

Agenda item 5

For update & decision – staff wellbeing project

Author: Laura Flaherty, HR Lead and Executive Assistant to the Town Clerk

Summary incl. recommendations

This is a very brief report to update Cllrs on the progress of one action from the Improvement Action Plan as agreed at Council in February 2026. Action number 9 was:

‘To engage with staff regarding TOIL, flexible working arrangements and staff welfare support and report back with recommendations to the Operations & Assets Committee’

Recommendations:

1. Bring the findings of the staff wellbeing survey and a progress report on the use of HR Planner as a means of recording and claiming TOIL to the Improvement Advisory Group on a date to be confirmed with any recommendations being submitted to the Operations & Assets Committee in November 2026
2. Develop a Staff Wellbeing Policy to be brought to a future meeting of the Committee

Background

FTC is committed to engaging with staff regarding the management of Time Off In Lieu (TOIL), flexible working arrangements and wider staff welfare support, with recommendations to be brought back to the Operations & Assets Committee.

Work has been undertaken during this period to review existing arrangements, improve communication with staff and identify opportunities to better understand employee wellbeing needs.

TOIL and HR Planner

Work is ongoing to further embed the use of HR Planner across the organisation. As part of this process, we have been encouraging wider and more consistent use of the system by all staff.

Updated internal training is being planned to ensure staff are confident in using HR Planner and understand its functionality. This training will include a refresher on the Council's processes for recording and claiming TOIL to ensure that arrangements are applied consistently and transparently across teams.

The intention is that improved use of HR Planner will support both employees and managers in monitoring leave, TOIL balances and working patterns more effectively.

A report on progress will be brought to the Improvement Advisory Group on a date to be confirmed with any recommendations to be presented to the Operations & Assets Committee in November 2026.

Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible working arrangements continue to be available to all employees from the first day of employment.

Requests are considered on an individual basis and assessed against operational requirements. FTC remains committed to supporting flexible working wherever possible and requests would only be declined where there is a clear and justifiable business reason for doing so.

Current arrangements are considered to be working effectively and continue to provide staff with opportunities to balance work and personal commitments.

Staff Welfare Support Review

A significant part of this work has focused on determining what FTC wishes to achieve through a review of staff welfare support.

An initial assessment has been undertaken of the support currently available to staff, alongside consideration of additional initiatives that may be beneficial in the future. Before any recommendations are developed, it was considered important to gain a clearer understanding of staff experiences, awareness of existing support and areas where improvements may be required.

To support this, a staff wellbeing survey has been developed.

Survey Development and Staff Engagement

A small staff focus group was established to review the survey prior to launch. The group was selected to provide a cross-section of employees, taking into account factors such as age and gender, to help ensure that questions were clear, inclusive and appropriately worded.

Of the six staff members invited to participate, feedback was received from two individuals. Their comments have been considered and incorporated where appropriate.

The survey is now ready to be formatted and published on 'My Frome' with the assistance of the Marketing and Communications Assistant, Miles Macey. This will be completed in the next couple of weeks. This will also be the first tester survey for using the My Frome platform internally. We will also gather feedback on staff experience of using the platform to help future learning.

The survey will be anonymous and is designed to encourage honest and open feedback from staff. In addition to the online survey, alternative methods for providing feedback will be available, including:

- Anonymous suggestion box submissions
- Direct email feedback
- In-person conversations

The survey is structured around a number of themes, including:

- General wellbeing
- Awareness of support currently available at Frome Town Council
- Accessibility and effectiveness of existing support
- Areas for improvement
- Potential future initiatives staff would value if resources were available
- Financial Implications

There is currently no budget attached to this project.

The purpose of the survey is to establish a baseline understanding of staff views and identify any areas requiring attention before considering whether further investment may be necessary.

Next Steps

The staff wellbeing survey is expected to remain open until mid-September 2026 to maximise participation and ensure staff have sufficient opportunity to contribute.

Survey responses will be analysed following closure and the findings will be presented to the Improvement Advisory Group on a date to be confirmed and then Operations & Assets Committee in November 2026. Should the results identify support initiatives that require additional funding and demonstrate a clear appetite from staff, a recommendation will be brought to the Committee at its meeting in November to inform budget setting and work programme development for 2027/28.

In addition, our intention is to develop a Staff Wellbeing Policy which is informed by the survey. This policy would be developed with the assistance of the focus group before again being consulted on with the wider staff team. The final version of the policy would be brought to a future Operations & Assets Committee meeting likely in 2027.

Other options considered	N/A
Key considerations for the Council	To be informed of progress on an action from the Improvement Plan
Consultation and feedback	A staff survey has opened until mid-September 2026. The feedback from the survey will inform our next steps.
Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan	This links to Aim 5 of the Council Plan

Financial and Risk Implications	Risk arises from not being up to date and compliant with employment law. These policies help to mitigate that.
Legal / HR Implications	No legal implications. The intention is that the HR implications will be positive. By offering a package of support to all staff that has been formed through staff engagement will be invaluable.
Equalities Implications	None specifically. Equalities implications will be considered in our approach to implementing wellbeing support and will be carefully thought through in the design of the policy.
Community Safety Implications	N/A
Climate Change and Sustainability Implications	N/A
Health and Safety Implications	• Health and Wellbeing implication • Provides a framework of support for staff and provides a safe working environment.
Constitutional Requirements	A Staff Wellbeing Policy will link to the Staff Handbook and will likely become a chapter of the constitution
Background Papers	Recommendation to approve the Improvement Plan - www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Agenda-item-7-For-decision-Draft-Improvement-Plan.pdf
Report Sign-Off	Peter Wheelhouse, Town Clerk, 18/08/26

Recommendations

1. Bring the findings of the staff wellbeing survey and a progress report on the use of HR Planner as a means of recording and claiming TOIL to the Improvement Advisory Group on a date to be confirmed with any recommendations being submitted to the Operations & Assets Committee in November 2026
2. Develop a Staff Wellbeing Policy to be brought to a future meeting of the Committee