

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 719221 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

10 DECEMBER 2024

The Special Sub-Group will meet on Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire.

The day after the meeting a recording will be available to 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.

5 **Update Report on Human Resources Issues** - Report of the Interim Corporate Director (Resources) Section 151 Officer

Summary

This report summarises work done by the Human Resources (HR) team in 2024/25. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2024 to September 2024 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 **Internal Audit Service** - Report of the Interim Corporate Director-Resources (Section 151 Officer)

The Contact Officer for this report is Alison Turner (719374).

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 5

Special Sub Group

10 December 2024

**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 (HR) team in 2024/25. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2024 to September 2024 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

Recommendation to the Board

That the report be noted.

2 Introduction

2.1 This report provides an update on Human Resources issues and the position on sickness for 2024/25.

3.1 Summary of Sickness Absence 2024/25 (April 2024 –September 2024)

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 2023/24 to 2024/25 there is a decrease in both short-term sickness of 0.15 days per FTE and long-term sickness of 1.16 days per FTE. The position is summarised in the table below, with additional detail given at Appendix A.

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Type	2023/24	2024/25
Short Term	2.22 days per FTE	2.07 days per FTE
Long Term	4.32 days per FTE	3.16 days per FTE
Total	6.53 days per FTE	5.25 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 5 employees having lost a total of 410.80 days. Of these employees, 3 have returned to work and 2 are still absent.

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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 Cold/Flu/Infections.

- 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
 - 21 employees are at Stage 1
 - 6 employees are at Stage 2
- 3.1.5 In February/March 2024, the HR team undertook briefing sessions with managers, to equip them with the knowledge required to undertake effective handling of attendance management issues and the deal with the issues proactively. The level of sickness absence reduced in 2023/24 and continues to reduce during 2024/25. 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 2024 to September 2024. There were 22 new starters. There were 25 leavers, including 7 retirements, 17 resignations and 1 dismissal. This equates to a labour turnover of 9.31% (8.94% 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, 21 posts have been filled internally; this supports the Council's ability in succession planning.
- 4.3 During 2024/25, the HR team had 3 employees leave (2 were successful in gaining new roles within the Council). The 2 new part time HR Assistants joined the Council in August and September 2024. The HR Officer role has been vacant since the end of August 2024. The HR Manager intends to review the roles and level of resource required within the HR service. Consequently, an agency worker has been appointed while this review is undertaken and prior to any permanent recruitment campaign.

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 3 disciplinary investigations commenced between April 2024 and September 2024, which are currently ongoing.
- 5.2 The HR Manager and HR Officers also provide considerable support in the actions up to and including hearing and appeals (if required).
- 5.3 Service restructures require staff consultations which the HR Manager and the HR Officer action 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. In addition, there is the job evaluation process that need to be undertaken regarding any revised / newly created roles. During 2024/25 the HR

team have supported restructures within Housing Maintenance, Community Development and Corporate Services.

- 5.4 The HR team is co-ordinating the Staff Survey 2024, which was sent to all employees at the start of November 2024. 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 2024/early January 2025.

6 Pay & Benefits

- 6.1 The pay award for 2024/25 was agreed 22 October 2024. The Pay Policy statement was updated for 2024/25 and published on the Council's website. During 2023/24, Chief Officer pay was subject to external pay benchmarking in line with the Council's Pay Policy statement.
- 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 2024) is required to be submitted by 30 March 2025.

7 Learning, Training and Organisational Development

- 7.1 The HR team are arranging the training courses as agreed in the corporate training plan for 2024/25. Progress has been delayed on this due to capacity issues. During the 2024/25 training year, the Council expects to run in house courses including Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk, Prevent Duty, Mental Health Awareness, and Health and Safety courses (e.g., First Aid, Fire Marshall, 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.
- 7.3 The 'THRIVE' organisational values were created following employee engagement and feedback; work will be ongoing to ensure that the values are embedded and employees are fully committed to working in line with the values. The Staff Forum was launched early in 2024 and employees volunteered to head up 3 sub-groups of Communications, Management and Staff Morale. The results of the 2024 Staff Survey will be discussed at the next Staff Forum meeting.

8 Safety Management

- 8.1 The Health and Safety Officer works with Managers and Directors in all service areas of the Council, to provide health and safety advice and support. Workplace audits are completed in partnership with Union representatives.

Additional departmental audits, undertaken by the Health and Safety Officer, are under review and are expected to recommence before the end of 2024.

- 8.2 Corporate health and safety groups established include the Health and Safety Working Party and the Strategic Health and Safety Group. A new group including all members of the Councils Management Team has been set up to support the development of a positive health and safety culture and effective health and safety management systems.
- 8.3 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 2024/25, there were 29 reported employee accident/incidents, which are categorised as follows:
- 8 Manual Handling
 - 6 Slips/Trip
 - 3 Other
 - 2 Violence/Aggression
 - 2 Medical
 - 2 Hit by an Object
 - 2 Animal
 - 1 Fall from Height
 - 1 Vehicle Fire (improperly disposed lithium battery ignited in refuse truck)
 - 1 Road Traffic Accident (non-fault)
 - 1 Strain/Sprain

In addition to the above, there were 12 reported near misses.

- 8.4 The Health and Safety Officer has been pivotal in the work to develop the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Risk Register, Assurance Register and an action tracker.
- 8.5 Central Midlands Audit Partnership (CMAP) have undertaken an audit on Corporate Health and Safety systems, compliance and management. The final report will be received in due course and any recommendations will be actioned accordingly and will feed into the Health and Safety work plan for 2025/26.

9 **Policies Procedures and Processes**

- 9.1 The HR work plan for 2024/25 includes an updated timetable for policy review. Progress has been delayed due to other corporate work priorities required and capacity within the HR team.

10 **Areas to be taken forward in 2024/25**

- 10.1 The HR work plan for 2024/25 includes actions such as 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 4% for 2024/25. The pay award agreed is lower than the provision included by around £164,000, so will reduce 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

	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	28.79	30.76	88.18	66.76	3.06	2.17
Chief Exec	5.00	4.50	7.00	42.00	1.40	9.33
Community Services	32.21	31.65	172.87	130.47	5.37	4.12
Resources	17.13	16.11	104.00	105.00	6.07	6.52
Corporate Services	15.28	17.05	28.25	58.99	1.85	3.46
Housing	63.39	62.59	620.04	607.35	9.78	9.70
Leisure & Comm Dev	36.96	38.03	70.40	93.74	1.90	2.46
Streetscape	71.81	68.99	676.19	312.02	9.42	4.52
Total	270.57	269.68	1,766.93	1,416.33	6.53	5.25

SHORT TERM SICKNESS

	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	28.79	30.76	37.17	45.76	1.29	1.49
Chief Exec	5.00	4.50	7.00	3.00	1.40	0.67
Community Services	32.21	31.65	84.04	48.58	2.61	1.53
Resources	17.13	16.11	15.00	6.00	0.88	0.37
Corporate Services	15.28	17.05	28.25	37.71	1.85	2.21
Housing	63.39	62.59	129.93	159.85	2.05	2.55
Leisure & Comm Dev	36.96	38.03	70.40	93.74	1.90	2.46
Streetscape	71.81	68.99	227.53	169.02	3.17	2.45
Total	270.57	269.68	599.32	563.66	2.22	2.09

LONG TERM SICKNESS

	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	28.79	30.76	51.00	21.00	1.77	0.68
Chief Exec	5.00	4.50	0.00	39.00	0.00	8.67
Community Services	32.21	31.65	88.82	81.89	2.76	2.59
Resources	17.13	16.11	89.00	99.00	5.20	6.15
Corporate Services	15.28	17.05	0.00	21.28	0.00	1.25
Housing	63.39	62.59	490.11	447.50	7.73	7.15
Leisure & Comm Dev	36.96	38.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Streetscape	71.81	68.99	448.66	143.00	6.25	2.07
Total	270.57	269.68	1,167.59	852.67	4.32	3.16

Reasons for Sickness

APPENDIX B

Division	Back/ Neck	Chest	Cold/ Flu/ Infections	ENT / Mouth	Endocrine	Geni-Urin	Heart	Mental Ill Health	Muscular/Skeletal	Neurological	Pregnancy	Skin Conditions	Stomach	Total
NWBC	59.54	49.78	181.21	105.41	1.94	31.95	92.00	466.93	223.06	72.00	24.44	20.66	87.41	1,416.33

<u>Sickness Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
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

10 December 2024

**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

Internal Audit Service – Report of the Interim Corporate Director-Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Paragraph 1 - Information relating to an individual; and

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 Amanda Tonks (719221).