



Assessment report

North Norfolk District Council

Accreditation number: CEN-18-01176

Accreditation valid from: 30/11/2018

Assessment conducted by: Clare Laidler





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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone for their time and support in ensuring that this assessment ran smoothly, with particular thanks to Jeanette Wilson, Sally Morgan, Tamara Skoulding, Nick Baker and Steve Blatch. Thanks also to Jane Wisson and the Staff Focus Group for their input throughout the assessment process and over the last year.

Finally thank all those who took part in the assessment – whether through the online assessment survey, interviews or by providing cover for others whilst they attend interviews.

Executive Summary

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) has successfully achieved the Investors in People Silver Award at this assessment. Congratulations to all for this achievement.

Key Strengths

There is a very strong positive vibe through the organisation with many feeling they are lucky to work for NNDC where they feel valued for their contribution and supported by colleagues. Many people who work for the Council have known each other for many years and live in the community; there is very positive natural teamwork and collaboration that many suggested had improved over the last few years. The assessment demonstrated a shared dedication and enthusiasm in delivering the priorities of the Council and levels of community engagement and pride are particularly high.

Performance management in terms of setting and monitoring established targets was viewed as being strong in focus. Leaders are generally seen as proactive in sharing information about plans and outcomes, perpetuating this positive sense of achievement and pride. There are some highly effective line managers who role model good practice in raising expectations and maintaining high levels of performance. There are also individuals throughout the Council who engender positive communication approaches and engage through the organisation. The style of leadership over the last few years has enabled and encouraged this further.

The whole leadership team has faced unexpected change and challenge and has handled this effectively, engendering high levels of trust and transparency in approaches towards ambitions within the Corporate Plan 2015-2019. The approachability of leaders was a strong feature mentioned by many during the interviews.

People felt that high levels of focus and interest in development meant that opportunities for learning and development were encouraged and supported, along with opportunities to learn through a range of interactions with colleagues and beyond. Time and resources are set aside to provide opportunities for collaboration and there is a genuine interest in empowering individuals and groups to consider solutions or ideas and in taking these forward. There were many examples demonstrating high levels of natural collaboration, often driven by individuals with a common interest in improvement and making a difference.

There were some good examples where individuals were able to progress their careers and their roles, with managers showing strong coaching capability and an interest in colleague development. There were examples of people being praised for their level of enthusiasm or skill, or where thanks was given noting some of the personal, team or organisational achievements also challenges individuals had faced either within their roles or outside of work, through personal health or family challenges. Many people said the team was like a family; this is something that is regularly mentioned in many organisations. Feedback from people who work for NNDC demonstrated a mostly united 'family' atmosphere where for most of the time, people focused on what is best for the community, not what is best for individuals.

People were clear on their roles and the policies and procedures needed to ensure consistency and quality. Groups such as the Staff Focus Group regularly took part in reflecting, updating and gaining feedback with an interest in driving improvement agendas.

Learning and development opportunities were clear to everyone with many examples given such as the decision to undertake further development of coaching skills in order to engender this approach in line management interactions.

Personal growth and career development is very well supported tending to be self selected rather than encouraged through discussion at line management performance based interactions.

Recruitment and selection is viewed as being well structured and supported with colleagues playing an active part in the role related induction. Clearly a great deal of effort and consideration goes towards planning activities and input to support initial needs and welcome new starters.

By far the majority of people believe NNDC is a great place to work.

Key recommendations for improvement

Leading – Consider developing the planning process in two particular ways, firstly to engender greater involvement and input in the planning process by Service areas, secondly to have a much clearer organisational plan that focuses on setting ambition and clear priorities for organisational (other than political) aspirations and short terms measure for progression monitoring and engendering a learning culture.

This would help to engender greater trust and engagement in the plans themselves and ideally build resilience, comfort in change and provide scope for more effective organisational learning. The aim here should be to ensure that everyone in the Council can see the relevance to them of the organisational strategies and that they have a voice in those elements of strategy that they personally work within.

Ensure all leaders and managers are clear on expectations of them in terms of the relevance and importance of this key role and that leaders define and role model any steps towards organisational change. This will require honesty and clarity in the status quo with clear communication of changes required with specific measures to be used effectively as a means of learning and tweaking (learning loop) rather than purely a corporate outcome. This requires thinking about the how's rather than just the what's, creating a culture where people feel they have the opportunity to discuss and take forward ideas about those things that are either viewed as not adding value or that are limiting potential.

Ensure care is taken when encouraging participation; there are cases where people feel that although they have been asked to share ideas for areas most relevant to their roles, they do not feel they have been truly listened to or that their views have been taken on board. Examples came from the Business Process Reviews, elements of Digitalisation and various ongoing meeting forums such as Extended Management Team. Again, linked to culture, and particularly when engendering change, it is really crucial to engender high levels of trust and integrity in the plans and the progression against them. NNDC would benefit by looking at some basic principles of managing change and introducing this more overtly in communication agendas. There is a tendency for formality in the delivery of information from the Corporate Directors relating to decisions made, but a fairly informal approach in gaining input and ideas. If the same clarity was introduced in what people's views and ideas where and therefore what decisions were made as a result etc., this would help to create clear pathways that could be reinforced by regular update. The more the organisation is able to tackle the things that are most challenging for people, the better, as this demonstrates that people are being listened to and the organisation is doing something about it.

More regular mention of values and the competency framework at relevant meetings will help everyone to embrace them and particularly what they mean in practice for their day-to-day work. Consider introducing discussion of these between colleagues at Management Team meetings and encourage challenge. Some organisations do this by describing examples or running a short quiz style dialogue or questionnaire. Others post regular examples on intranet, using examples or scenarios. This can be a very interesting and positive communication exercise and is particularly useful when people are encouraged to share their views rather than a right or wrong example. The point of outcome is to encourage everyone to be aware and consider their own approaches more regularly. Alternatively NNDC could utilise the Insights profiles more effectively to encourage more discussion particularly when there are colliding views or dynamics.

Consider further use of 360 as a means of encouraging interest and discussion about behaviours and approaches and scope to change these or use alternative approaches for different scenarios. This could be led by the leadership and management team with reference to the competency framework, it would be beneficial to engender much more regular dialogue about these behavioural aspects not on the basis of right or wrong but to widen the scope of opportunity for individuals in their interactions and responses. People generally know colleagues well and there are some friendships, however sometimes small conflicts can perpetuate longer than necessary, as scope for a conversation about varying viewpoints is not always easily taken forward.

Ensure that teams are able to relate their day-to-day experiences with the objectives and reported achievements of the team. Encourage challenge and discussion where this is not the case to ensure any disconnect is traced and discussed.

Supporting - The culture relating to the line manager role in performance management is worth consideration. There is a common belief that there are time limitations for managers to fulfil their line manager responsibilities and feedback supported the fact that the extent that established management practices are undertaken effectively is mixed.

This requires consideration from a 'big picture' perspective and the question to ask is not 'how do we get people to complete the appraisals on time' as appears to have been the case with behind the scenes efforts to get the specific tasks (appraisal paperwork) done even though there is a common view that the appraisal, for example, does not add value. The question to ask is 'what do we need to do as an organisation to reach a position where everyone is holding regular, worthwhile, open conversations about performance so everyone is able to achieve their very best. It would be a mistake to blame the processes and much more worthwhile to re-consider the role of line managers historically, now and what the ideal set of skills are for the future.

This is not a quick fix but will require a series of interactions and developments, which will ideally enable a platform for much more mutually worthwhile discussions about performance. Also greater scope to engender ongoing line management responsibly rather than a reliance on the HR team and therefore establish greater potential for the utilisation of the skills of the HR team.

The assessment revealed a common perception that many view the appraisal process as going through the motions with no perceived benefit. The processes are fine, and whilst they may benefit from some tweaking in the long run, are not the problem. The problem is the fact that they are not being fully incorporated and effectively undertaken so everyone can see it is just a case of getting the paperwork done. This is one of the less positive points linked to levels of confidence in leadership and management.

Feedback was that 121s are used in a range of ways, sometimes for a quick catch up. Some of the people interviewed said these do take place and that they are a good opportunity to touch base. It is important to ensure that there is scope for deeper discussion with a correlation with the appraisal and any particular changes or updates such as role and responsibility change or development undertaken. *Feedback was that this is not always the case. In many cases there appears to be more comfort in discussion the task or technical side of roles rather than the softer things, which may have the greatest potential for growth and development.*

Ensure that feedback on difficulties has clear follow through with regular communication on progress. Encourage discussions about middle of the road performance to support improvements. Engender more specific support for those line managers who struggle - ideally this would be a discussion and development point for their own appraisal. Support managers in giving meaningful positive feedback day to day so that there is a balanced approach. As NNDC is very much a 'family' of people who know each other well, ensure managers are effective in taking a coaching approach and feeling able to provide developmental feedback/guidance. Encourage honest feedback and develop the robustness of people to take on feedback by providing clear opportunity for development.

The Pay Structure was mentioned regularly during the assessment and many feel this and the job evaluation exercise is an area that is limiting and de-motivating and sometimes unfair. Whilst pay is rarely an aspect of overall happiness and contentment in any organisation, this does appear to have created some long-term frustrations and resentment. One of the factors is that there is a high level of focus in this structure of being a line manager, bearing in mind the points made about the mix of approaches, this doesn't help.

Most organisations have some roles that require a high level of technical abilities or require people to take on additional responsibilities, which can be mutually beneficial in terms of career development and progression. Feedback was that NNDC is limited in the extent that those joining the organisation at an early stage of their career, can progress and a belief that this always has to be via the hierarchy. This is not an immediate point for development but in the longer term it would be worth considering a structure that focuses so strongly on hierarchy. Many organisations are choosing this route, which presents much greater capacity for freedom in structuring roles as organisations evolve.

There appeared to be some discontentment with the use of initial lump sum payments to recruit to roles that are difficult to attract to, several people mentioned this. Further appreciation of the implications of these messages and ensuring they are made with sensitivity, may be worthwhile.

Improving – As already covered, the extent and level of depth managers discuss learning and development with their team varies significantly. The organisation is seen as generous and enabling in the extent of opportunity for external and internal training. However, the extent that this is engendered varies and is sometimes not even discussed so there is much more opportunity to evaluate and benefit from the investment.

Ideally, any training/development will be discussed via 121s and appraisal interaction and arrangements made to ensure individuals are able to put any development to good use. For example, the ILM should ideally include an opportunity for individuals to reinforce their learning within their role, there were some examples where this was the case but not always. Consider also, creating follow up in-house events for project based development with clear definition and outcome, enabling those who have undertaken training, to take this forward in practical ways benefitting the individuals and the organisation. Whilst this is not always possible, there

may be scenarios where it would be, particularly where it would provide further impetus for learning or development of confidence.

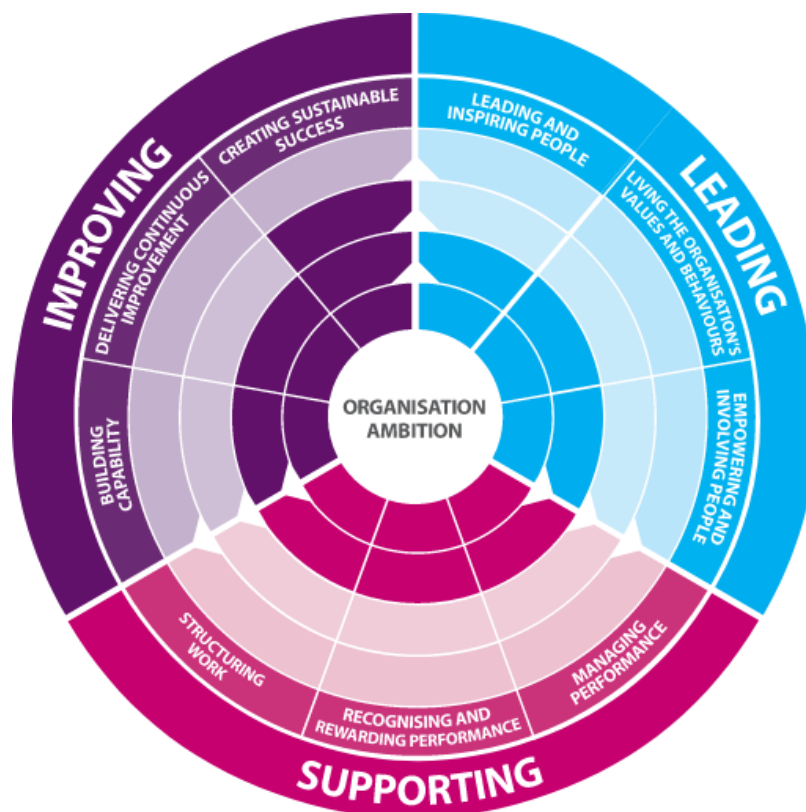
Feedback about the induction was positive and people who had joined felt well supported. There were a couple of things they mentioned. Firstly, that the online application system had some challenges, this may have now been resolved; secondly, the arrangement where people were expected to read extensive policy based information on day one was not deemed to be ideal nor motivational. It is suggested that all new starters are asked to provide feedback so the organisation is able to continuously update arrangements.

It may be worthwhile developing the coffee and cake scenario into a more structured opportunity to gain initial feedback and input of ideas.

Continue to consider and develop approaches to communications through interesting and relevant briefings. For example, the Extended Management Team meetings are an example where people may have suggestions.

Provide clear updates on the status of people's ideas with likely timescales for the different stages where possible. Find ways to encourage more comfort in challenging status quo and encouraging suggestions that whilst may be deemed sensitive, provide an opportunity for transformational change. There can be a subtle defensiveness or closed off approach to those things that are not deemed to be set out in current strategy or relevant to those aspects that are politically important/measured. Whilst it may be that these points offer golden nuggets of opportunity for organisational progression and development.

North Norfolk District Council assessment outcome



North Norfolk District Council final award outcome



North Norfolk District Council has achieved Silver performance level but has been awarded Gold IIP for 12 months under the amnesty act. This report and the feedback meeting will provide clear guidance on what is required to achieve the Gold Award and a decision can then be taken whether to stick with Silver accreditation from November 2019 for the remainder of the three year accreditation or to be assessed against the outstanding areas as a way of seeking accreditation at Gold.

Introduction

North Norfolk District Council is based in Cromer and has been accredited with Investors in People for many years. There have been significant changes since the last assessment in 2015. In September 2016 three senior officers left the Council at short notice to join Great Yarmouth Borough Council. The CEO, Head of Finance and Head of HR resigned following a period when the two Councils discussed and instigated plans for shared working opportunities. The remaining two Corporate Directors stepped into a shared leadership role at this time and this has worked well according to feedback through this assessment.

The Council employs 319 people with most being based in the Council offices. 54 people were selected for interview (17% sample) with representatives from each department. This included a cross section of teams, roles and levels, with length of service also considered. Interviews were conducted face to face apart from one, which was held by telephone. To accommodate the number of interviews, some interviews were undertaken as group interviews.

At the last assessment NNDC achieved the Gold Award. As the Standard has changed since then achieving Gold can be more challenging for organisations so the outcome of this assessment should not be seen in any way as a backwards step. Due to the outcome there is an amnesty period of 12 months from the date of assessment. NNDC will continue to be accredited at Gold in the meantime and in order to continue to be accredited as a Gold organisation for the remaining two years up to 2021, will need to demonstrate evidence against outstanding areas. This will be discussed in detail at the feedback and there is an opportunity for further discussion throughout the next year. Due to some of the feedback within this report and the need for consideration and development of some cultural aspects, it may be worthwhile to continue at Silver for the remainder of this accreditation and focus on reinforcing change with a longer lead-time. This will avoid any assumption that any change agenda's are based around this accreditation and harness the principle of organisational outcome as the greatest opportunity, not the colour of the badge.

The Context Discussion included a group of people from different parts of the Council. We discussed overall aims of the Council, its key strengths and challenges and where it was felt to fit on the IIP framework.

Strengths and challenges

When three of the senior team left the Council at short notice, this created some immediate challenges for the organisation and was an unfortunately unsettling time. However, the two remaining Corporate Directors agreed to share the leadership role and have been effective in continuing to follow organisational strategies in a highly effective way. The result is that most people feel the organisation has taken significant steps forward in engendering trust and engagement in aspects of communication, encouraging collaboration and efforts to provide everyone with all the information they need to perform. There is an overwhelming opinion that NNDC is an organisation that genuinely cares about people, employees and the community and that people who work for the Council can make a difference in their roles and that this is valued. Although there was a different assessor at the time of the last assessment, most people interviewed felt that the culture had improved and that leaders are more approachable and visible since the time of the last assessment.

There are high levels of pride and a belief that NNDC is a great place to work.

Since the last assessment there have also been a number of changes in terms of the political leadership and membership of the Council. This has created a need to focus on the supporting function of officers in ensuring new members and those moving into new responsibilities, are adequately briefed to ensure structures and committees continue to run effectively.

Strengths highlighted at the Context meeting:

- Long established, loyal team of employees, engaged in their roles in supporting the community
- Good teamwork with many collaborative opportunities and networks including some very positive informal groups
- Very active and engaged Focus Group - greater empowerment over the last year
- Respected leadership who are seen as valuing people's input and being open and approachable
- As a result, people are more resilient when it comes to 'speaking up' and raising concerns
- Wonderful working environment with a flexible and people focused approach in terms of work based wellbeing
- People are given the tools to do their jobs and encouraged to ask/take needs forward
- Evaluation shows performance targets are met
- Low rate of corporate complaints
- A district with vibrant communities and where healthy lifestyles are accessible to all
- To make the council more efficient so that we can both deliver our priorities and offer value for money for the local taxpayers

Challenges/Opportunities (from the Context meeting):

- Could enhance approaches and mechanisms used for sharing achievements
- Could be more co-ordinated regarding cross team/service learning
- Could delegate more
- Further opportunity for greater empowerment, stretch and challenge
- Could improve the activity linked to succession planning
- Some drawbacks to long established team – know each other so well the professional relationship and friendship can sometimes be a challenge
- May be some employees who are prone to 'not my job' mentality
- Political scenario – uncertainty and likelihood of change in personalities and priorities, this creates a need to pause in terms of full strategy/political leadership
- The above can create fears and challenges for officer team
- High drop out rates for training – creates unnecessary cost implications
- Whilst appraisals may have been conducted, they have not been completed and therefore full value not gained
- Future budget reductions
- Appreciation that there is an opportunity to engender much more focus on behavioural discussion within performance management approaches
- Some roles difficult to recruit

Organisations that meet the world-recognised Investors in People Standard reflect the very best in people management excellence. Underpinning the Standard is the Investors in People

Framework. Based on 25 years of leading practice, the latest research and workplace trends, the Investors in People Framework is organised around nine key indicators of high performance each with three underpinning themes.

To achieve accreditation, organisations are assessed against these themes and indicators, leading to an award level of standard, silver, gold or platinum. This represents the level of performance achieved, or the level of 'maturity', from a fundamental 'developed' level to 'high performing'. Assessment is carried out using surveys, interviews, meetings and observation. The accreditation awarded represents the current level achieved and the Standard can be used to facilitate ongoing development of people management practices.

Organisational context

The overall Group vision, mission and values are as follows:

Our people being as good as they can be - the better we all are, the better the service we can provide

'A Better Place'

Mission

- A district with a thriving economy offering better jobs and prospects for local people
- To address housing and infrastructure for local people whilst meeting the market demand for housing
- A district where the beautiful natural environment is managed and protected for future generations
- A district with vibrant communities and where healthy lifestyles are accessible to all
- To make the council more efficient so that we can both deliver our priorities and offer value for money for local taxpayers

Values

- We respect people and treat everyone fairly
- We are open and honest and listen
- We strive to offer the best value for money service
- We welcome new challenges and embrace change

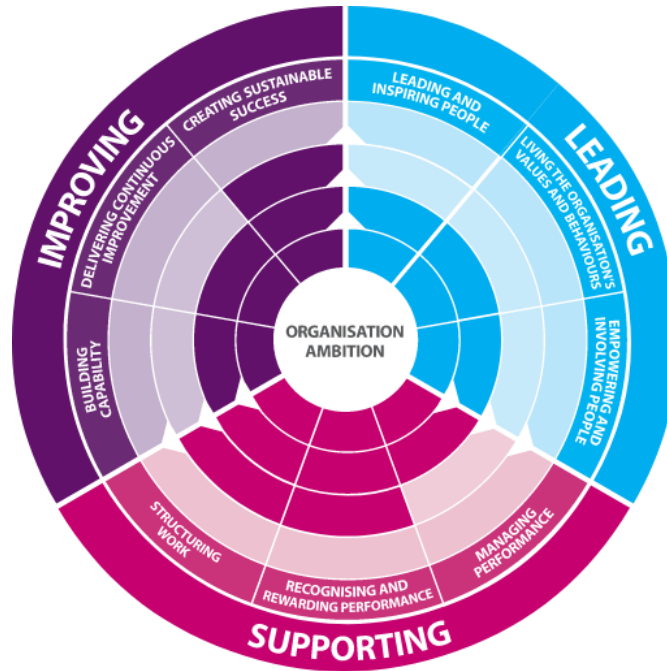
Changes since the last assessment include:

- A new leadership team – reduction of the team from 3 to 2 Corporate Directors and Heads of Service from 8 to 7
- Changes in plans for shared service options with Great Yarmouth Council
- Move to a Council with 'No Overall Control' since November 2017
- Change in Conservative Leader in 2018
- Vote of no confidence in Leadership in November 2018 and Liberal Democrat voted in as Leader
- Staff Achievement Awards introduced in 2017
- 2% pay rise for all staff April 2018
- Business Process Reviews – undertaken Environmental Health and Planning
- Digitalisation Projects planned and introduced
- Competency Framework introduced to support Appraisal
- Changes in the Customer Service/Operations teams to re-engineers aspects of customer contact and delivery of Council priorities
- Mental Health training undertaken

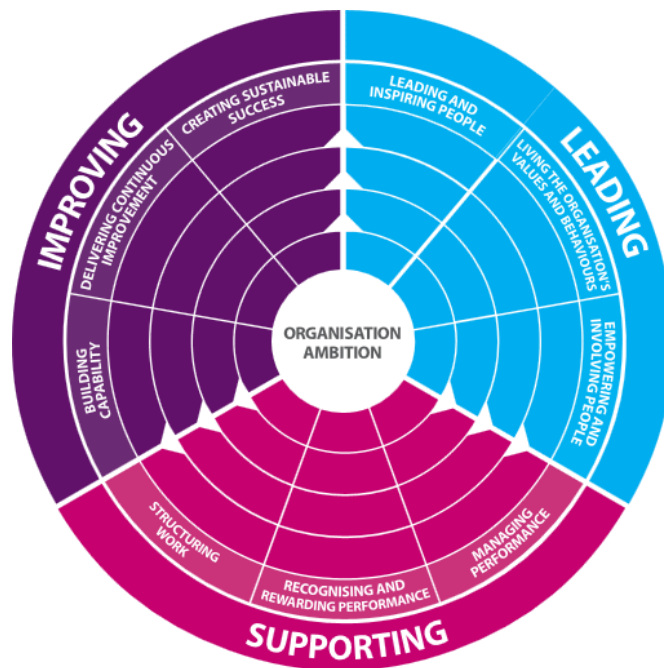
- Health & Wellbeing Group introduced
- Introduction of Monthly Health and Wellbeing campaigns
- New intranet
- Introduction of Volunteering days with a clear policy established

The heat maps shown overleaf summarise where the organisation believes it currently sits against the each of the nine IIP indicators and where it aspires to be in order to achieve its organisational ambition. The shaded cells represent the maturity level against the each indicator. The more cells shaded the more mature and embedded the practices were thought to be by the group attending the Context Meeting.

North Norfolk District Council 'As Is' heat map



Aspiration or 'To-be' heat map



Assessment Approach



The online assessment was deployed to 319 employees and there was a response of 76%. This was above the international Investors in People guidelines and therefore the sample is considered statistically significant.



Based on the findings from the online assessment, 54 employees were interviewed employees from across the organisation.



During the assessment open plan offices, canteen and a range of notice boards and examples of intranet content were observed. Meetings with members of the Staff Focus Group, Heads of Service, Extended Management Team plus observation.



Documents reviewed included Corporate Plan, Agenda's, Minutes, Training information, data such as sickness and benchmarking, targets and outcomes, e mails of thanks, staff awards information, process based information i.e. appraisals, workforce profile stats, examples of briefings, examples of policies, event examples and notes of thanks, appreciation, examples of outcomes and notes of celebration, presentations i.e. relating to development of INPHASE, new Management Information System.

Detailed Assessment Outcome

This section provides a detailed analysis of NNDC's assessment against the IIP Framework. The table in Annex 1 shows the assessed performance level for each of the 27 themes within the IIP Framework. The following gives the summary for the online assessment (OLA) in terms of numbers of responses and group sizes.

Survey Response Rate

Overview

TOTAL RESPONSES 243 responses out of 319 (76%)



RESPONSE METHOD



Email link: 243 responses out of 243

Open access: 0 responses out of 243

By Team

GROUP 1 28 responses out of 46



GROUP 2 37 responses out of 42



GROUP 3 37 responses out of 46



GROUP 4 45 responses out of 52



GROUP 5 11 responses out of 15



GROUP 6 61 responses out of 90



GROUP 7 12 responses out of 14



GROUP 8 12 responses out of 14



For the purposes of establishing an industry benchmark, data collected from the Public Administration and Defence sector has been used as a benchmark. Two comparisons are shown below. The first compares the organisation with the average of all the IIP organisations on the database (all sectors). The second compares the organisation with the Public Administration and Defence sector.

NNDC benchmark against the average of all IIP organisations on the database (all sectors).

Indicator summary

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score	Difference from IIP Average
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	15.1%	38.8%	21.1%	12.8%	5.9%	4.1%	2.3%	5.2	-0.3
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	19.0%	45.3%	18.7%	11.9%	2.5%	2.1%	0.6%	5.6	-0.3
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	23.5%	36.8%	21.6%	7.5%	5.2%	3.6%	1.7%	5.5	-0.3
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	31.1%	39.0%	13.0%	7.5%	4.1%	2.9%	2.5%	5.7	-0.1
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	11.4%	27.3%	19.0%	20.3%	9.8%	7.1%	5.1%	4.7	-0.4
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	26.2%	42.1%	17.7%	7.1%	3.1%	2.3%	1.5%	5.7	-0.2
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	16.4%	40.4%	18.9%	12.1%	6.1%	3.3%	2.8%	5.3	-0.2
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	19.3%	39.6%	22.7%	11.9%	2.6%	3.0%	0.8%	5.5	-0.1
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	21.7%	44.9%	18.9%	9.3%	2.7%	1.6%	0.9%	5.7	-0.1

NNDC benchmark against the Public Administrative and Defence sector

Indicator summary

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score	Industry
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	15.1%	38.8%	21.1%	12.8%	5.9%	4.1%	2.3%	5.2	+0.2
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	19.0%	45.3%	18.7%	11.9%	2.5%	2.1%	0.6%	5.6	0.0
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	23.5%	36.8%	21.6%	7.5%	5.2%	3.6%	1.7%	5.5	0.0
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	31.1%	39.0%	13.0%	7.5%	4.1%	2.9%	2.5%	5.7	+0.2
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	11.4%	27.3%	19.0%	20.3%	9.8%	7.1%	5.1%	4.7	+0.1
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	26.2%	42.1%	17.7%	7.1%	3.1%	2.3%	1.5%	5.7	+0.1
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	16.4%	40.4%	18.9%	12.1%	6.1%	3.3%	2.8%	5.3	+0.2
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	19.3%	39.6%	22.7%	11.9%	2.6%	3.0%	0.8%	5.5	+0.2
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	21.7%	44.9%	18.9%	9.3%	2.7%	1.6%	0.9%	5.7	+0.2

Detailed information regarding the online assessment results are available in a separate PDF document. The graphic showing the benchmark comparison for the whole framework is shown on the next page.

Benchmark



ORGANISATION'S IIP BENCHMARK

• **696**

AVERAGE IIP BENCHMARK *

• **724**

AVERAGE INDUSTRY BENCHMARK

• **672**

Showing results for Public Administration and Defence

* This reveals the average IIP Benchmark for all organisations who have undertaken the survey.

The next section gives detailed feedback on each Indicator and Theme within the framework.

The feedback includes strengths and areas for development.

Development points within the body of the report are given in italics.

Throughout the report survey results by group are given and will be referred to as such.

Group 1	Economic and Community Development/Leisure and Localities
Group 2	Finance/Council Tax/Accountancy/Assets/Exchequer and Property Services
Group 3	Environmental Health (Environmental Services, Protection, Commercial, Enforcement and Licensing)
Group 4	Planning Developments (Planning Policy, Building Control, Conservation, Design and Landscape)
Group 5	Legal
Group 6	IT and Business Transformation/Benefits/Customer Services/Post/Scanning/TICs/Housing Options
Group 7	Democratic Services and Corporate PA's/Elections
Group 8	HR and Communications

Indicator 1: Leading and Inspiring People

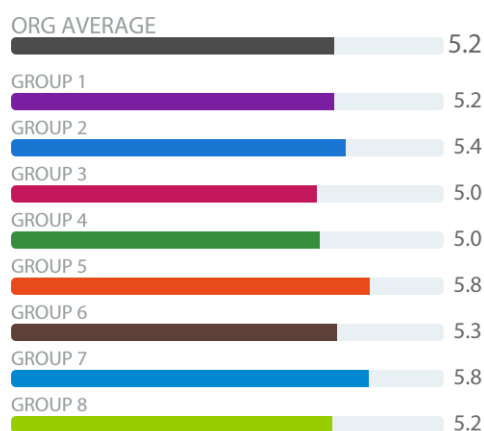
Indicator 1: Leading and inspiring people

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Base Questions							
I trust the leaders of my organisation	14.8%	47.3%	17.3%	9.5%	6.2%	3.3%	1.6%
Management communicates the organisation's ambition	15.6%	50.2%	20.6%	9.1%	2.9%	1.2%	0.4%
My manager motivates me to achieve my best	24.3%	33.7%	15.6%	10.7%	7.4%	4.5%	3.7%
My organisation develops great leaders	5.8%	23.9%	30.9%	21.8%	7.0%	7.4%	3.3%
Optional Questions							
My organisation's leaders are role models for our values	10.3%	33.7%	24.3%	20.2%	6.2%	3.7%	1.6%

For indicator 1 the organisation scored 5.2, this is in the bottom 3 indicators for your survey. When compared to the UK IIP benchmark (all sectors) NNDC is 0.3 points lower. When compared with the Administrative and Defence sector the organisation is 0.2 points higher.

Team comparisons are shown below and show that Groups 5 and 7 gave the highest results. Groups 4 and 5 had the lowest team score.

Indicator 1: Leading and inspiring people



Creating transparency and trust – Established

Three statements from the online assessment (OLA), link to this theme. The first 2 statements are from the base questions and give 'very positive responses' (if both strongly agrees and agrees are added together) of 65.8% for management communicate the organisation's ambition and 62.1% for I trust the leaders of my organisation. Results were less positive for the optional question with 44% for my organisation's leaders are role models for our values.

From interviews people explained that there are regular communications where all are updated on strategy and objectives. The Corporate Plan 2015- 2019 highlights five key priorities, detailed further by Service Plans with regular established reporting arrangements. People felt every effort is taken to share these priorities and achievements via presentations by the Corporate Directors in engaging ways that generate enthusiasm and pride. Many described Directors and Heads of Service as being approachable and interested with an 'open door' style and there were many good examples of this in practice. People described an open and encouraging leadership with high levels of day-to-day approachability, albeit most are extremely busy. There are regular updates shared on the intranet and people feel they are kept updated about priorities, outcomes and achievements in terms of aspects such as the commercial projects.

"They take great effort in sharing information with everyone and when they do so, there is a sense that the achievements are based on a team effort."

"The intranet is good in sharing updates and there are regular notes and updates coming through. There is also a very good informal communication where things are openly shared."

The overall view from the feedback is that the corporate strategy and outcomes are effectively shared and people value the intention to share information with enthusiasm and pride. The Plan sets broad priorities and gives objectives for each, there is good tracking against these in terms of outcomes and this is something that is given in some detail with clear information on priorities and achievements of the Council. So there is evidence to demonstrate that Corporate Directors have communicated purpose, vision and objectives. People are certainly clear of what gets measured.

However, there is a common view that something is missing in terms of the Corporate Plan so although everyone confirmed the efforts taken to share information, many feel additional information would be relevant and useful. This makes sense and links to a number of areas of opportunity for the organisation Questions were raised for example linked to organisational development projects such as Digitalisation and Business Performance Review. There was confusion and concerns about communication of progress and opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns – which many felt had either been ignored or that they couldn't ask.

"The corporate plan is pitched at the wrong level and when we are considering our objectives we think, how can we shoe horn this in"

"The corporate plan is missing a vision statement – it doesn't mean anything to people"

Perhaps due to the unusual set of factors in terms of leadership and politics over the last two years, some felt that opportunity for involvement the detail of planning by Heads of Service was limited.

Extended Management Team meet quarterly, this is a significant investment as it involves a lot of managers for a fairly long meeting with various agenda items being prepared and delivered. Whilst this demonstrates a tremendous commitment in sharing information, several people suggested the possibility of considering changing the format of this meeting. Certainly it would be worth considering looking at a more dynamic time sensitive means of fulfilling the

sharing of information aspect. If the meeting aims for input it would be worth considering how this can be achieved using a different approach as some felt that there are points that are regularly raised but are not take forward.

Several of the people interviewed said they had not seen their Service Plan and some said they did not have a Service Plan.

Motivating people to deliver the organisation's objectives – Established

The OLA shows 58% very positive results (adding strongly agrees and agrees) for my manager motivates me to achieve my best and had the second highest level of negative responses for all the themes in this indicator (8.2%). However only 3.7% strongly disagree.

Departments and teams operate using a range of approaches in terms of meetings and focus on targets and objectives. In most cases, people are clear of team priorities and objectives and aware of performance against these. Line managers are generally seen as supporting individuals to achieve and there is good practice in cascading through most teams and team members able to take part in day-to-day decisions regarding priorities.

People explained that there are a range of Committee and focus group meetings, which drive and deliver objectives and milestones and there are regular progress updates, which inform those directly and indirectly involved.

People mentioned 121s, as taking place and it seems that these vary significantly for teams in terms of their purpose and content. Feedback confirmed the principle that these provide an opportunity to discuss work based expectations and responsibilities and to support people in delivering these. By far the majority of managers were regarded as being effective in providing the necessary support to motivate individuals to achieve their objectives.

From interview there were a few points mentioned that related to challenges and frustrations and the most important point is that they felt there was a lack of opportunity for any dialogue about these areas. This was a common point made regarding a range of specifics within teams. This point may relate to the points about the perceived lacking of an organisational vision/plan. Scope for discussion of the challenges is quite limited in the current culture and it would be beneficial to consider how to move this forward.

Some reported that communication approaches for keeping people updated were not always well managed and some do feel 'out on a limb'. Some managers do not make time to meet with teams and some scenarios exist where communication within teams in terms of updating, is quite limited. In each case this was not seen as a failing of the manager but due to challenges linked to volumes of work and availability of team members.

There is scope for reviewing and updating the things that get measured; there are a number of key areas that relate to organisational progression on established priorities, which are viewed with confusion and uncertainty. The leaders have a significant opportunity to motivate people more by considering how to move forward on this point.

"My role as a manager is all about what can I do to make your job better"

Developing leadership capability – Established

The statement that links to this theme from the base questions (my organisation develops great leaders) gave the lowest results for this indicator with 39.5% very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) with more people somewhat agreeing (30.9%) or being unsure (21.8%) (i.e. neither agreeing nor disagreeing). The highest level of negatives was given for this statement (17.7%).

From interviews people explained that managers have a competency framework and there is a range of leadership and management training undertaken including coaching training which had been increased during 2018. 30 people had attended the Manager as Coach and 7 for Leader as Coach, 28 people attended ILM training. So there has been a high level of investment in training and some of the people interviewed described how this had helped them to develop their approaches in managing people.

There are good examples of individuals being encouraged and supported to lead projects or take on additional responsibilities either within teams or by representation at Council wide forums and events. Also examples where people who had undertaken ILM training had specifically been given an opportunity to lead a project. The collaborative groups provide scope for leadership and this is well understood and well used. There are good examples also of individuals who have received coaching with clear steps forward in their progression in terms of their role and their impact.

Roles and responsibilities for line managers are clearly expressed with established and regularly updated policies and process definition. Updates, presentations and short training sessions are run to help managers either when they initially take on the role or when changes are made or when a common shortfall is identified. Examples included appraisal training and sessions on using the competency framework.

Whilst there is an interest in manager's taking on greater responsibility so that HR can move into a Business Partner role, this aspect is not yet fully understood nor embraced. The interviews revealed a number of perceived limitations, which may provide some idea of why the survey results were quite low.

Although there has been a lot of training, the organisation has not yet defined any particular follow up to this to take the learning forward. There are very different styles and behaviours within the leadership team (Corporate Directors and Heads of Service) It would make sense to establish much clearer definition of what Leadership means for NNDC and to introduce some tools to engender this more specifically. This is particularly relevant as many of the people involved have developed into leadership roles whilst working for the Council and there is a tendency for greater comfort in management rather than leadership.

*Leadership in terms of embracing the change required in order to ensure **all** managers and leaders fully embrace their role and receive support and feedback to enable them to do this well, is unclear.*

There are several reasons why managers do not fulfil their role in line management, some are cultural and some are due to perceived limitations of the role, or specific challenges pertinent to the team or service. There is an opportunity to focus on this as a priority, there appears to have been an assumption that this will happen automatically but it will require very clear leadership in managing the change in behaviours.

"There is a complete lack of actual management and this creates challenges and delays and lot of confusion"

“The middle layer of managers does not talk” (this was not across the whole Council but some examples within Departments and more to do with work patterns than anything more negative).

“Our progression in completing tasks can be held up as we are waiting for decisions or we cannot get hold of managers”

There is a process of 360 feedback but the assessment suggested this had not been particularly well utilised yet.

There was mixed feedback on managers role modelling the values and feedback was that there is not yet a comfortable culture in discussing behaviours in ways that support and encourage development.

Indicator 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours

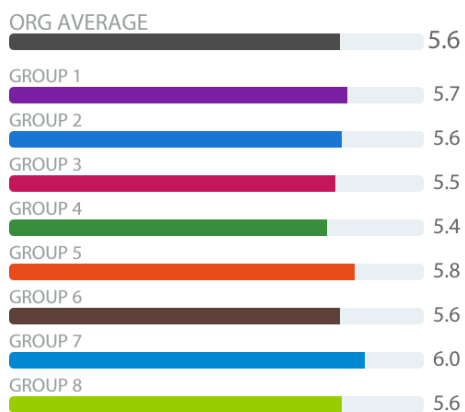
Indicator 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours



This was the second highest scoring indicator from the OLA with an overall indicator score of 5.6. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration and Defence sector, NNDC was **-0.3** and **0** points difference respectively.

Team comparisons are shown below with Group 7 showing the highest results and Group 4 the lowest.

Indicator 2: Living the organisation's values and behaviours



Operating in line with the values – Established

The second statement in the OLA links to this theme (values guide the way we work). The very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) is 45.7% if the 'somewhat agrees' are included in the positive results this gives a total of 72.9%.

There are 4 values, which are widely understood in principle and followed in practice. They are included as part of recruitment and appraisal discussion and where this is undertaken effectively, this is a valuable exercise. The competency framework lends itself to the values and again, where effectively undertaken, this adds considerable depth in personal development. There are a number of references to the values around the offices and there is very little doubt that most people do aspire to operate within the values of the organisation.

The Staff Focus Group has undertaken some very positive work around values and members, who represent each part of the organisation, have had opportunities to bring the values alive, seek feedback and suggestion and follow up on this with action.

An opportunity for a very positive leadership gesture was made following a rather clumsy attempt to highlight the values just prior to the assessment, which was understandably not received well. Hopefully this was a learning point following the decision to add the values as a screen saver. This was an example where the high levels of trust in leadership were challenged for a short time but due to the quick and genuine response to feedback by Corporate Directors, was quickly restored.

Feedback showed that there are some who are seen as very strong leaders and managers who demonstrate the values on a day-to-day basis and are seen as role models particularly where they are able to effectively challenge and coach others without judgement. This is a developing aspect for NNDC and one that ideally will be encouraged and enabled further so that anyone managing people has the ability and scope to use emotional intelligence in the conversations they have with team members as part of the appraisal and 121 process (*this is not yet widely the case*).

This means there is an opportunity for NNDC to take forward the investment made in 2018 in coaching and leadership training. People described a generally "risk averse" style of leadership and management and whilst people said they understand why, many feel this creates some limitations for the organisation, particularly in the extent of challenge and development of behavioural aspects. This point links leadership with core values and encourages the growth of understanding of how leaders can and should challenge each other when discussing organisations values. Whilst people did feel that leaders typically independently do act in line with values, they also said where this is not the case, this is not always discussed and led effectively. Sometimes conversations that should take place do not. This point was about shared leadership and relationships for the whole of the leadership team – Corporate Directors and Heads of Service.

A few mentioned leaders who perhaps did not always operate within company values (this was only mentioned with a couple of examples and linked to team spirit and commitment where they needed to listen more to people within the team so that improvements could be made more effectively.

Adopting the values – Advanced

Within the OLA there are two statements from the base questions that link with this theme. Showing very positive results (adding strongly agrees and agrees) question 4 having clear values is 73.7% and question 3 sharing the values is 78.9%.

From this we could assume that people know what the values are and share these in principle.

From interview people felt that the values were very relevant for the work they do. The role of the Council in terms of the community matters to people and many have a strong personal commitment towards their role. The fact that the Council effectively reflects on values noticing and responding to demonstration of these on a day to day basis in everyday chat, means that there is a very well embedded sense of what these mean and there are many who naturally drive standards in their interactions with others.

There were many examples of people doing the right thing and not necessarily the easiest – these included taking on extra work to help out when someone needs to take time off or due to family needs, working extra hours without being asked in order to complete a deadline, being available for colleagues in support of their needs, either work or family, taking the time to listen to a member of the community despite the outcome of extra time, volunteering and taking seriously membership of forums and groups. Considering the needs of new members of the team, helping those joining the Council or those who had particular challenges. There were also excellent examples of how team members and senior managers had taken steps to support and provide flexibility to enable the political and officer changes and at times, challenging environment. Whilst it could be argued that this is part of the role, it is the spirit that this is undertaken and how this is noticed by colleagues and mutually supported that makes NNDC stand out.

The interviews, observations and tone of circulars, newsletters and updates all demonstrated great conformity and personal responsibility in understanding and following behaviours. There is a common understanding that there is a really good environment within NNDC, which is tangible in all interactions. Although there are one or two examples, which stand out as they are not the norm, there are extremely high levels of respect and personal responsibility demonstrated in interactions and wholeheartedly followed during the interviews. People spoke very positively of colleagues and of teams in the way they embrace the sometimes challenging needs of the Council, the levels of pride in the community and the spirit of respect, honesty, openness and interest.

The behaviours feature strongly in the 121s but they are also so evident in people's behaviours day to day.

“There is an ethos of ‘it matters’ that runs through the organisation”

Living the values – Established

From the OLA there are 2 statements linked to this theme with one (my behaviour reflects the values) giving 84.4% very positive results (adding strongly agrees and agrees). The 2nd statement (I challenge behaviours which don't match the values) had lower very positive results with 39.1% (adding strongly agrees and agrees) and only 7.4% strongly agreeing. There was a slight increase in negative responses for this statement (7.4%) but a lower level of negatives than for the statement under the first theme for this indicator (values guide the way we work), which had 11.5%.

Everyone was able to talk about the values in broad terms and more importantly spoke very positively about how they felt these were appropriate to the Council and that they were generally demonstrated in practice and noticeable when not evidenced.

People interviewed were aware the values were circulated and many were able to give broad examples of how they felt they personally demonstrated values in their own approaches. On the whole people are seen as operating in line with the values. *However, where this is not the culture is sometimes limited in the extent that people will challenge. There is a need to reinforce the responsibility and skills of leaders and managers to discuss behaviours more overtly and more capably as part of the appraisal and 121 discussions. Currently there appears to be a scenario where things may be discussed but not always directly.*

The Council has engendered a very positive natural culture, which reflects the values, so the culture has not come because of the values but is a good reference of the values. It is important to stress that the status of values and how people connect with these is why people love working for NNDC, how they feel motivated to make a difference, support their team and the wider community.

Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people

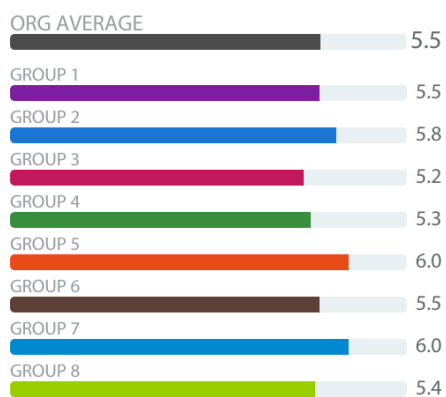
Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Base Questions							
I have all the information I need to do my job well	13.6%	39.5%	25.1%	10.3%	7.4%	3.3%	0.8%
I am encouraged to use initiative in my role	31.7%	37.9%	15.6%	6.2%	4.5%	2.5%	1.6%
I have a say in decisions that affect my role	17.3%	32.1%	27.2%	9.5%	4.1%	6.6%	3.3%
I am trusted to make decisions in my role	31.3%	37.9%	18.5%	4.1%	4.9%	2.1%	1.2%
Optional Questions							
My manager supports me to achieve stretching goals	26.3%	33.7%	17.7%	12.8%	4.1%	1.6%	3.7%

This indicator has a score of 5.5. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration and Defence sector, NNDC was **-0.3** and **0** points different respectively.

Team comparisons are shown below with Groups 5 and 7 showing the highest results and Group 3 the lowest.

Indicator 3: Empowering and involving people



Empowering People – Advanced

In the OLA there are 2 statements that link to this theme. The very positive result (strongly agrees and agrees) for being encouraged to use initiative show 69.6%. For having all the information to do the job well there is a lower very positive result with 53.1%.

Knowledge and information about people's jobs and working procedures are well established and updated regularly by those working within teams. The culture encourages people to identify best ways of fulfilling responsibilities and therefore make relevant changes where this brings improvement. The waste partnership, digital transformation, coaching pool and health and wellbeing group are examples of working groups being established to drive an organisational priority.

By far the majority of people interviewed felt encouraged to identify and put forward ideas for improvement and this works well within teams where people's enthusiasm for improving day-to-day systems and approaches is generally encouraged and supported.

People value the level of effort taken in sharing information and providing people with regular updates and information. This is viewed as having improved over the last few years with the impact of raising awareness and understanding about the wider context of the Council and in particular the links between the Corporate Priorities, politics and the role of the Council.

"We have improved the silo mentality, teams are working more effectively across the organisation"

"We provide lots of opportunity to work across the Council and have specifically enabled this with some of the regular forums run"

There are good examples where people have been encouraged to take the lead and supported in doing so. For example, the Staff Focus Group has improved in its impact due to the opportunity members have been given to identify the most pertinent strategies and take these forward. The Democratic Services team has led interactions to support understanding of protocol for both Council Members and Officers. The Customer Services team has transformed working approaches within the team and in their role of supporting back office teams. Members of the team have been able to upskill and gain promotion to other service areas.

The communication structures mean that people are able to keep up with and where relevant take part in discussions on changes and progress. These are ongoing activities that everyone is aware of and responsible for keeping up to date. Virtually everyone interviewed mentioned (and liked) the fact that the information is there for them and it is up to them to keep up with what they need.

"My managers cope brilliantly without me."

All those moving into management roles are encouraged and supported to undertake ILM 3 and ILM 5. 12 people not in management roles have undertaken ILM 3. Extended Manager Meetings are held quarterly, where managers are not able to attend, representatives from their team are encouraged to attend and report back. Feedback was that the dedication of holding these meetings without fail over the last few years had improved levels of trust and awareness of the 'bigger picture' of the Council and related challenges. *There is a fairly common view that these meetings would benefit from an update in terms of their focus – moving towards encouragement of greater discussion, listening and much clearer clarity on points and response for all those raised in terms of future and ongoing strategy.*

What is less well established as a Council wide principle is how people (including people in management roles) are actively encouraged to develop and utilise leadership skills. Given that people are able to attend ILM qualifications, further emphasis of pre and post guided development and feedback via the existing performance management process would be worthwhile. This has the potential to develop the culture of leadership through the Council. Whilst there was evidence from the assessment of this working well in some departments, there are other examples where this key element is missed.

Feedback was that not all 121s and appraisal discussions include aspirations and agree personal development plans to support peoples' careers. So even some of those in leadership positions do not hold a regular meaningful dialogue with their line manager about their own leadership and how this can be enhanced or fully utilised.

Participating and Collaborating – Established

From the OLA there were 49.4% very positive responses (strongly agrees and agrees) for having a say in decisions that affect people's roles. From the optional statement there were 60% very positive results for manager supporting to achieve stretching results.

Feedback from the interviews was that NNDC is an organisation that does provide scope and encouragement for participation and collaboration and that this is facilitated and supported in a number of ways such as a range of forums and groups with a wide Council representation. Most people felt that due to the strong relationships across teams there is a natural culture of collaboration, which is encouraged and supported by the leaders. This is an outstanding strength for NNDC particularly as the shared interest is focused towards a positive impact for the community.

Regular consultation exercises are run to determine where development or input needs to be focused. For example, when introducing an Achievement Awards in 2017, views were sought and collated. Other policies such as the volunteering policy were developed using input from collected views and ideas. Although this is the first time I have assessed the organisation, there was a very strong opinion that this is an area that has greatly improved over the last three years with people truly feeling empowered to lead collaborative exercises to take results forward. The Staff Focus Group is a good example where the clear principles of communication have been effective in building levels of trust and engagement and demonstrating outcomes.

There is high enthusiasm for the ad hoc events such as Antiques Road Show, Blue Flat Awards and pulling together during challenges such as tidal surges and other community related 'all hands on pumps' experiences. The approaches to these events value people's input highly and encourage and enable exceptional teamwork with some good leadership by those with the greatest experience and authority.

Whilst there is no doubt in the efforts to seek feedback and input in decisions, feedback was that this is not always well executed in practice. There were a few examples where people felt unable to challenge or raise concerns despite feeling these points were relevant, there were also examples where people felt their opinion had been sought only to be ignored with no reasoning given. Greater transparency when seeking input will be worthwhile so messages shared and to avoid any accusation of 'going through the motions' of participation. It is important to ensure there is a genuine interest, followed through, if people are asked to take part in sharing input.

Union representation is well co-ordinated with clear responsibility and process followed effectively. There is a mutual interest in reaching decisions that support policy and overall fairness in delivery and it is felt that although this is quite long winded, the established structures help the process and are wholeheartedly followed. Unfortunately there were a few examples in the early stages of BPR where people's input was sought but not viewed as being taken on board" There is still a view held by some that the BPR team over promise and that this creates frustration and challenge. Further genuine listening and honesty would be beneficial in building/maintaining trust in the process of participation.

Property Services is a very good example of a team that works across the Council on various projects where teams are brought together. There is a very positive vibe here and this encourages others to engage.

"We have got better at trying to make links"

Making Decisions – Established

The OLA results for people being trusted to make decisions in their role showed a very positive response (strongly agrees and agrees) of 69.2%.

There are some excellent examples where individuals have increased their confidence and capacity within departments impacting positively on distribution of workload and providing scope for personal development. Across the organisation there are a number of structures, projects and working groups that bring people from different parts of the organisation together to achieve something. Make up of the group may be based on skill, role or interest. Examples include Waste Partnership, Digital Transformation, Coaching Pool and Wellbeing Group.

People interviewed expressed clear understanding of their decision making and confirmed that this is clearly established through policies and processes and that people are given support and development as appropriate to understand relevance and links, by line managers and colleagues. There is clear reporting on outcomes from decisions so people in most if not all cases are able to understand the impact of their decisions. For example, changes in some structures such as Customer Service, Planning and Revenues and Benefits means there needs to be a re-establishment of process and flow chart, decision making is a key aspect here.

There is quite a range of approaches in terms of dialogue surrounding decision-making and responsibility. The Head of Legal Services described various changes made within the team, which came from ongoing development coaching and personal growth. This had enabled the commercialisation of the legal services, now well established. There were also examples of a member of the team taking on additional responsibilities in terms of working with Members. One of the IT team described how he had been able to take on increased responsibility for working closely with teams through steps of Digital Transformation and had been encouraged to take this forward in terms of his own knowledge, skills and interest.

"Yes we are trusted in our roles to make decisions and are expected to do so."

There was feedback from some teams relating to elements of BPR and Digital Transformation, saying they felt their views and input had not been taken on board. The overall view was that this is now improving but in the initial phases this was a source of frustration and limited the success of approaching change positively.

There was feedback from the Revenues and Benefits teams saying they felt limited in the extent that they can make decisions and have any impact in change. There was a view that there is a more controlling style of management here and that there is opportunity for much more encouragement of ideas and input.

There are some current perceived challenges related to aspects of planning and customer enabling. This may be simply due to the timing and that changes are currently being implemented. This related to a new pre-application process where people questioned the aim to enable customers but was that colleagues are not answering phones. This is mentioned, as it is an example of impact between teams/Service areas. From feedback this can be a challenge and one where there can be delays in dealing with perceived issues with ease.

Indicator 4: Managing performance

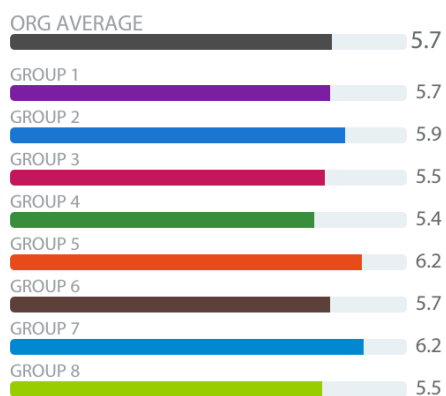
Indicator 4: Managing performance

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Base Questions							
I have discussed my performance with my manager in the last 6 months	38.7%	42.4%	7.0%	5.8%	1.6%	2.5%	2.1%
I have agreed my objectives with my line manager within the last 12 months	36.6%	43.6%	8.2%	5.8%	1.2%	2.5%	2.1%
My manager helps me improve my performance	20.6%	36.2%	18.5%	12.3%	5.8%	3.7%	2.9%
I feel encouraged to perform to the best of my abilities	28.4%	33.7%	18.1%	6.2%	7.8%	2.9%	2.9%
Optional Questions							
At my organisation, poor performance is addressed by managers	6.6%	19.3%	19.8%	20.2%	14.8%	11.1%	8.2%

This indicator has a score of 5.7. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration and Defence sector, NNDC was **-0.1** and **0.2** points difference respectively.

Team comparisons are shown below with Groups 5 and 7 showing the highest results and Group 4 the lowest.

Indicator 4: Managing performance



Setting objectives – Established

From the OLA there were 80.2% very positive responses (strongly agrees and agrees) to agreeing objectives within the last 12 months.

The high level of positive response for questions 1 and 2 were surprising when compared with the comments made through the interviews. There has been a significant push on the completion of appraisals and this has encouraged a good completion rate. However, the basis of discussions about appraisals in particular was that they are typically seen as not adding value.

In most cases, people confirmed they are clear of their role and related priorities and that these are tangible and regularly shared/monitored/discussed. People described holding regular 121s and return rates for completed appraisals were 83% for full year returns and 32% midyear returns. *However at interview many questioned the value of the appraisals and said these were not generally undertaken but were written up and signed off just to get them done.* Inductions are well structured with key knowledge and information covered through courses and on-the-job shadowing and support from colleagues. Processes that support the induction period and ongoing management of performance are well supported although sometimes managers require chasing by the HR team, and there is scope to improve the extent that they have unanimously taken on the extent of responsibility required in the long run for proactive management of performance.

Due to the way reporting works through the Council, there is a good understanding of team targets and progress against these. People were clear about this; it is the individual objective setting and discussion of performance on this basis that is less well established.

“There is a general practice of just getting the things written up, most people do not see any value in the process”

“Managers are doing their best but have workload issues and this often means they are not able to fulfil people related interactions”

“There is a lot of emphasis on getting the task/process done on time”

Encouraging high performance – Established

There are three statements in the OLA for this theme (two base and one optional). 62.1 of respondents gave very positive (strongly agreed or agreed) to statement about people feeling encouraged to perform at their best and 56.8% being very positive about their manager helping them to improve their performance. The optional statement relating to poor performance being addressed by managers received less positive response of 25.9 (strongly agree or agree).

Many people mentioned 121s taking place and there is a view that these are open and honest with the opportunity to discuss anything. However, feedback was that these tended to focus on tasks, time lines and technicalities of the roles rather than any mention of performance related aspects. Some of the people interviewed said that 121s rarely take place and are regularly cancelled at short notice, also that they can involve a one-way dialogue, which is based on an update.

There were only a few examples where line managers were viewed as regularly establishing opportunities for discussion of performance and encouraging open dialogue. Where this was the case, this was seen as mutually beneficial.

Interviews with managers demonstrated an interest in supporting teams and some said they had time related challenges in fulfilling responsibilities for 121s but held team meetings, which

they felt, were more beneficial. This was reflected by some of the comments made by people and some said team meetings replaced 121s.

Most people do feel their performance is reviewed based on their general work delivery, interpersonal approaches and ability to take on additional responsibilities. Most said they had clear targets and that any discussion is around the achievements of these. There was a general view that poor performance is not well managed and that the whole HR framework is 'risk averse', some still believe it is HR's responsibility for tackling performance related aspects and this can lead to scenarios where things are deemed as being less well handled. In particular, the opportunity for dealing with performance aspects requiring development that could possibly be improved upon with clear feedback and coaching.

Feedback was that managers are seen as wholeheartedly honest in their approaches with teams but there is also a strong view that the whole culture is not yet fully comfortable and therefore robust in managing poor performance situations. This is an area that would benefit from much greater skills in the basic principles of the types of conversations taking place regarding performance. Further effective use of coaching skills by all managers would help here. Currently the emotional intelligence element and therefore the level of comfort in holding meaningful performance based conversations which focus on providing scope for discussion in these cases are not strongly understood.

Some still believe this is the responsibility of HR and this can create a basis for greater difficulty in the conversation that should be taking place with an aim for a positive outcome. Due to the historical relationship HR has had with the rest of the organisation, as with many organisations, there can be a tendency for some to view the HR team in a sort of policing or personnel role. This is now quite an old fashioned viewpoint and no longer relevant to NNDC so it is only those managers and their capability in undertaking the full range of their role as managers that will create the potential for this to move forward.

"There is a very soft culture, systems for effective performance management are not well established and we don't do this well – HR is safe and risk averse"

There is confusion relating to responsibility of managers in their performance management role and although there have been various discussions and development steps taken to develop skills and responsibilities, this is not fully embedded as normal practice with managers taking the lead.

However, line managers are viewed as being quite honest in terms of discussing performance against the measured aspects, they could just go a little deeper in constructive coaching.

"We pay lip service to the competency framework"

Therefore there is clearly a need to look at the approaches for discussing performance and take a very honest starting point from which the Council can move forward. Clearly it is of no value at all to accept a principle that all is well just because the numbers look good. The reality is that most people question the value of the appraisal. Feedback was that Appraisals and 121s are regularly missed or not given the time necessary, 121s are regularly cancelled at short notice or not run at all. Whilst some line managers understand the value of the exercise and therefore undertake responsibilities effectively, most do not according to the feedback.

There was also feedback that some managers do not evidence strong people skills. Bearing in mind Management is a key factor in the pay structure, this is unfortunate on many levels and will benefit from further discussion of how to move this forward.

Measuring and assessing performance – Established

There are two statements in the OLA for this theme (one base question and one optional). There were 81.1% of people very positive (strongly agrees and agrees) about discussing their performance with their manager in the last 6 months (base statement) whereas there were fewer very positive (65.8%) about their manager providing them with feedback. From interview people confirmed they had discussed objectives and performance against these. It is interesting therefore how this does not appear to be linked with the appraisal process as many said the identification of objectives is difficult due to the challenge in relevance with organisational priorities (indicator 1).

Where they take place, people find the 121s useful in many cases they are literally a catch up and therefore sometimes limited in the extent of feedback on performance. People confirmed the team based reporting does provide the basis for measuring performance against objectives and there is a good understanding of this throughout the Council with very strong reporting practice.

Data relating to the appraisal return rates were shared as part of the assessment preparation and these show a very positive 83% full year returns and 32% midyear returns. However, feedback was that the appraisals are commonly seen as not adding value and many said they are done just to fulfil the task rather than do them properly. Several people said they had been written up without discussion.

So bearing in mind the positive feedback from the survey and the interviews about 121s and the ongoing communication relating to performance targets and outcomes, there is an opportunity to consider this and identify a way forward in terms of improving the process to ensure it (appraisal and 121) is worthwhile for everyone.

Both the appraisal and 121 are very comprehensive and straightforward with opportunity for setting objectives and reviewing progress. There is also a very natural dialogue-taking place with a mutual interest in discussing outcomes. The values and competency framework clearly define the values and there is a strong positive culture that supports and perpetuates these in day-to-day working principles. The only outstanding aspect which is the difference between Established and Advanced outcome is the level at which managers ensure these interactions are undertaken with enough time and consideration to ensure there are ongoing opportunities to discuss performance fully. Whilst there is little doubt that essential needs and immediate challenges have an opportunity for airing, the more individually relevant aspects may not and this may ultimately limit individual and organisational potential for definition of performance development opportunities in a proactive sense. Also to hold a regular conversation which starts with the premise of 'how can we improve'. Currently there seems to be a culture of, 'we are fulfilling the important priorities so we don't need to discuss how we can improve, how can we move forward'.

There were some good examples of developmental steps suggested and undertaken and scenarios where this had supported improvement, there were also team and role changes which had been very clearly supported with specific feedback around areas for development. There were also some examples where people had not discussed development at all as they had not asked for any training and examples where people had attended training and nothing had happened since.

Indicator 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance

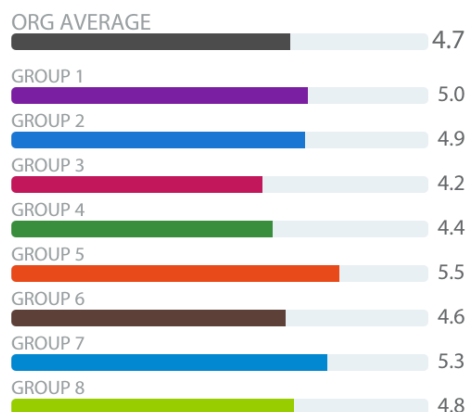
Indicator 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Base Questions							
I get appropriate recognition for the work I do	11.9%	31.3%	19.3%	16.9%	10.3%	6.6%	3.7%
I am consistently recognised when I exceed expectations	11.5%	25.1%	19.3%	22.6%	9.9%	6.2%	5.3%
I feel appreciated for the work I do	18.1%	32.5%	23.0%	8.6%	8.2%	5.8%	3.7%
I am rewarded in ways that match my motivations	4.1%	20.2%	14.4%	32.9%	10.7%	9.9%	7.8%
Optional Questions							
I feel my contribution to my organisation is valued	13.2%	30.5%	26.3%	9.1%	9.5%	8.2%	3.3%

This indicator has a score of 4.7. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration and Defence sector, NNDC was **-0.4** and **0.1** points difference respectively.

Team comparisons are shown below with Group 5 and 7 showing the highest results and Group 3 the lowest.

Indicator 5: Recognising and rewarding high performance



Designing the approach - Established

The statement on being rewarded in ways that match people's motivations fits with this theme and there were 24.3% with only 4% strongly agree responses and 28.4% of negative responses.

From interview the feedback was generally more positive.

Day to day the majority of line managers are good at noticing good work and extra efforts and thanking individuals for specific actions. There are also a number of schemes to support reward and recognition – these include:

- Thank you e mails from Corporate Directors and Heads of Service – and colleagues there are also face to face thank you's which are really appreciated
- Achievement Awards introduced in 2017 – 76 nominations received over 5 categories (Employee of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Team of the Year, Outstanding Achiever Award, Change and innovation Award). This was a successful event according to feedback and it being repeated in 2018, with some updates based on feedback.
- Staff Briefings are viewed as being upbeat and celebratory with a strong vibe of valuing the inputs of teams.
- Long Service Awards – Gift Vouchers
- Honorarium payments for high performance or outstanding work
- New benefits recently added include wider wallet, KAARP, all received an extra increment in their pay
- Ad hoc rewards i.e. Apprentice of the Year
- Celebrations and thank you's for representation of Council i.e. 2017 Local Authority Challenge, praise for implementation of change, achievement of delivery target i.e.
- Promotions – 11 staff promotions in last 2 years
- Staff secondments 24 in last 2 years
- People also gave a number of other methods including the level of support for learning and development, the level of autonomy and trust in the role, the opportunity to support others, the level of encouragement of people's input and taking this on board, opportunity to work flexibly (this was highly appreciated – although some mentioned it can create delays or challenges in getting any response from teams).
- Canteen, which people really appreciate, office vibe and welcoming culture – mentioned as a real bonus
- Events such as Christmas party, BBQs, community focused events
- Culture and structures for supporting people through ill health and life challenges

The approach is continually reviewed taking note of feedback from surveys as well as through 121s and team meetings. For example the Awards event was tweaked following feedback and the Staff Focus Group led this.

The reasoning behind the lower online assessment scores for this theme was thought to relate to people's level of dissatisfaction in particular with the pay structure and job evaluation. Changes linked to Business Performance Review and role distribution were also an area where people had concerns. There is a belief by many that too much is expected and that many do not have time to fulfil their responsibilities.

However, pay has been benchmarked and fits with market rates. There are clear and detailed procedures established and followed in terms of role evaluation and union representatives work in collaboration to ensure these are followed. This is however an area that many feel unhappy about and there seems to be a belief of perceived unfairness between departments

and particularly in cases of line management and taking on additional responsibilities. There has been great effort to communicate with clarity but many do question the structure and the perceived limitation that one needs to be a manager in order to achieve a certain level of pay. Some feel this is a very limiting feature of the structure, particularly when some holding these roles are not felt to be strong in terms of people skills. There was also a view of perceived unfairness in terms of departments and particularly that the same roles in Planning were viewed as a higher level than other service areas. People also questioned introductory payments and there was a feeling of resentment from some about the relevance of these.

Some of the people who had recently joined at the beginning of their career felt there were very limited opportunities for them with the Council due to the structure and the extent of long serving people already in management roles.

Apart from pay, when people described the wider context of reward and recognition they were far more positive about the Council's approach.

Adopting a culture of recognition – Established

The base OLA results for people feeling appreciated for the work they do are higher than the previous theme with 50.6% very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) and 17.7% negatives. The optional statement that links to this theme (I feel my contribution to my organisation is valued) gave a 43.7% very positive result.

Everyone was clear on the approach to reward and recognition and felt that this was relevant to them and that there was scope for everyone to feel recognised. There is also a clear appreciation that people do not necessarily want the same thing, some like to be openly thanked and praised, others don't. The approaches manage this well due to the close working relationships and respect of differences.

Managers typically know their teams well and engender ways of celebrating to suit individual preferences, they are empowered to do this and encouraged to share their achievements through the Council in ways that work for people and teams. The Corporate Directors are respectful and supportive in the way they respond to feedback and suggestions from managers and keen to utilise any opportunity for giving praise to teams and individuals for their achievements. There is an interest from both Corporate Directors in getting to know individuals from their interactions and learning about their particular 'stories' in their working experience. This means no one is invisible.

The opportunity for improvement here is the consistency of approach by managers and how this varies between teams; some are far more encouraging and involved than others, some are quite distant and transactional in their approach.

Whilst it is clear that leaders are keen to celebrate achievements throughout the whole Council, the dynamics do mean there are some individuals or Services or that are perceived as having a greater level of interest than others. For example, Planning and Communication were two examples of areas where people perceive that Corporate Directors take a high level of interest. Revenues and Benefits, less so. Whilst this is not a particularly strong development point, it would be worth considering opportunities where further engagement could be encouraged. It is appreciated that efforts have been taken to involve members in working groups such as the Staff Focus Group.

The general view is that the recognition and reward scheme itself is excellent *but there are some managers who do not engage with the process fully.*

Recognising and rewarding people – Established

The base OLA statements (appropriate and consistent recognition) that link to this theme gave very positive results (strongly agrees and agrees) of 43.2% and 36.6% respectively.

The Achievement Awards are generally valued as a positive step for the organisation and people feel these are a genuine gesture seeking to thank people and celebrate success. There is a high level of engagement in the event with five categories.

There is a culture of thanking and praising people and an interest in advancements and outcomes of Departments. The assessment revealed no examples where individuals felt that recognition was in anyway unfair.

Behaviour is praised and noticed via regular e-mails, opportunities to lead projects and through the staff briefings. There is a high level of peer-to-peer praise and thanks and individuals from different teams regularly spearhead change and development.

There were very few negative comments through the interviews and it is therefore felt that the negatives from the OLA came from development areas mentioned elsewhere in the report and particularly related to the pay structure and job evaluation activity which has created a few feelings of being under valued. People also sometimes feel personally challenged in preparing for a job evaluation and their own approach can be quite demoralising as they feel their worth is being questioned. This came through quite strongly from the interviews and seems to be something that is taken very personally.

This is an example where a clearer plan in terms of managing cultural change may be beneficial. Whilst such change is typically challenging and possibly painful in the first instance, organisations can ease this by taking a longer term view and ensuring that clear and connected messages through this process of change can limit or ease the personalisation people may feel. It would be worth considering any opportunities for introducing additional support so that people are able to understand that it is not their personal worth that is being questioned.

Support from line managers and further discussion of why the job evaluation is being undertaken and what this means for individuals may be worthwhile but it is appreciated that there has been a great deal of communication already aimed at providing everyone with clarity of why this is taking place.

People mentioned feeling recognised through the support given at times when they had experienced challenges either at work or home. Colleagues are generally very mindful of people's day to day interactions and quick to support where needed, this is a very people focused organisation. There is an opportunity for people to be themselves and this is strongly embraced by the organisation, people are praised and valued for what they bring and where possible, their potential is fully utilised.

One of the things mentioned by a few people was the ability to work flexibly. Although this was also mentioned as a challenge where colleagues are not available and this can lead to delays, which some find frustrating, those who have the opportunity are very grateful and see this as a form of recognition.

People appreciate some of the things that the Council has, such as a great canteen, a focus on health and wellbeing with various events held. An encouragement and opportunity to volunteer and take part in organisationally run events such as the Antiques Roadshow. There is a high understanding of the value of these things and a keenness to take part. People understand the impact this has on the health of the organisation.

Indicator 6: Structuring work

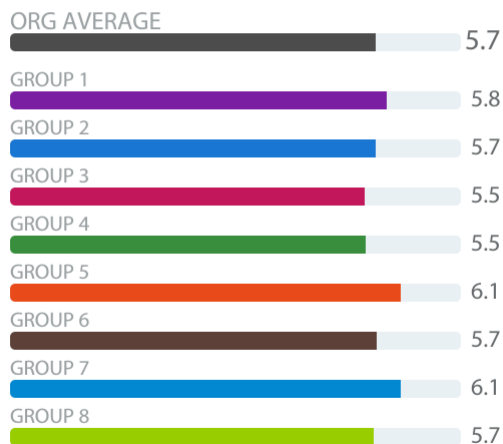
Indicator 6: Structuring work

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Base Questions							
I am able to develop the skills I need to progress	16.0%	39.1%	25.1%	8.2%	4.9%	3.3%	3.3%
My work is interesting	34.2%	43.2%	14.0%	5.8%	0.8%	2.1%	0.0%
I have the right level of responsibility to do my job effectively	21.4%	44.4%	14.8%	7.8%	6.2%	2.9%	2.5%
My role enables me to work well with others	33.3%	41.6%	16.9%	6.6%	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%

This indicator has a score of 5.7. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration sector, NNDC was **-0.2** and **0.1** points different respectively.

Team comparisons are shown below with Groups 5 and 7 showing the highest results and Groups 3 and 4 the lowest.

Indicator 6: Structuring work



Designing roles – Established

There are 2 statements in the OLA that link to this theme with 55.1% very positive about being able to develop the skills they need to progress and 77.4% being very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) about their work being interesting.

From interview the OLA results about being able to develop the skills needed to progress may link to some people's requests for learning and development being declined and perceived limitations in the structure meaning that there is not an opportunity to move forward though the hierarchy.

Job roles are well structured and people were very clear on the expectations. Everyone interviewed felt that their work was interesting and care is taken to vary the tasks where possible to support interest as well as providing better cover of skills and ability. Where relevant there are people who are able to support or train others and in particular new members to the team. There are also some roles such as the post room where people are likely to get to know colleagues easily with the potential to quickly learn a broad overview of the organisation. These are also examples where colleagues are particularly capable at helping new starters to settle and this works very well. *A useful point of feedback was that although everyone is very approachable, due to the open plan arrangements, it can be difficult for new starters to gain an appreciation in the short term of who does what and who the decision makers are for a particular aspect of delivery. Some organisations have picture organisation charts to provide visible clarity.*

There are career-graded roles across the organisation. Significant changes to the structure of frontline operational teams included the development of a Customer Services team. Changes were made to the Benefits and Revenues teams and skills matrices were developed to help with career and cover planning in terms of deployment and training of skills. There has been an effort to provide people in some of the lower graded roles with the potential to step into other roles in the Council through a career graded structure, although this is not necessarily perceived as a significant development potential particularly by some of the people who have joined at the beginning of their careers and do not necessarily see NNDC as offering strong career potential. There are good examples where individuals have progressed and where roles have developed with considerable structure to ensure the steps taken in re-grading roles follow established procedure and are fair. There is a strong formal connection between HR and Unions in managing this process. 17 roles have changed in grade due to the evolving nature of the role, although this is a very positive point, this may be one of the reasons why people currently question the pay structure (although no one specifically said this).

The overall opinion from interviews was that there is an interest in ensuring all roles are updated accordingly to ensure they are relevant for the work of the Council. There are robust processes for managing this process and they are taken seriously and effectively undertaken. *This does not always mean people are happy with the outcome. Some do feel there are specific cases where a particular role (and pay level) in one team or Service, will not necessarily match the same perceived level in another.*

There was a sense of despondency, as people do not easily see scope for opportunity to progress through the hierarchy in the future due to the level of long service and limited movement of people in higher paid roles.

There has been success in filling some key vacancies, which are typically hard to fill. NNDC is the quickest authority in Norfolk to recruit to vacant posts.

Creating autonomy in roles – Established

There were 65.8% very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) in the OLA about having the right level of responsibility to do their job effectively.

Decision-making is clearly set out in people's job roles and there is also flexibility as people grow in their role to gain experience of wider decision making with the manager's support. This is a very positive aspect, although there were a few examples where people questioned why they had not moved upwards in terms of the pay scale.

The Person Specifications outline the skills, abilities and attributes needed to be successful in the role. This is used as a tool for recruitment and managing performance and to evaluate roles comparative to one another, the intention is that there is a regular dialogue about this and it should form part of the appraisal.

There are set processes and procedures for particular roles and responsibilities and people are encouraged and empowered to update these. Tried and tested methods within the different parts of the council are well established and people have access to procedures and support from colleagues or via guidance policy. Equally people are encouraged to challenge the status quo and give reasoning for improvements, which are discussed and taken on board where possible.

There is feedback that links with previous points in that where people are encouraged to take part in Business Reviews, it is really important that they feel they are listened to. There were cases where people felt this had not been the case and this meant that the processes they were expected to work with were not the right ones and created problems in delivery.

Graduates and Apprentices are well supported and there is an open dialogue, which supports their learning needs demonstrating a commitment toward this as a priority.

Enabling collaborative working – Established

From the OLA 74.9% were very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) about their role enabling them to work well with others.

People were clear on their links to other teams and departments. There were also very good examples of improvements through the range of collaborative groups some of which are ongoing and some are initiated to take forward a particular short-term idea. Examples of projects include Garden Bins, Leisure Project, Waste Partnership, Woodland Management

Other collaboration opportunities are regularly mentioned via the intranet and encourage involvement even this is a case of sharing opinions, responding to surveys or taking part in an event. There are many opportunities for collaboration within the community, for charity activities and through sports and social events.

The Council regularly collaborates with partners and agencies to take forward a mutual priority. The Multi Agency Support to North Norfolk Community is an example, where the group comes together to support the community with shared priorities such as homelessness.

Indicator 7: Building capability

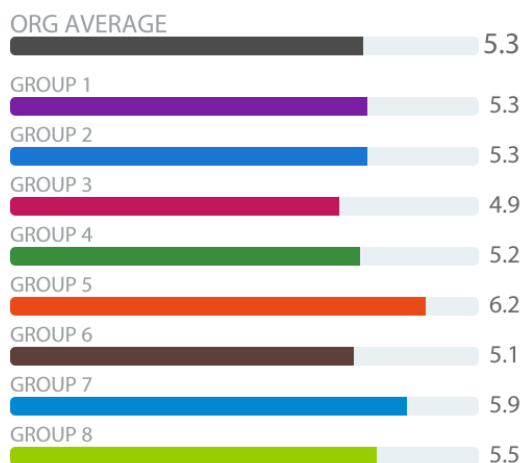
Indicator 7: Building capability

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Base Questions							
I make use of my organisation's learning and development opportunities	11.5%	40.3%	22.2%	14.8%	7.0%	2.9%	1.2%
I have opportunities to learn at work	20.2%	47.3%	14.8%	7.0%	6.2%	2.1%	2.5%
My manager thinks it is important that I develop my skills	19.8%	45.3%	16.0%	9.9%	3.3%	3.7%	2.1%
I know how my organisation invests in learning and development	16.9%	39.1%	21.4%	14.4%	4.5%	0.8%	2.9%
People are selected for roles based on their skills and abilities	13.6%	30.0%	20.2%	14.4%	9.5%	7.0%	5.3%

This indicator has a score of 5.3. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration and Defence sector, NNDC was **-0.2** and **0.2** points different respectively.

Team comparisons are below with Group 5 showing the highest results and Group 3 the lowest.

Indicator 7: Building capability



Understanding people's potential – Established

There are 2 statements in the OLA that link to this theme with an interesting difference in the results. For people having opportunities to learn at work there are 67.5% very positive results (strongly agrees and agrees) and for people making use of the organisation's learning and development opportunities the results are lower with 51.5% very positive.

From interview this was felt to link to the fact that everyone feels they cannot not learn at work due to the extent of change and ongoing work based development. However, as has already been covered, the extent that people discuss their own progression via processes such as the 121 and appraisal can be quite limited. So people learn but they do not always talk about it. Whilst the conversations do happen in one way or another, as this report has already suggested, the extent of value in this could be enhanced. Whilst it is already highly effective for some, this ideally will become the norm in all manager interactions.

There is a high level of resource for learning and development and the Council invests heavily in learning, there can be no doubt this is a priority which is very rarely questioned. There are a range of well-established delivery formats established and new opportunities considered with some having been identified over the last year.

Interviews confirmed that people feel they are supported in all they need for their learning and development and that they have the time and resource to learn effectively.

There were only two exceptions: The Customer Services team felt that sufficient time and training was not available when taking the step to answer queries for a wide range of highly technical areas.

Secondly, there is a current challenge for those undertaking professional training contracts due to the lack of opportunity for interaction and shadowing with team leaders. This is one of a number of current challenges for this team where communication and updating opportunities are very limited, creating a number of challenges for the team operationally.

Supporting learning and development – Established

There are 2 statements in the OLA for this theme, 56% of people were very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) about knowing how the organisation invests in learning and development and 65.1% about their manager thinking it is important that team members develop their skills.

The interviews revealed these are well communicated and people are aware of what is available for them and how they can access support. This includes a wide range of in-house, peer to peer training, external training courses such as ILM and Coaching Training, Professional qualification linked to the role and other people related development such as the Personal Profiles, Mental Health Awareness, Delivery of 360 appraisal etc.

There is a formal process for identifying learning and development needs and budgets are maintained throughout the year with reference to each team and service and their spend according to their requirements from significant changes, a need to train people who are new or keen to move into professional positions etc. For example, several people in the Planning team are undertaking training contracts with day release arrangements to support them through their formal qualification. Budgets have been set aside for mandatory training such as Equality and Diversity and GDPR and a range of training is undertaken via e-learning.

New starters have a well-structured induction with initial weeks covering key common themes to ensure an understanding of working for the Council. Whilst some said the focus on reading

material in the first day or so was not ideal, there is a very clear and well-established process, which is typically followed, according to feedback.

Apprentices have a very well structured programme with a range of training and plenty of team based input and opportunity to encourage and enable learning. The main challenge for apprentices is where they may go in terms of their longer term careers, whilst they said they really like working for the Council, some felt the Council may understandably be able to offer longer term opportunities to fulfil ambitions.

“I feel really lucky to have worked in an organisation like this, I have been able to develop my career and grow, I have had opportunities to learn from colleagues and go outside of the organisation and in the wider community”

“I feel I can suggest development that is most relevant to me, this may be attending a conference or visiting a local Council to gain insight of how they do things I am planning to change or update”

Democratic Services has delivered significant development to officers and members following a series of changes in portfolio holders. This has helped to define roles and responsibilities also protocols for officers and members. There is good evidence to show how officers working within the Democratic Services have been developed and empowered to take on more responsibility. This has helped manage the significant changes in portfolio holders.

It would be worth ensuring that managers are all discussing learning and development as a basis of all interactions. If team members attend training courses or any other development opportunity it is important that this is discussed with an opportunity to agree a plan to engender the development into the role and/or skills. The assessment revealed that this is not always viewed as being the case.

Deploying the right people at the right time – Established

The statement for this theme in the OLA gave the lowest results for this indicator with 43.6% very positive (strongly agrees and agrees) about people being selected for roles based on their skills and abilities. From interview the reasoning for this was thought to be due to a perception that some roles lend themselves more to opportunities for development because people are picked from the teams they work on, which are the teams that have a recruitment opportunity. The other factor mentioned was the point that there are teams such as benefits and revenues where technical skills are required and people can find themselves stuck and not able to move to other roles where they may be more able to progress.

What was clear from the assessment was that the processes and policies developed and overseen by the HR team do wholeheartedly operate on a basis of fairness, transparency and efficiency. What could be improved is the communication particularly when there are new roles or new opportunities for roles being re-evaluated.

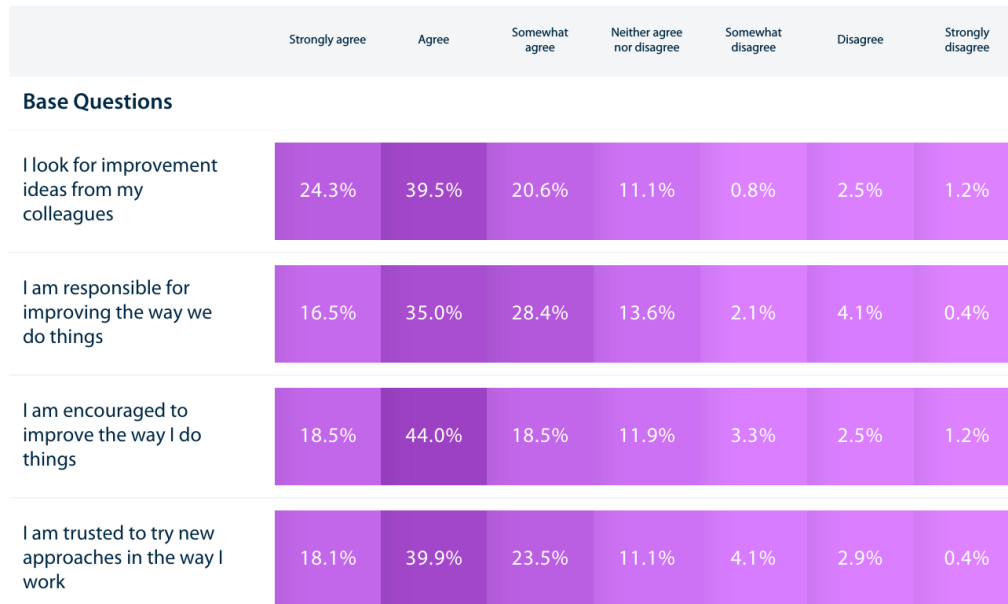
There have been some steps taken to try to resolve recruitment challenges for some roles/teams, such as professional planners. *Training contracts have been established, however, as has already been covered, there needs to be much improved appreciation of the on the job support that these posts require.* This works extremely well in some cases but not all. Perhaps clearer definition of what this entails in terms of line management would be a useful step?

There is an opportunity to improve the whole Council’s approach to succession planning; several cases were mentioned where greater discussion at an early stage would provide scope for greater communication, planning, preparation and training.

Succession Planning is not a particularly well-established activity and it would be worth considering how this could be developed and how this might help the organisation and individuals who demonstrate particular ambitions and skills.

Indicator 8: Delivering continuous improvement

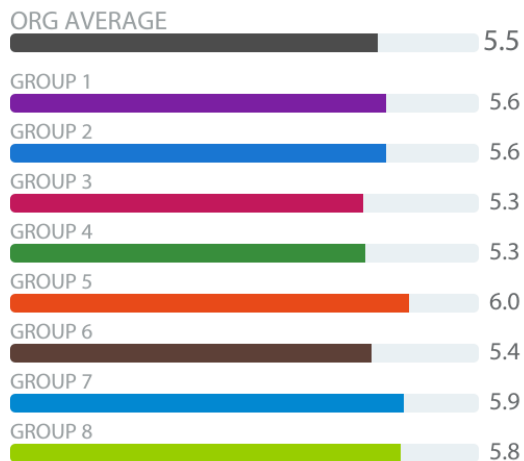
Indicator 8: Delivering continuous improvement



This indicator has a score of 5.5. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration and Defence sector, NNDC was **-0.1** and **0.2** points difference respectively.

Team comparisons are shown below with Group 5 showing the highest results and Groups 3 and 4 the lowest.

Indicator 8: Delivering continuous improvement



Continuous improvement through internal and external sources – Established

The statement in the OLA on looking for improvement ideas from colleagues gave a 63.8% very positive response (strongly agrees and agrees).

From a performance perspective there is close monitoring, reporting and responding to outcomes which people are aware of and involved. The feedback from the assessment was that the focus is wholeheartedly on statutory and publicly shared measures with an interest in ensuring these are all showing positive signs of delivery and performance. Input to this level of planning and monitoring involves a number of people and a high level of effort.

The five priorities within the Corporate Plan are cascaded to a series of specifics, which are measured in tangible ways and used as the basis of reporting through a series of committees and structures. The statutory performance targets are well understood and well measured with strategies to ensure these are met and maintained. The Council also celebrates success in terms of benchmarking with other Councils in terms of these targets and regularly networks through meetings to pick up examples of good practice.

There are structured reviews across the Council to look at data and measures and what adjustments may be needed to improve. NNDC undertook the Investors in People Survey in 2016 and used this feedback to identify areas of development. This was the basis of the re-evaluation of the Staff Focus Group.

The last Investors in People report mentioned how people were not able to describe the core values and the organisation has improved this area by introducing mention of core values at various interactions such as recruitment, induction and appraisal (*this is still not the case all the time and some managers do not discuss the competency framework in ways that engage interest in the development or growing understanding of behavioural approaches*).

Feedback was that people do feel core values are generally demonstrated by colleague's behaviours and that this had improved. Whilst it may be the case that nothing has actually changed, it is still of value that people are recognising the values in practice.

People mentioned the Staff Focus Group saying they could see how results were taken forward. Whilst there were areas where they felt things could be more effectively communicate, they did appreciate there were some really good examples where genuine effort to listen and respond in terms of improvement, were evident.

Teams have worked together to share messages and help members of the community to use alternative tools for interacting with the Council; good examples were given by the Customer Services to demonstrate progress, which has been measured also to give examples of how people have been supported.

The HR team has introduced more self-service opportunity for tasks previously undertaken through paperwork exercises. Scanning has been introduced creating a significant saving on photocopying and paper-based systems. Many processes are now undertaken on line.

Creating a culture of continuous improvement – Established

There are 2 statements in the OLA for this theme with 62.5% very positive (strongly agrees and agrees) about being encouraged to improve the way they do things and 51.5% very positive about being responsible for improving things.

There are a number of ways this works well through the Council and examples where teams and individuals have been able to make changes and introduce improvements. The interviews confirmed a high level of interest in improvement and pro-activity from teams and individuals in taking part in discussions. An example came from the Customer Services team with a transformation in working structure to apply to new more sustainable ways of communicating with the community. People have worked together to engender change and this has included a great deal of sharing and building ideas, trial and error and taking this forward by responding to any learning from this experience. This also included considering and reflecting on how other Councils have taken this forward.

The two main organisational focuses for delivering continuous improvement have been the Business Process Review Process and the Digital Challenge. The Business Process Review has been undertaken for Environmental Health and Planning. There has also been activity for the Revenues and Benefits teams. *Feedback was extremely mixed and quite negative about the approaches taken and although the general vibe appears to be more positive there is still a high level of confusion and uncertainty about plans and outcomes.*

There were examples where people had been encouraged to take part in sharing ideas and suggestions through the planning stages but according to feedback this was quite limited and not always listened to. This had the impact of creating a distance in the initiatives and the teams along with a sense of frustration due to perceived delays in progress. The Environmental Health process took place first and although the process appears to be a little clearer for the Planning team, there are still areas of perceived challenge with no clear plan for resolution. One of the areas of confusion is the delivery time frame for systems required for the functions being changed.

Greater appreciation of the importance of the messages to people through the change process with clear milestones and engendering positive experiences in terms of taking part would have been worthwhile. Feedback was that this had been approached as a task rather than a major change impacting on the whole organisation and requiring a change in thinking and culture. People said this did not encourage people to embrace change and although there has been a lot achieved, it could have been undertaken in ways that encouraged engagement and whilst this may have taken longer, would have been better in the long run.

There were examples of ideas being taken up very quickly *but also ones that although many said had been mentioned many times, were ignored – those mentioned as being regularly ignored related to the two most significant focuses for change, Business Process Review and Digital Challenge. The cultural aspect of continuous improvement would be worth considering further in terms of how leadership can encourage engagement, develop resilience and engender greater opportunity to learn from mistakes and successes.*

Encouraging innovation – Established

There were 58% of people very positive (strongly agrees and agrees) about being trusted to try new approaches.

The assessment supported the principle that people are encouraged to come up with ideas, particularly through some of the established forums such as the Staff Focus Group. There has been an emphasis on the way these changes include input and ideas and leaders have clearly established an agenda that invites ideas. Changes to the Staff Awards and other people related strategies and policies have been introduced based around input of ideas and suggestions, led by staff.

There are examples within Service areas where some teams are empowered to identify ideas, which may be adopted. Many people who work for NNDC network with colleagues from other Councils through the County and region and there are other sources such as lectures, conferences, changes within disciplines and ideas from professional guidance.

From interview the more negative responses were felt to link to the difficulty in making changes in some areas because of limitations connected to the two change programmes already mentioned. People particularly felt that the collaborative groups had a clear objective of identifying ideas for implementation, improvement or consideration. For example, the Coaching Project Group had developed a number of features to support the development of coaching within the Council, including establishing a Coaching Pool and an intranet facility to offer internal coaching sessions with colleagues.

People had identified and implemented many things that supported or improved services, for example the introduction of a development log for revenues and benefits, changes made to planning processes following ombudsman feedback, introduction of the garden bin project with suggestions following research with other Councils.

The Green Build events were introduced and continue to evolve through lots of input of ideas from people who work for the Council. The Wellbeing Days were an idea from the Wellbeing Group and the group have been able to take forward a number of ideas and provide a point of reference for others wishing to suggest ideas.

Indicator 9: Creating sustainable success

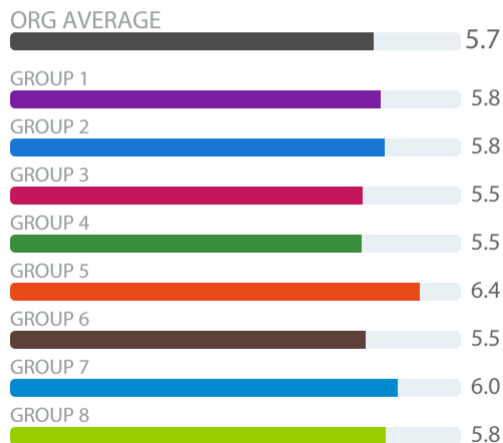
Indicator 9: Creating sustainable success

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Base Questions							
My organisation is a great place to work	25.1%	42.8%	18.1%	10.3%	2.5%	0.8%	0.4%
My organisation has a plan for the future	20.6%	50.6%	17.3%	8.6%	1.2%	1.2%	0.4%
My organisation embraces change	16.9%	39.9%	23.9%	8.2%	5.8%	2.5%	2.9%
My organisation has a positive impact on society	24.3%	46.1%	16.5%	9.9%	1.2%	2.1%	0.0%
Optional Questions							
I'm not afraid of making mistakes	12.3%	33.7%	28.4%	12.3%	7.8%	4.1%	1.2%

This indicator has a score of 5.7. When compared with the IIP average and the Public Administration and Defence sector, NNDC was **-0.1** and **0.2** points difference respectively.

Team comparisons are shown below with Group 5 showing the highest results and Groups 3 and 4 the lowest.

Indicator 9: Creating sustainable success



Focusing on the future – Advanced

There are 2 statements in the OLA for this theme with 71.2% of people very positive that the organisation has a plan for the future and 67.9% very positive that the organisation is a great place to work.

There was a recognition that communications from senior managers have improved with more information on Council projects, priorities and outcomes – e.g. everyone was aware of the political changes and implications and clear about the commercially linked projects and linked focus on reducing costs and establishing alternative ways of working with and enabling the community. The focus on supporting health within the community is something that people care deeply about and so there is a strong buy in from people who work for the Council. People mentioned the style of communication particularly from the Corporate Directors, saying they had encouraged great pride in the achievements and interest in the priorities. This was demonstrated by the high level of volunteering for various events such as the Antiques Roadshow, Blue Flag Awards, Business Awards and Greenbuild Event.

There are clear plans and involvement from teams with high levels of participation from individuals directly involved also from a wider scoping where relevant. For example, sometimes individuals are asked to take part in discussions and planning forums based on their specific skills or their demographic, national, local or technical expertise. This is an exceptional strength in terms of the culture of NNDC. Whilst it is of course part of the role of the Council to drive and take part in these events, the level of involvement and interest is far beyond what would be expected within the role. Many described this as one of the most positive aspects of working for the Council saying the shared sense of caring about North Norfolk brings people together and provides an opportunity for people to make a difference with a shared sense of purpose and pride.

“There is a feeling of belonging here that I haven’t experienced anywhere else”

“There are some amazing people who work here and they encourage others to get involved, this can be extremely rewarding and because we do a lot of community based volunteering we have developed an appreciation that we get a lot back from doing it”

There is a wide range of regular forums linked to disciplines and functions, which focus on specific common points of interest, change and tailoring around future strategies, tools and updates.

By far the majority of people interviewed (86%) believed that NNDC is a great place to work.

“I have never worked anywhere so friendly and so supportive”

“I don’t think I could find a better job, this is much better than any other organisation”

Embracing change – Advanced

From the OLA there were 56.8% of people very positive that the organisation embraces change (with 11.2% negative). Responses to the optional question relating to not being afraid of making mistakes gave a very positive response of 46%.

Feedback from interview that is included under Indicator 8 also applies here – about the focus on change and management of change and in particular culture and communication of change. This is where the development points are covered. These are points are not repeated here but are relevant. As they have been picked up at Indicator 8, this focuses and the positive elements of embracing change.

The Staff Focus Group has approached their remit very effectively and there has been a wholeheartedly genuine interest in seeking feedback and responding to this with encouragement for forum members to take part in their role for sharing messages and bringing perceived challenges to the group for consideration. Efforts to engender the values further also encourage greater effective use of the competency framework and other people related skills and tools such as coaching and 360 feedback. Whilst there is room for a deeper engagement in the potential impact for such groups, the processes followed should form a blueprint for similar forums.

Changes are communicated through Staff Briefings, Weekly News, e-mail, intranet updates and dissemination via management. Changes in Digital Transformation and Business Performance Reviews are measured in terms of previously established outcomes.

There is good communication about learning in areas deemed relevant to people. People confirmed a belief that the company really does try to give people what they need and listens to views with the hope of responding and updating effectively to give people tools to fulfil roles. Some of the people interviewed mentioned projects such as the Sandscaping Project and the Early Help hub saying that communication of progress and outcomes is regularly shared and individuals within the Council are encouraged and supported to take such projects forward, in many cases with input from others. During the interviews people talked about cross Council initiatives and progress with clarity expressing enthusiasm and interest in these along with a confidence in the individuals taking them forward.

Understanding the external context – Advanced

There were 70.4% of people very positive (adding strongly agrees and agrees) about the organisation having a positive impact on society (but only 3.3% negative).

There are strong links with stakeholders and communities, which would be expected for any Council but as already, covered, is taken further due to the high level of engagement and interest in making a difference. There are strong links with local authorities although to some extent this was challenged due to the way previous colleagues left the organisation and joined Great Yarmouth at a time when efforts had been taken to build relationships as a basis for shared working opportunities. There are various established benchmarking activities, which help NNDC to determine its success and achievements against other authorities. These include diversity reporting and many other people related outcomes.

There are many links made with local businesses, schools, community facilities and partners, local charities are also supported through events such as dress down Friday. There is a Wellbeing Group who run a range of activities and events such as yoga classes; there are also a number of sporting events and regular activities where people are encouraged to take part. People undertaking various roles and disciplines network nationally and within Norfolk to keep up with relevant topics and maintain knowledge. The Legal Team seeks relevant networking opportunities with various members of the team taking part. Each member of staff is given 2 days allowance to undertake volunteering activities.

In terms of diversity, we must appreciate this is North Norfolk and many of the people who work for the Council have done so for many years and live in the local community. This brings some challenges in terms of diversity but the current staffing does reflect the local community and this is a source for ongoing measurement and discussion. For example, when the CEO, head of Finance and Head of HR left to join Great Yarmouth Council, this impacted on the overall shape of the senior management gender balance. Following the retirement of the Head of Planning, earlier this year efforts were taken to recruit a replacement and this was of course an open process. There have been a number of promotions into managerial roles and into

roles with the potential for further progression; activity demonstrates an interest in balancing gender in the long run.

Online assessment demographic comparisons

Results from the demographic comparisons are given in an annex to this report. They do not reveal any major points other than gender where 32 respondents preferred not to state their gender and in each question scored lower than male and female respondents. As can be seen, the results when male and female responses are compared are quite similar so this does not suggest any concerns. This may be something NNDC may wish to pursue further in terms of identifying any opportunities for improvement or further clarity of recruitment and promotion procedures.

Implications and Recommendations

The following recommendations for the leadership team are based on the professional judgement and assessment of NNDC undertaken by Clare Laidler. They have been linked to the principles of the IIP Framework to help you move forward with your continuous improvements.

1. Leading

- a. **Leadership and transparency of priorities and objectives** – develop the planning to involve Services more in the process and engender a clearer definition of organisational priorities (not political) that relate to areas that the organisation can improve - ideally establish a clear ambition for this with specific priorities and measures
- b. **Consider leadership for the future** – define the role of leadership in taking the above organisational strategy forward. This will be instrumental to the future culture of NNDC. Currently the approach focuses on management not leadership – the relationship, role and responsibility between politics and organisational development requires clearer definition and separation
- b. **Scope for discussing values** – Ensure the everyday culture ensures the opportunity to discuss values and behaviours where there are differences and difficulties. This needs to be spearheaded and role modelled by leaders and to engender this it will be important to discuss what this means in practice and how NNDC intends to make this subtle but key change.
- c. **Empowering people** – Consider how meeting structures such as the Extended Management Team may be updated to ensure that this follows the principle that their involvement in this meeting embraces a clear demonstration of participation with outcomes that show their contribution makes a difference and is taken forward.
- d. **Seeking input** – Ensure where this is done, there is clear transparency in any follow up to show that people's ideas have been heard.

2. Supporting

- a. **Line manager effectiveness in managing performance** – Consider reflecting on the points about the line manager role and capability in encouraging high performance and the perceptions about the processes used. Continue to reinforce the importance of the ongoing discussion of performance

and ensure all line managers understand and are able to use the processes to do this well. Where necessary make changes – it is imperative that the issue regarding perceptions about appraisals is fully discussed with a clear plan forward.

- b. **Reward and recognition** – Consider how leaders can manage the change regarding pay structures to enable people to understand that changes do not question people’s worth but there is a need to make these changes as a point of sustainability. The more leaders and managers consider the relevance of the conversations about performance, the less people will feel threatened through exercises such as job evaluation.
- c. With development already covered in terms of managers and their focus on regular discussions to encourage high performance and positively manage areas of poor performance, this will raise the potential of this indicator.
- d. **Structure** – Ensure that people are involved in changes within their teams or role so that they can understand reasons behind these and feel empowered not disempowered through this exercise.
- e. **Building capability** – Improve the way line managers support an agenda of learning in their interactions with people, particularly through the Appraisal and 121 process, picking up on ambitions and potential, supporting individual growth and development for opportunities within the Council and beyond.

3. Improving

- a. **Building Capability** – Ensure that learning and development courses are supported by effective evaluation including ensuring people are able to put skills learnt into practice and receive ongoing support as required. Ensure this is part of the ongoing development conversation with line manager.
- b. Where leadership and management training is undertaken it is essential that further steps are taken to ensure the investment has been worthwhile – attending a course will not necessarily change a habit. Ensure that all investments in learning are effectively evaluated Rather than immediate evaluation replace this with more meaningful evaluation undertaken by the line manager not only immediately following training but further on by revisiting what has changed.
- c. **Further adoption of learning culture** – Identify ways to engender a culture where there is greater opportunity to discuss mistakes, weaknesses and challenges in order to identify opportunity for improvement. When introducing change ensure there is clarity of terms of measurement of impact and be willing to alter specific elements if outcomes do not fulfil expectations or if other weaknesses arise. Build this aspect in to the change principle. It is the learning that comes from this practice that becomes the most valuable aspect of change.
- d. **Continuous improvement and sustainability** – Continue to develop better communications through interesting and relevant briefings. Include ongoing focus on commitment to delivery plans to ensure that everyone is clear on the new expectations. Provide clear updates on the status of people’s ideas with likely timescales for the different stages where possible. Find ways to take more sensitive ideas for improvement on board. Report on people related aspects such as diversity, career opportunity, local and organisational challenges and what in the long run NNDC aims for or plans to do.

Next Steps and Key Dates

North Norfolk District Council Accreditation date	North Norfolk District Council 12-Month Review	North Norfolk District Council 24-Month Review	North Norfolk District Council Accreditation Expiry
30/11/2018	30/11/2019	30/11/2020	30/11/2021

The feedback meeting goes through the recommendations within this report so that we can discuss the types of activities that would support improvement. The agreed actions from this meeting would be used at the annual reviews to look at progress and next steps for the following year. There is also the option to include an update of the online assessment at each annual review if required for comparison.

Annex 1: Assessment outcome table

		Not met	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
Leading and inspiring people	Creating transparency and trust					
	Motivating people to deliver the organisations objectives					
	Developing leadership capability					
	Leading and Inspiring People					
Living the organisation's values and behaviours						
	Operating in line with the values					
	Adopting the values					
	Living the values					
Empowering and involving people						
	Empowering people					
	Participating and collaborating					
	Making decisions					
Managing performance						
	Empowering and Involving People					
	Setting objectives					
	Encouraging High Performance					
Recognising and rewarding high performance						
	Measuring and assessing performance					
	Managing Performance					
	Designing an approach to recognition and reward					
Structuring work						
	Adopting a culture of recognition					
	Recognising and rewarding people					
	Recognising and Rewarding High Performance					
Building capacity						
	Designing roles					
	Creating autonomy in roles					
	Enabling collaborative working					
Delivering continuous improvement						
	Structuring Work					
	Understanding people's potential					
	Supporting learning and development					
Creating sustainable success						
	Deploying the right people at the right time					
	Building Capability					
	Improving through internal and external sources					
Creating sustainable success						
	Creating a culture of continuous improvements					
	Encouraging innovation					
	Delivering Continuous Improvement					
Creating sustainable success						
	Focusing on the future					
	Embracing change					
	Understanding the external context					
Creating sustainable success						
	Creating Sustainable Success					

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