe an ‘employer of choice’ and to attract/retain talent

Already we

- Have secured Disability confident “leader” status for the way in which we recruit and support employees with disabilities
- Actively use our job evaluation system, including the use of market supplements, to ensure we recruit and retain the best talent
- Provide access to the Tusker car lease scheme; access to tax free cycle loans; Brocks Benefits package and access to car loans
- Provide access to coaching and mentoring, training and development; management training; apprenticeships and graduate and postgraduate training; and career development secondments.
- Celebrate employee excellence through the Broxtowe “employee of the year” and “team of the year” awards; weekly “shout outs” for employees living out the values, and employees of the month highlighted in senior management briefings
- Provide development opportunities for Employees within Broxtowe and succession planning possibilities.

We intend to develop this by

- In partnership with local travel companies including the NET, exploring more support for sustainable travel options for employees
- Reviewing our rewards for employee loyalty
- Seeking to secure silver and gold award status under the Defence Employer recognition scheme
- Building on our expertise in employing people with disabilities and seek to develop it further
- Working closely with employees and trade unions to gain insight and ideas as to how we can positively respond to health needs
- Developing our approach to equality and diversity in the workplace by coming up with action plans to ensure greater diversity at head of service and management level and eliminate the gender pay gap within the whole organisation.

D. Supporting Managers to manage effectively to ensure every employee can flourish and fulfil their potential

Already we:

- Have signed the “mindful employers” charter
- Are training all Managers to become qualified mental health first aiders

- Providing support and training for Managers to support them to provide high quality management to employees who have neurodiverse conditions
- Have individual personal appraisals and development plans for every employee

We intend to develop this by

- Quality checking and seeking to find ways to improve, the application of the annual appraisal system
- Listen to LGBTQ employees, and identify and overcome any direct or indirect discriminatory barriers experienced by them.
- Provide further support to managers to enable them to appropriately respond to threats of suicide and self-harm
- Support Managers to improve employee resilience, and identify and respond to employee burnout.

11. What Support Do We Provide Our Employees?

The following is a more detailed summary of our existing wellbeing support to employees:

Disability Confident

The Council is a Disability Confident Leader and is committed to supporting employees to remain in work by making reasonable adjustments and removing any barriers or stigma about disabilities and mental health conditions.

Employee Assistance Programme

The Council provides all employees with access to an Employee Assistance Programme (Care First). Care First offers free, 24/7, confidential support via trained Counselors both via telephone and online. Employees are able to receive up to eight sessions of Counselling free of charge. The Care First website offers a wide range of wellbeing resources including webinars, budget calculators and various tools to support both work and home difficulties.

Occupational Health

The Council supports its employees who may be struggling with health and wellbeing difficulties by offering a bespoke Occupational Health service via David Barber Occupational Health. Appointments are held in person, over the phone or virtually if necessary. Occupational Health provide both the employee and Council advice on how to support the employee with their wellbeing and health.

Wellperson Checks

From time to time, the Council offers wellperson checks free of charge to employees. This includes cholesterol, blood pressure, hearing, osteoporosis and PSA testing (prostate). Wellperson checks are undertaken by David Barber Occupational Health at both the Council Offices and Kimberley Depot.

Mental Health First Aiders

A number of employees across different departments are certified Mental Health First Aiders to support colleagues and signpost to appropriate further support. In

addition, the Council has an internal Trained Trainer to ensure that more employees can receive formal training, including Heads of Service and Senior Managers.

Flu Jabs

The Council also offers seasonal flu jabs from time to time (where stock is available) and these are administered free of charge to employees at both the Council Offices and Kimberley Depot.

Gym Membership

Gym Membership is available to all employees at a discounted rate via the Council's wholly-owned company, L Leisure. Members have access to three Leisure Centres at Chilwell, Bramcote and Kimberley including access to gyms, swimming and classes.

Wellbeing Room

A designated Wellbeing Room was built in 2021 for exclusive use for employees. The room has been designed as a quiet space with sofas, access to water, fans and two internal smaller rooms appropriate for prayer use, for those observing religious occasions such as Ramadan. Mothers returning from maternity leave may also use the internal room to express if necessary.

Menopause Policy

A Menopause Policy was introduced in 2019 to recognise the need for appropriate support and guidance for employees experiencing the menopause (or perimenopause symptoms). The policy was designed to offer assurance that the Council acknowledges the impact menopause can have and put in place support measures such as adjusting trigger levels for absence.

Eye Testing

In relation to DSE (Display Screen Equipment) usage, employees are eligible for free eye tests via Specsavers and a generous contribution of £45 towards glasses.

Support For Carers

The Council signed a pledge in 2022 to support Carer's in Employment. The purpose of signing the Pledge was to acknowledge and support informal carers within our organisation and to ensure our policies such as Recruitment and Career Break Policies are inclusive of Carers.

12. Success Measures (Linked to Performance Management System)

We will measure how we achieve success in implementing our Wellbeing Strategy by:

(a) Objective measures

Monitoring data and setting annual appropriate targets

- Declining levels of absence;
- lower levels of turnover;
- gender pay parity;

- diversity of employment profile which matches the Borough profile;
- low levels of stress related absence

The annual workforce profile will provide annually reportable data on these measures. Annual targets will be included in the Resources Business plan reported annually to Cabinet as part of the budget process.

(b) Subjective measures

Conducting regular employee surveys and measuring results over time

- Rising levels of employee satisfaction
- High levels of awareness of support available for mental health problems
- High levels of satisfaction with support for mental health and wellbeing
- High levels of willingness to disclose mental health problems to a line manager

Working with Trade Unions through the LJCC to support employees' health and wellbeing

Benchmarking with other organisations to share and learn new health and wellbeing ideas and strategies

13. Helpful Contacts

Human Resources

Aaron Gidney – HR Manager

Neil Smith

Health & Safety Manager

Unison

Kim Dawson

Unite

Health & Safety Executive – hse.gov.uk

CIPD – cipd.co.uk

British Heart Foundation – bhf.org.uk

MIND – mind.org.uk

Investors in People – investorsinpeople.co.uk

COHPA – cohpa.co.uk

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter wellbeingcharter.org.uk