

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 719226 or via email – democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

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

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SPECIAL SUB-GROUP

26 June 2023

The Special Sub-Group will meet on Monday, 26 June 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 Corporate Director - Resources**

Summary

This report summarises work done by the Human Resources (HR) team in 2022/23 and highlights work to be undertaken in 2023/24. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2022 to March 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 item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely

disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

7 Staffing Matter

The Contact Officer for this report is Rachael Dobson (719338).

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 5

Special Sub-Group

26 June 2023

**Report of the Corporate Director
(Resources)**

**Update Report on Human
Resources Issues**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises work done by the Human Resources (HR) team in 2022/23 and highlights work to be undertaken in 2023/24. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2022 to March 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 2022/23.

3.1 Summary of Sickness Absence 2022/23 (April 2022 – March 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 2021/22 to 2022/23 there is an increase, 0.58 days in short term sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE), and an increase, 1.02 days in long term sickness. The position is summarised in the table below, with additional detail given at Appendix A.

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Type	2021/22	2022/23
Short Term	5.09 days per FTE	5.67 days per FTE
Long Term	7.91 days per FTE	8.93 days per FTE
Total	13.00 days per FTE	14.60 days per FTE

It is important to note that the increase in the sickness absence rate for 2022/23 is not unexpected, given the Office for National Statistics report on sickness absence in the UK labour market 2022, states that the sickness absence rate “rose to 2.6% in 2022, an increase of 0.4 percentage points from 2021 and the highest it has been since 2004”.

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 18 employees having lost a total of 1,660.94 days. 13 of these employees have successfully returned to work, 1 is still absent and 4 left the Council (1 resignation, 2 dismissals and 1 ill-health retirement).

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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 Stomach.

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:

- 8 employees are having management/formal reviews
- 19 employees are at Stage 1
- 5 employees are at Stage 2

3.1.5 In order to address the increase in sickness absence, in 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 2022 to March 2023. There were 38 new starters. There were 37 leavers, including 3 retirements, 1 ill health retirement, 3 dismissal due to ill health, 1 dismissal, 28 resignations and 1 due to end of temporary contract. This equates to a labour turnover of 13.64% (11.43% 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, 38 posts have been filled internally; this supports the Council's ability in succession planning.

4.3 Several recruitment campaigns had been undertaken to fill a HR Officer vacancy within the team, which had been vacant since January 2022. A recruitment campaign in January 2023 was successful and the officer started with the Council in May 2023.

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 2 disciplinary investigations and one grievance case commenced/undertaken between April 2022 and March 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 2 investigations, one investigation resulted in a written warning and one investigation is ongoing.
- 5.3 Service restructures require staff consultations which the HR Manager and the HR Officer 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 co-ordinated the Staff Survey 2022, which was sent to all employees in November 2022. A total of 118 employees completed the survey, which is a response rate of 35%. There were 47 questions in total, in 7 different areas (e.g. Communication, Management, Staff Morale). In comparison to the Staff Survey in 2021 –
- 44 questions received best ever results or improved to some degree
 - 2 questions remained the same
 - 1 question received a worse result

Overall, the results were positive across all the sections.

6 Pay & Benefits

- 6.1 The pay award for 2022/23 was agreed in November 2022. The Pay Policy statement was updated for 2022/23 and published on the Council's website.
- 6.2 No pay award has yet been agreed for 1 April 2023 onwards. The National Employers have made a one year full and final pay offer of an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive and an increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer. The Unions are currently balloting their members and the outcome is expected to be announced early July 2023.
- 6.3 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 Council's report for the snapshot date as at 31 March 2022 is:
- The mean gender pay gap for the Council is 1%
 - The median gender pay gap for the Council is - 11%

A positive pay gap indicates men are paid more than females and a negative pay gap indicates that females are paid more. Other public sector employers average a pay gap of 6.8% and all industries is 13.9% (Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2022 provisional data). At 1%, the Council's mean gender pay gap is, therefore, significantly better than other organisations within the public sector and private sector.

7 Learning, Training and Development

- 7.1 During the 2022/23 training year, the Council ran in house courses including Investigation Skills, Mental Health First Aid / Awareness, and Health and Safety courses (e.g., Personal Safety/Conflict Management, First Aid, Fire Marshall and Water Hygiene and Legionella 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, Bribery Act 2010, Staff Reviews (Appraisals). 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.
- 7.3 During the 2022/23 training year, Extended Management Team and Team Leaders/Supervisors received a 360-degree appraisal with the HR team managing the process and producing the analysis in house. An external consultant provided the feedback to the delegates and produced 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 2022/23, the Council recruited an Apprentice Plumber, Electrician and two Accountants; and will be able to utilise the apprenticeship levy allowance to cover the training costs for these posts.
- 7.5 Following the publication in early 2022 of the Government's 'Living with Covid' document and the return to more conventional working arrangements, a series of training events were held in 2022 and early 2023 for managers and staff called 'Re-engage, Re-energise' to reflect on where the Council now was with regard to its priorities and service delivery, what elements of hybrid working should be retained and to impress upon staff that the temporary Covid period has now come to an end. Led by the Chief Executive and developed with West Midlands Employees, the sessions allowed staff to promote best practice across the organisation and to identify a number of 'even better if' issues to be improved.
- 7.6 The Chief Executive has also been working with a group of managers on Organisational Development issues, initiated by attendance at a Society for Local Authority Chief Executives development seminar and designed to look at a number of ways to improve how the organisation works, linked to a number of issues emerging from the 'Re-engage' sessions.
- 7.7 Finally, 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, one to retire and one to take up a position at the Multi Recycling Facility to which he was seconded on a part-time basis. The Corporate Director Resources has been recruited following a successful recruitment process and the Corporate Director Streetscape role filled by a well regarded interim Director. A formal 'on boarding' programme developed with West Midlands Employees for these important roles has been adopted to integrate the new

members of staff into the organisation and once completed, a wider consideration of management and staff development will be considered.

8 Safety Management

- 8.1 Managers undertake risk assessments, safe systems of work and safety audits in their work areas. The Health and Safety Officer worked with Managers and Directors in all the service areas of the Council, to provide health and safety advice and support. Duties have included a high-level audit of the Council's work generally and risk assessments in particular. In addition, there are several working practices and health and safety policies that the Health and Safety Officer has reviewed/revised.

9 Policies Procedures and Processes

- 9.1 The HR work plan for 2022/23 included a timetable for policy review, however, progress was delayed due to the staffing vacancy in the team.

10 Areas to be taken forward in 2023/24

- 10.1 The HR work plan for 2023/24 includes actions such as an updated timetable for Policy review, and a review of the Council's Corporate Workforce Plan and the Human Resources Strategy.

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 financial strategy included provision for a pay award of 2% for 2022/23. The pay award agreed exceeded the provision included by around £556,000, so was 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, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

ALL SICKNESS

	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	28.95	29.95	291.75	240.39	10.08	8.03
Corporate Services	19.76	16.75	79.71	52.54	4.03	3.14
Streetscape	71.37	70.93	1608.15	1673.64	22.53	23.60
Leisure & Comm Dev	44.32	38.51	868.11	420.01	19.59	10.91
Community Services	31.99	31.74	234.64	319.47	7.33	10.07
Finance,HR & Audit	15.33	15.33	123.38	59.12	8.05	3.86
Housing	69.58	62.09	524.90	1188.68	7.54	19.14
Chief Exec	6.80	5.90	15.40	6.00	2.26	1.02
Total	288.09	271.20	3,746.05	3,959.85	13.00	14.60

SHORT TERM SICKNESS

	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	28.95	29.95	75.54	94.28	2.61	3.15
Corporate Services	19.76	16.75	46.96	52.54	2.38	3.14
Streetscape	71.37	70.93	619.23	601.90	8.68	8.49
Leisure & Comm Dev	44.32	38.51	308.19	232.13	6.95	6.03
Community Services	31.99	31.74	87.44	145.13	2.73	4.57
Finance,HR & Audit	15.33	15.33	11.38	43.58	0.74	2.84
Housing	69.58	62.09	302.27	361.40	4.34	5.82
Chief Exec	6.80	5.90	15.40	6.00	2.26	1.02
Total	288.09	271.20	1,466.41	1,536.96	5.09	5.67

LONG TERM SICKNESS

	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2022/23
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	28.95	29.95	216.22	146.11	7.47	4.88
Corporate Services	19.76	16.75	32.75	0.00	1.66	0.00
Streetscape	71.37	70.93	988.92	1,071.74	13.86	15.11
Leisure & Comm Dev	44.32	38.51	559.92	187.88	12.63	4.88
Community Services	31.99	31.74	147.20	174.34	4.60	5.49
Finance,HR & Audit	15.33	15.33	112.00	15.54	7.31	1.01
Housing	69.58	62.09	222.63	827.28	3.20	13.32
Chief Exec	6.80	5.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	288.09	271.20	2,279.64	2,422.89	7.91	8.93

Reasons for Sickness

APPENDIX B

Division	Accident at Work	Back/ Neck	Chest	Cold/ Flu/ Infections	ENT / Mouth	Endocrine	Geni-Urin	Heart	Mental III Health	Muscular/Skeletal	Neurological	Pregnancy	Skin Conditions	Stomach	Coronavirus	Total
NWBC	0.00	285.48	116.47	265.11	137.20	14.88	35.62	236.54	1154.78	720.21	136.68	1.82	147.96	373.17	333.93	3,959.85

<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 III 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
Coronavirus	Coronavirus symptoms - confirmed via testing / following vaccination

Agenda Item No 6

Special Sub-Group

26 June 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 item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

Agenda Item No 7

Staffing Matter

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

In relation to the item 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 (719226)