

Report to Stronger Council Select Committee

Date of meeting: 24 January 2023

Portfolio: Internal Resources - Councillor Sam Kane

Subject: Launch of the new Employee Wellbeing Hub

Officer contact for further information: Joanne Budden (Service Manager – People, Culture, Wellbeing & Internal Communications)

Democratic Services Officer: A Hendry (01992 564243)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the refreshed Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Employee Wellbeing Hub.

Executive Summary

The report provides the Committee with an update on developments to our Wellbeing Hub and resources which will be showcased at the meeting.

Report:

Our Wellbeing Journey so far

1. EFDC takes great pride in its ability to provide excellent wellbeing resources and support for all employees and has been on an ever-improving journey since COVID hit in 2019. Communicating to ensure all employees understand there are resources, support, and information available has remained a constant priority.
2. In the last two years in addition to a fantastic Employee Assistance Programme (Perkbox) which offers counselling sessions and support for all employees and their close family members, EFDC have focussed on developing a solid network of individuals within the organisation to help support colleagues too.
3. EFDC have trained over 90 employees to become Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs), providing employees with an experienced first point of call for anyone with concerns about any aspect of their mental health or their loved ones.
4. Trained by the Mental Health Foundation, our MHFAs are not therapists or counsellors, but the role is to guide and signpost others to get appropriate support. In November this year this existing group of MHFAs undertook refresher training (this will continue in 2023) and we have been running a very successful mental health awareness course for managers on Litmos (EFDC's Learning Management Software) which ensures our managers are well equipped to help support our employees too.
5. In 2020 an intranet page was created which listed a host of wellbeing resources for employees including support for mental health, physical and financial wellbeing, and support for families – called the Wellbeing Hub.
6. In September 2020 we extended our wellbeing provision by introducing Perkbox Medical, giving employees access to GPs 24/7 online, via an app on your phone.
7. In November 2021 we announced the expansion of the Perkbox platform to include

wellness resources via the Perkbox Wellness Hub, a space dedicated to FREE content that covers all aspects of wellbeing including resources to help you get fit, overcome anxiety, sleep well and more.

8. Employee wellbeing over the years has become an important part of our workplace culture and awareness and understanding of its value has grown over the years – this is supported by our employee survey findings. ‘Wellbeing’ at EFDC has averaged an overall positive score of 71/100 over the last four employee surveys.
9. Our wellbeing offering has developed so much over the years, we have been able to offer more specific support in recent times. In October 2022 we launched a set of financial wellbeing resources and ran three successful and very well attended financial wellbeing Skill Pill sessions for employees. This was also recorded for employees who could not attend the live sessions.
10. In 2020 the People Team introduced winter wellbeing resources by way of an additional downloadable PDF document called ‘Tis the Season’, which covered all sorts of winter specific and general wellbeing support. The resources were recreated and in winter 2021 the team released a similar wellbeing pack, highlighting seasonal as well as year-round resources.
11. This year, when considering developing a new winter wellbeing pack for 2022, we decided to tackle the whole concept of how our employees access the information to ensure it was as accessible, digestible, and engaging as possible.

The Challenges

12. Whilst providing employees and communicating the resources on offer is and continues to be a priority, there is such a thing as overload and there is a balance to be struck between overloading our employees with information and making sure we are providing the right kind of support.
13. The way we communicate has a massive impact on employee wellbeing and the evolution of our wellbeing offering takes this into consideration. We looked at the challenges faced by our employees when accessing the information on the intranet from a user perspective:
 - Trying to find resources in different locations can add to frustration and stress
 - Providing a long list of resources may add to feelings of being overwhelmed
 - Providing a downloadable PDF for information means you cannot get to the information straight away; you need to download a document first
 - The information is static and not intuitive

From an administrator perspective, the existing way of doing things is:

- Labour intensive, especially when developing new seasonal wellbeing packs
- The PDF and intranet page provide no analytics aside from the number of times the document has been downloaded
- There is no way of understanding user behaviour
- No understanding of what content people want to access

The new and improved Wellbeing Hub

14. The launch could not come at a more crucial time for employees as the cold weather sets in, the cost-of-living crisis continues, and changes happen around the organisation.
15. The new platform provides a digital, data-led, engaging alternative to the intranet page and PDF alternative. The improved hub combines both the original Wellbeing Hub,

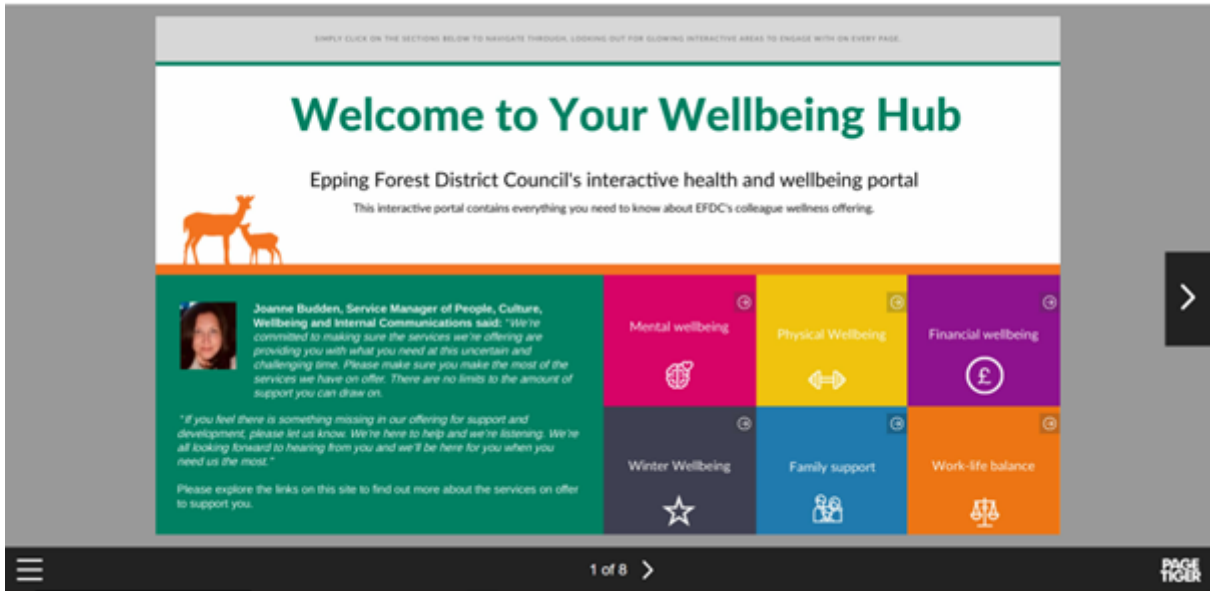
financial, and winter wellbeing document resources and is split into six sections for ease of use

- **Mental Wellbeing** - highlighting resources like the Employee Assistance Programme from Health Assured, our Mental Health First Aiders and more.
- **Physical Wellbeing** – highlighting resources like the Perkbox Wellness Hub, Cycle to work scheme, menopause resources and more.
- **Financial Wellbeing** – highlighting resources like the Financial Wellbeing Skill Pill Learning Pathway on Litmos, the Cost-of-Living Survival Kit from Money Saving Expert and more.
- **Winter Wellbeing** – highlighting resources like How to look after your mental health at Christmas, S.A.D – What it is and how to beat it and more.
- **Family Support** – highlighting resources for fathers, Relate’s resources for relationship problems and more.
- **Work Life Balance** – highlighting resources from podcasts, videos, and articles about managing stress, understanding work-life balance and more.

16. Using software called Page Tiger, we can create a seamless experience for employees. All they need do to access the resources is click on the Wellbeing Hub link on the intranet and the document appears like a digital magazine.
17. The new format allows us to change the content and adapt to the needs of our employees without needing to develop lengthy additional seasonal wellbeing documents.
18. The platform also provides us with anonymised analytics, providing us with not only how many times the document has been accessed, but how many times a particular page or link has been clicked on, giving a date and time. This will allow our administrators to make data-led decisions and ensure the content we provide employees continues to be relevant. In return employees will receive an intuitive, engaging experience which supports their overall wellbeing.
19. The hub launched on 21 December 2022, and we are actively encouraging employees to feedback to help us develop our hub and wellbeing offering.

Hub demo and screenshots

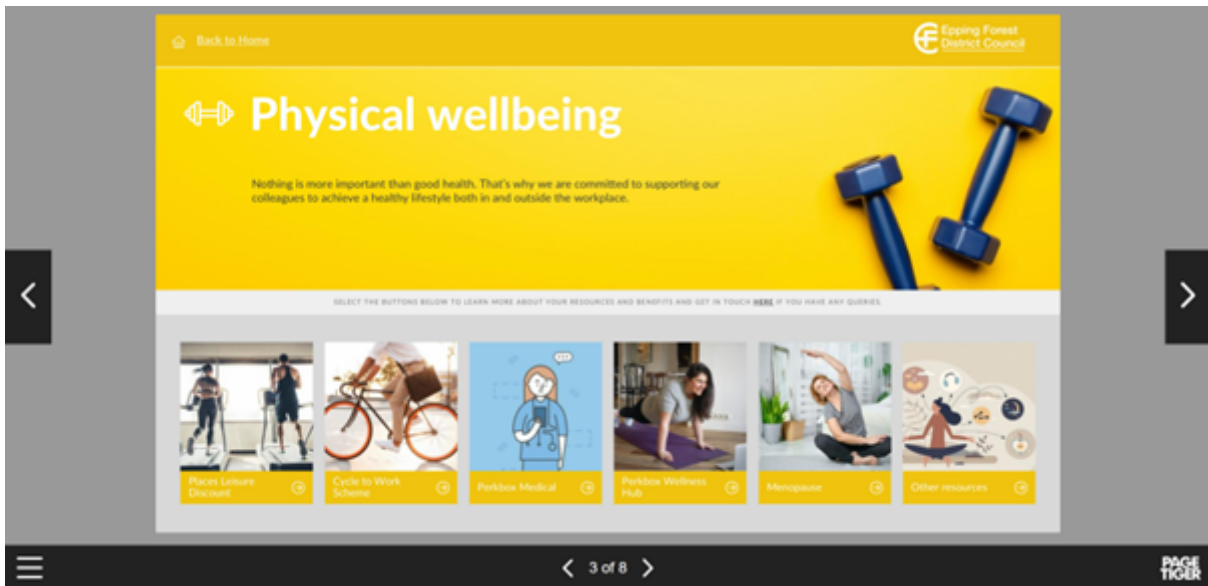
20. Visit <https://youtu.be/BahnskzrA0c> to watch a pre-recorded Hub Demo, please find screenshots of each page below.



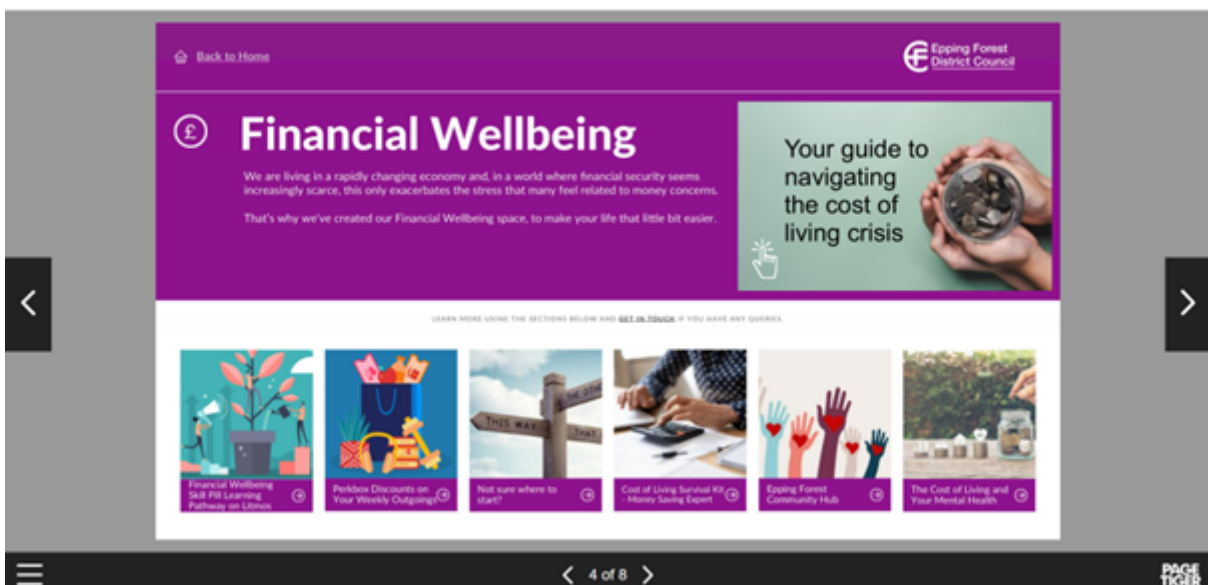
Page 1. Wellbeing Hub Homepage



Page 2. Mental Wellbeing



Page 3. Physical Wellbeing



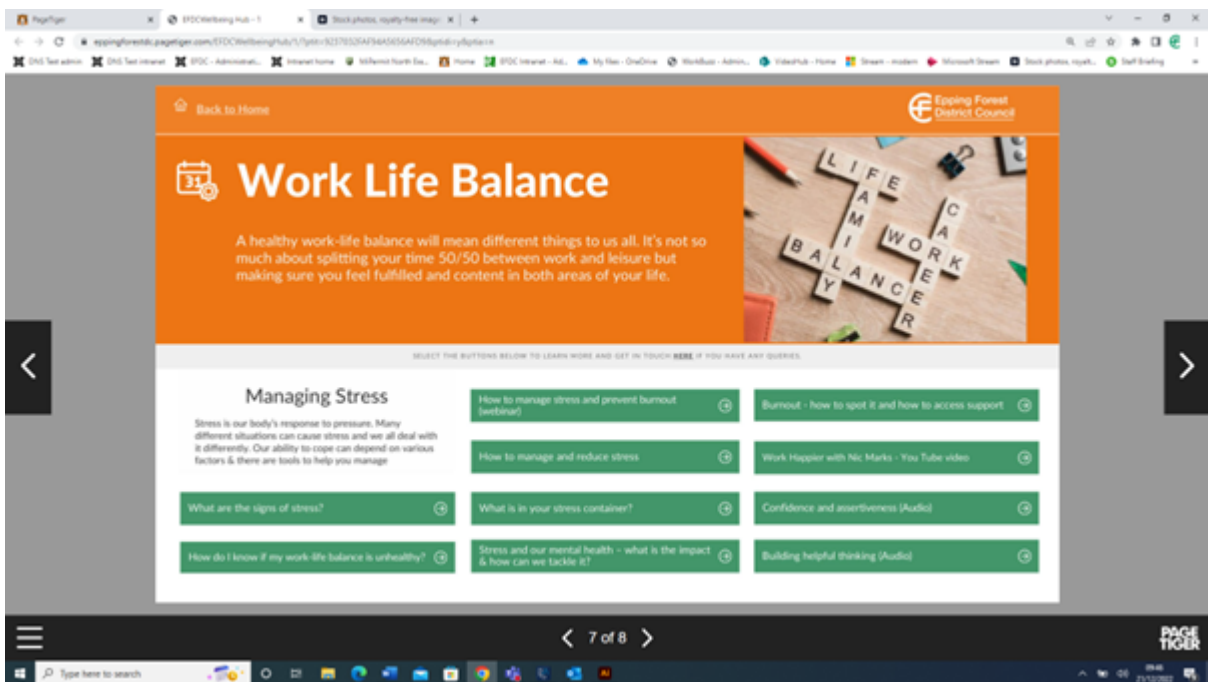
Page 4. Financial Wellbeing



Page 5. Winter Wellbeing



Page 6. Family Support



Page 7. Work-Life balance

Reason for decision: to note the refreshed Epping Forest District Council Employee Wellbeing Hub. The Hub will be showcased at the meeting.

Options considered and rejected: N/A

Consultation undertaken: Consultation with employees as noted within the report.

Resource implications: No increase in budget is required.

Legal and Governance Implications: N/A

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: N/A

Background Papers: N/A

Impact Assessments: N/A

Risk Management: N/A

Equality: N/A