

To: Members of the Special Sub-Group

Councillors Clews, Chapman, Farrow, Jenns, Ririe and Watson

For the information of the other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Democratic Services on 01827 719237 or via email – democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

This document can be made available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

SPECIAL SUB-GROUP

12 DECEMBER 2023

The Special Sub-Group will meet on Tuesday, 12 December 2023 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire.

The Meeting can also be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel at: [NorthWarks - YouTube](#)

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure**
- 2 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council Business.**
- 3 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

4 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to put questions to elected Members. Questions should be submitted by 9.30am two working days prior to the meeting. A period of five minutes will be allowed for each question to be answered.

Members of the public wishing to address the Board must register their intention to do so by 9:30am two working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

If you wish to put a question to the meeting, please register by email to democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk or telephone 01827 719221/719226/719237.

Once registered to speak, the person asking the question has the option to either:

- (a) attend the meeting in person at the Council Chamber.
- (b) attend remotely via Teams; or
- (c) request that the Chair reads out their written question.

The Council Chamber has level access via a lift to assist those with limited mobility who attend in person however, it may be more convenient to attend remotely.

If attending remotely an invitation will be sent to join the Teams video conferencing for this meeting. Those registered to speak should dial the telephone number and ID number (provided on their invitation) when joining the meeting to ask their question. However, whilst waiting they will be able to hear what is being said at the meeting. They will also be able to view the meeting using the YouTube link provided (if so, they made need to mute the sound on YouTube when they speak on the phone to prevent feedback).

5 **Update Report on Human Resources Issues** – Report of the Interim Corporate Director - Resources

Summary

This report summarises work done by the Human Resources team in 2023/24. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2023 to September 2023 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

The Contact Officer for this report is Kerry Drakeley (719300).

6 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To consider, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, whether it is in the public interest that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

7 **Staffing Matter** – Report of the Director of Housing.

The Contact Officer for this report is Angela Coates (719369).

8 **Staffing Matter** – Report of the Chief Executive.

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438)

9 **Staffing Matter** – Report of the Chief Executive.

The Contact Officers for this report are Clive Tobin (719251) and Martyn Harris (719222)

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 5

Special Sub-Group

12 December 2023

**Report of the
Interim Corporate Director - Resources**

**Update Report on Human
Resources Issues**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises work done by the Human Resources team in 2023/24. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2023 to September 2023 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

<p>Recommendation to the Board</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This report provides an update on Human Resources issues and the position on sickness for 2023/24.

3.1 Summary of Sickness Absence 2023/24 (April 2023 – September 2023)

- 3.1.1 Absence Management is recorded for all employees and is then analysed into short and long-term absence. Comparing the same time period in 2022/23 to 2023/24 there is a decrease, 0.43 days in short term sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE), and an increase, 0.26 days in long term sickness. The position is summarised in the table below, with additional detail given at Appendix A.

...

Type	2022/23	2023/24
Short Term	2.65 days per FTE	2.22 days per FTE
Long Term	4.06 days per FTE	4.32 days per FTE
Total	6.71 days per FTE	6.53 days per FTE

- 3.1.2 The long-term sickness absence is being managed either by getting staff back to work or them exiting the organisation either on ill-health retirement, dismissal or by resignation. Those with significant long-term absence equates to 8 employees having lost a total of 556.51 days. 6 of these employees have successfully returned to work, 1 is still absent and 1 has left the Council.

... 3.1.3 Appendix B shows the reasons for the number of days lost per FTE. The main reasons for absence relate to Mental Ill Health, Muscular-Skeletal and Back/Neck.

3.1.4 There are a number of cases currently being dealt with under the Attendance Management Policy, and the current status of these cases are as follows:

- 17 employees are having management/formal reviews
- 19 employees are at Stage 1
- 10 employees are at Stage 2

3.1.5 During 2023/24, the HR team will undertake briefing sessions and formal training with managers, in order to equip them with the skills required to undertake effective handling of attendance management issues. In addition, the Council intends to review its Occupational Health Provider. Whilst the Council has been content with the services of the current provider for several years, it would be beneficial to review the available providers in the market to ensure that a cost effective, efficient service is delivered.

4 Recruitment, Retention and Selection

4.1 There were a number of starters and leavers between April 2023 to September 2023. There were 24 new starters. There were 23 leavers, including 1 dismissal due to ill health, 1 death in service, 3 retirements and 18 resignations. This equates to a labour turnover of 8.42% (7.69% voluntary leavers).

4.2 The Council has continued with the strategy of reviewing all posts that become vacant. Those posts that need to be filled are recruited to internally where possible. During the current year, 15 posts have been filled internally; this supports the Council's ability in succession planning.

4.3 The HR team's new HR Officer started with the Council on 2 May 2023 and has settled in well in the role.

5 Employee Relations

5.1 The HR team provides advice and support to managers on all HR issues. The HR Manager and the HR Officers provide support to managers and lead, where appropriate on investigations and disciplinary, grievance, and capability matters. There were 4 disciplinary investigations commenced/undertaken between April 2023 and September 2023.

5.2 The HR Manager and HR Officers also provide considerable support in the actions up to and including hearing and appeals (if required). Out of the 4 investigations, one investigation did not proceed to hearing, and three resulted in final written warnings issued at the hearing.

5.3 Service restructures require staff consultations which the HR Manager and the HR Officers do with the line managers. These require HR to provide support to both managers and staff, with the queries and information they require during the process.

- 5.4 The HR team is co-ordinating the Staff Survey 2023, which was sent to all employees at the start of November 2023. The HR team will encourage responses to the survey to facilitate a high response rate, which in turn, ensures a more representative result base. It is planned that the results will be available by the end of December 2023/early January 2024.

6 Pay & Benefits

- 6.1 The pay award for 2023/24 was agreed on 1 November 2023. The Pay Policy statement was updated for 2023/24 and published on the Council's website.
- 6.2 Gender pay reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. The gender pay gap information for the current reporting year (which will use a snapshot date of 31 March 2023) is required to be submitted by 30 March 2024.

7 Learning, Training and Organisational Development

- 7.1 The HR team are arranging the training courses as agreed in the corporate training plan for 2023/24. During the 2023/24 training year, the Council is running in house courses including Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Training, Prevent Duty, Mental Health Awareness, and Health and Safety courses (e.g., First Aid, Fire Marshall, CDM Awareness, Manual Handling, IOSH Managing Safely and Personal Safety/Conflict Management).
- 7.2 Our E learning programme covers Health & Safety, Fraud Awareness, Fire Awareness, Equality & Diversity, Customer Service, Data Protection, GDPR & Cyber Awareness, Freedom of Information and Bribery Act 2010. The mandatory E learning modules should be refreshed every 3 years, and the HR Manager has worked with the Administrator of the E learning platform, Staffordshire County Council (SCC) to facilitate the refresher program, which was launched on 1 April 2023.
- 7.3 During the 2023/24 training year, managers at section head level will receive a 360-degree appraisal with the HR section managing the process and producing the analysis in house. During December 2023, an external consultant will provide the feedback to the delegates and produce a report of the overall findings.
- 7.4 The apprenticeship levy came into effect from 6 April 2017. The HR team have assisted Divisions with the consideration of apprenticeships, where appropriate. During 2023/24, the Council has recruited an Apprentice Electrician and is currently looking to recruit an Apprentice Mechanic. The Council will be able to utilise the apprenticeship levy allowance to cover the training costs for these posts.
- 7.5 The Chief Executive continues to work with a group of managers/officers on Organisational Development issues to look at a number of ways to improve how the Council works. Areas include for example, Recruitment, Appraisals, Organisational Values and a Staff Forum.

7.6 The management of the organisation has undergone significant change in the first half of 2023, with two members of the Council's Management Team leaving. Both the Corporate Director Resources and Corporate Streetscape have been filled with well-regarded interim Directors. The Council has commissioned a review of its staffing structure from the Local Government Association and proposed changes will be considered by Members early in the New Year. A staff 'on boarding' and development programme has been developed with West Midlands Employers to integrate new members of staff into the organisation, particularly those in senior roles. This will be implemented once a new structure has been agreed.

8 **Safety Management**

8.1 On appointment, the Health and Safety Officer began work with Managers and Directors in all the service areas of the Council, to provide health and safety advice and support. Duties initially included a high-level audit of the Council's work generally and risk assessments in particular.

8.2 All accident/incident reports are reviewed by the Health and Safety Officer, who provides advice and support on recommendations for remedial action to control any hazard and the risks they pose. During April 2023 to September 2023, there were 17 reported employee accident/incidents, which are categorised as follows:

- 8 Road Traffic Accidents
- 5 Slips/Trips
- 2 Violence/Aggression
- 1 Animal
- 1 Manual Handling

In addition to the above there were 24 reported near misses.

8.3 Corporate health and safety groups such as the Health and Safety Working party, Strategic Health and Safety Group and Lone Worker Group play a vital role in ensuring a positive health and safety culture and that the Council has effective health and safety management systems.

8.4 There are several health and safety policies, that the Health and Safety Officer has reviewed/revised. In addition, the Health and Safety Officer has developed and delivered in house training/briefing sessions for managers and employees in areas such as COSHH Awareness, Asbestos Awareness and PDCA Health and Safety Management system.

8.5 The Health & Safety work plan for 2023/24 includes actions such as introduction of corporate auditing of departments, establishing a corporate H&S/risk assessment database and developing/revising management strategies for vibration, noise, dust, working at height etc.

9 Policies Procedures and Processes

9.1 The HR work plan for 2023/24 includes an updated timetable for policy review. Progress has been somewhat delayed due to other corporate work priorities required and capacity within the HR team.

10 Areas to be taken forward in 2023/24

10.1 The HR work plan for 2023/24 includes actions such as a review of the Council's Corporate Workforce Plan and Human Resources Strategy and benchmarking Chief Officer pay in line with the Council's Pay Policy statement.

11 Report Implications

11.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

11.1.1 There are costs associated with the use of additional staffing resources to cover periods of absence. Most short-term absence is absorbed within sections. However, if sickness is long term, and the service could potentially fail as a result of staff shortages, then there would be additional costs to maintain services, either through buying in extra resources or acting up arrangements.

11.1.2 The original budget set in February 2023 was based on a 4% pay award. The latest financial strategy included the settled flat pay award of £1,925 (pro rata for part time employees) for grades 2-14 and 3.88% for grades 15-17. The pay award agreed exceeds the original budget provision by around £373,000, so is a significant added pressure on the financial position of the Council.

11.2 Human Resources Implications

11.2.1 As detailed in the report.

11.3 Equality Implications

11.3.1 Under the Equality Act there are specific responsibilities specified under the public sector equality duty to ensure that local authorities meet the general equality duty. In terms of Human Resources there are specific codes of practice for employment and for equal pay.

11.4 Links to Council's Priorities

11.4.1 Effective recruitment and management of the workforce contributes to the Council's priority of making the best use of our resources.

The Contact Officer for this report is Kerry Drakeley (719300)

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

ALL SICKNESS

	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	29.77	28.79	137.22	88.18	4.61	3.06
Corporate Services	16.65	15.28	18.14	28.25	1.09	1.85
Streetscape	69.41	71.81	883.58	676.19	12.73	9.42
Leisure & Comm Dev	38.61	36.96	195.39	70.40	5.06	1.90
Community Services	31.34	32.21	154.91	172.87	4.94	5.37
Finance,HR & Audit	15.13	17.13	20.68	104.00	1.37	6.07
Housing	60.59	63.39	391.21	620.04	6.46	9.78
Chief Exec	6.90	5.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	1.40
Total	268.38	270.57	1,801.13	1,766.93	6.71	6.53

SHORT TERM SICKNESS

	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	29.77	28.79	52.25	37.17	1.76	1.29
Corporate Services	16.65	15.28	18.14	28.25	1.09	1.85
Streetscape	69.41	71.81	316.80	227.53	4.56	3.17
Leisure & Comm Dev	38.61	36.96	94.80	70.40	2.46	1.90
Community Services	31.34	32.21	53.41	84.04	1.70	2.61
Finance & HR	15.13	17.13	20.68	15.00	1.37	0.88
Housing	60.59	63.39	155.85	129.93	2.57	2.05
Chief Exec	6.90	5.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	1.40
Total	268.38	270.57	711.93	599.32	2.65	2.22

LONG TERM SICKNESS

	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	29.77	28.79	84.97	51.00	2.85	1.77
Corporate Services	16.65	15.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Streetscape	69.41	71.81	566.79	448.66	8.17	6.25
Leisure & Comm Dev	38.61	36.96	100.59	0.00	2.61	0.00
Community Services	31.34	32.21	101.50	88.82	3.24	2.76
Finance & HR	15.13	17.13	0.00	89.00	0.00	5.20
Housing	60.59	63.39	235.37	490.11	3.88	7.73
Chief Exec	6.90	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	268.38	270.57	1,089.22	1,167.59	4.06	4.32

Reasons for Sickness

APPENDIX B

	Accident at Work	Back/ Neck	Chest	Cold/ Flu/ Infections	ENT / Mouth	Endocrine	Geni-Urin	Heart	Mental Ill Health	Muscular/Skeletal	Neurological	Pregnancy	Skin Conditions	Stomach	Coronavirus	Total
NWBC	0.00	265.04	133.32	62.83	36.24	1.00	48.97	15.00	532.79	396.69	27.32	0.14	71.54	176.05	0.00	1,766.93

<u>Sickness Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
Accident at Work	Accident at Work (Accident Form must be completed)
Back / Neck	Back & Neck problems
Chest	Chest / Respiratory: to include Chest infections
Cold / Flu / infections	Cold / Flu symptoms / Infections (<u>not</u> chest)
ENT / Mouth	Ear / Eye / Nose / Mouth including dental and sinusitis
Endocrine	Thyroid / Diabetes and other Endocrine related conditions
Genito-Urinary	Genito-urinary: including menstrual conditions
Heart	Heart / Blood pressure & circulation
Mental Ill Health	Anxiety, Depression / Stress / Mental Fatigue
Muscular-Skeletal	Musculo-Skeletal Problems
Neurological	Neurological; including headaches and migraine
Pregnancy	Pregnancy related
Skin Conditions	Skin Related Conditions
Stomach	Stomach, Liver, Kidney & Digestion; to include gastro-enteritis

Agenda Item No 6

Special Sub-Group

12 December 2023

**Report of the
Chief Executive**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation to the Board

To consider, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, whether it is in the public interest that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

Agenda Item No 7

Staffing Matter – Report of the Director of Housing.

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Agenda Item No 8

Staffing Matter – Report of the Chief Executive.

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Agenda Item No 9

Staffing Matter – Report of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual.

In relation to the items listed above members should only exclude the public if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, giving their reasons as to why that is the case.

The Contact Officer for this report is Marina Wallace (719224).