

To: Members of the Special Sub-Group

Councillors D Clews, Deakin, Hayfield, Jenns, Parsons and L Smith

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.

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SPECIAL SUB-GROUP

10 August 2021

The Special Sub-Group will meet on Tuesday, 10 August 2021 at 6.30 pm 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.

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.

If attending in person, precautions will be in place in the Council Chamber to protect those who are present however this will limit the number of people who can be accommodated so 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 **Green Space Officer – Market Supplement** – Report of the Director of Leisure and Community Development

Summary

This report seeks the Sub-group's approval for a market supplement to be applied to the Green Space Officer post.

The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Powell (719352).

6 **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 2020/21 and highlights work to be undertaken in 2021/22. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2020 to March 2021 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

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

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 5

Special Sub-Group

10 August 2021

**Report of the Director of
Leisure and Community Development**

**Green Space Officer –
Market Supplement**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks the Sub-group's approval for a market supplement to be applied to the Green Space Officer post.

Recommendation to the Sub-Group:

That the proposed market supplement for the Green Space Officer post, as detailed in the report, be agreed, subject to the Executive Board's approval of the required budgetary increase.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant Members and any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

3 Report

- 3.1 Members will be aware that Green Space Officer post, which is responsible for the delivery of corporately high priority services and initiatives, has been vacant since 25 April 2021, subsequent to which the position has been subject to the recruitment process on two occasions, unfortunately without success. On the first occasion there was one application and on the second, none at all.
- 3.2 The post has been evaluated at Scale 9 (£27,741 to £29,577) and was advertised at this grade on both occasions.
- 3.3 In order to establish whether or not the advertised salary may be a factor in the inability to attract a suitable candidate for the job, a brief benchmarking exercise of other similar posts has taken place, which produced the following results:

Authority	Salary
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council Green Space Officer	£30,451 to £32, 234
Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase District Councils Greenspace Development Manager	£34,728 to £38,890
Rugby Borough Council Green Spaces Officer	£29,577 to £33,782
Warwick District Council Green Space Development Officer	£30,451 to £32,910

3.4 It is proposed, therefore, that a market supplement be applied to the position, in an attempt to secure a suitable appointment. Initially, this would be at Scale 10 (£30,451 to £32,234), although if that is not successful, it may be necessary to advertise at Scale 11 (£32,910 to £34,728). The Sub-group is asked to approve this course of action, subject to the Executive Board's approval of the required budgetary increase.

3.5 If it proves possible to make an appointment, the market supplement would remain in place whilst the successful candidate continues in post. Should that person leave the Authority's employ or move to an alternative position, the post would revert back to a Scale 9 position.

4 **Report Implications**

4.1 **Finance and Value for Money Implications**

4.1.1 The proposed addition of a market supplement in seeking to recruit a Green Space Officer would require the approval of the Executive Board, in view of the need to increase the relevant budget. At the top of the relevant grades, however, an appointment at Scale 10 would result in a budgetary increase of £2,657 and at Scale 11, an increase of £5,151.

4.2 **Safer Communities Implications**

4.2.1 Work advanced through the Green Space Officer contributes to community safety by providing well-managed open space and recreation areas, which are safe by design and afford opportunities for positive activity.

4.3 **Legal, Data Protection and Human Rights Implications**

4.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the proposals in this report.

4.4 Environment, Sustainability and Health Implications

- 4.4.1 Delivery of high priority work through the Green Space Officer contributes directly to environmental improvements, the enhancement of biodiversity and mitigation of the effects of climate change. It also helps to build sustainable, vibrant and healthy communities.

4.5 Human Resources Implications

- 4.5.1 The human resources implications of the proposal are detailed in the main body of the report.

4.6 Risk Management Implications

- 4.6.1 A failure to appoint to the position of Green Space Officer risks an inability to deliver on the priorities of the adopted Green Space and Playing Pitch Strategies, which are known to be valued within the local community.

4.7 Equalities Implications

- 4.7.1 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.

4.8 Links to Council's Priorities

- 4.8.1 The work of the Green Space Officer positively impacts on each of the Authority's corporate priorities, as well as those of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Powell (719352).

Agenda Item No 6

Special Sub-Group

10 August 2021

**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 2020/21 and highlights work to be undertaken in 2021/22. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2020 to March 2021 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 2020/21.

3 Coronavirus (Covid-19) work

- 3.1 Further to the report submitted to the Sub-Group in January 2021, the HR team has continued with work in relation to employee issues in response to the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.
- 3.2 The HR team has undertaken a considerable amount of work in response to the current pandemic, including:
- Reviewing the Government guidance and providing regular updates to employees on the current guidance and advising them of any changes.
 - Providing information to employees on Mental Health and Wellbeing support. Emails/Leaflets have been issued to employees, providing useful links and contact numbers of relevant support services both locally and nationally.
 - Advice given to employees and Managers on Self-isolation, Testing and Quarantine procedures.
 - Keeping records on cases of Self-isolation and Testing and reporting on the figures.
 - Risk Assessments and health and safety advice.
 - The HR team worked with the IT department in co-ordinating two Coronavirus (Covid-19) staff surveys, which were sent to all employees in July 2020 and January 2021 and were involved analysing the results.

4.1 Summary of Sickness Absence 2020/21 (April 2020 – March 2021)

4.1.1 Absence Management is recorded for all employees and is then analysed into short and long term absence. Comparing the same time period in 2019/20 to 2020/21 there is a decrease, 2.12 days in short term sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE), and an increase, 0.54 days in long term sickness. The position is summarised in the table below, with additional detail given at Appendix A.

Type	2019/20	2020/21
Short Term	5.09 days per FTE	2.97 days per FTE
Long Term	7.96 days per FTE	8.50 days per FTE
Total	13.05 days per FTE	11.47 days per FTE

4.1.2 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 23 employees having lost a total of 1,905.42 days. 16 of these employees have successfully returned to work, 3 are still absent and 4 left the Council (2 ill-health retirement, 1 dismissal and 1 retirement).

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

5 Recruitment, Retention and Selection

5.1 There were a number of starters and leavers between April 2020 to March 2021. There were 26 new starters. There were 39 leavers, including 11 retirements, 1 ill health retirement, 1 dismissal due to ill health, 1 death in service, 21 resignations and 4 individuals who left due to the expiry of their temporary contracts. This equates to a labour turnover of 13.01% (12.68% voluntary leavers).

5.2 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, 16 posts have been filled internally; this supports the Council's ability in succession planning.

5.3 The HR team had two new starters during 2020/21; an HR Officer, who started on 31 March 2020 and an HR Assistant, who started on 1 April 2020. Both team members have had to be inducted and trained with adapted training methods due to the restrictions in place due to Covid-19. In addition, the HR team's Health and Safety Officer retired on 5 November 2020, a recruitment campaign was undertaken, but unfortunately the new appointment was not successful; the post is currently vacant and will be subject to a separate report to this group in September.

6 Employee Relations

6.1 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, disciplinary, grievance, and capability relating to

performance or attendance. There were 3 investigations (2 disciplinary and 1 dignity at work) undertaken between April 2020 and March 2021.

- 6.2 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 3 investigations, two employees resigned during the investigation/prior to hearing and one investigation resulted in a final written warning. In addition, there was an appeal from 2019/20, which had been delayed due to Covid-19, that took place in December 2020; the original decision to dismiss was upheld.
- 6.3 Service restructures require staff consultations which the HR Manager and the HR Officers undertake 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 or following implementation. During 2020/21 this has involved considerable support following the decision to end the Borough Care Service. In addition, the HR team has provided support to managers on the required actions for the Admin Review restructure.

7 Pay and Benefits

- 7.1 The pay award for 2020/21 was agreed as 2.75%. The Pay Policy statement was updated for 2021/22 and published on the Councils website.
- 7.2 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. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, reporting was suspended entirely for the 2019/20 reporting year. The gender pay gap information for the current reporting year (which will use a snapshot date of 31 March 2020) is required to be submitted by 5 October 2021.

8 Learning, Training and Development

- 8.1 Due to other work priorities relating to Covid-19, a formal corporate training plan for 2020/2021 was not established. During the year, there were limited requests for training from Divisions, but when received, the HR team reviewed the requests and essential training needs were approved.
- 8.2 Our E learning programme covers Health and Safety, Fraud Awareness, Fire Awareness, Equality and Diversity, Customer Service, Data Protection, GDPR and Cyber Awareness, Freedom of Information, Bribery Act 2010, Staff Reviews (Appraisals). Additional E Learning modules have been made accessible to employees during the pandemic to further support staff, including remote working, aimed at both employees and Managers.
- 8.3 The HR Manager continues to work with the Administrator of the E learning platform, Staffordshire County Council (SCC) on the services received under the contract. SCC have moved the online learning platform to Accipio from Learning Pool. The HR team are due to email all employees announcing that the new site is available and that the mandatory E learning modules should be refreshed every 3 years to ensure that refreshers are taking place, in accordance with the timescales.

9 **Safety Management**

- 9.1 Managers undertake risk assessments, safe systems of work and safety audits in their work areas.
- 9.2 During 2020/21, the Health and Safety Officer continued to work with managers and Directors in all the service areas of the Council, to provide health and safety advice and support during the pandemic.
- 9.3 The Health and Safety Officer and the HR Manager carried out lot of work in making the Council buildings Covid secure. Risk assessments were completed, and control measures include signage, one-way systems, provision of hand sanitiser and wipes, installation of 'touchless proximity reader' door security in the Council House/Old Bank House (OBH) office buildings etc. The HR team have issued regular reminders on the Government's guidance on hand hygiene and social distancing.
- 9.4 In order to manage occupancy levels within the Council House and OBH, a booking in system has been put in place for employees who need to undertake essential work in the office. This ensures that employees can work safely and maintain social distancing whilst working in the office.
- 9.5 The Council's Covid-19 Risk Assessment is reviewed and updated as appropriate.

10 **Policies Procedures and Processes**

- 10.1 The HR work plan for 2020/21 included an updated timetable for policy review to ensure that progress is made in this area. However, progress has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

11 **Areas to be taken forward in 2021/22**

- 11.1 As part of the continued management of sickness absence across the Council, work has begun on reviewing the Council's 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.

- 11.2 The pay award for 2020/21 was agreed as a one year agreement. No pay award has yet been agreed for 1 April 2021 onwards. Negotiations will take place between the National Employers and the Unions during this year. Officers from the Council attended a Pay Consultation event held on 17 March 2021 by the Regional Employers Organisation, West Midlands Employers, to understand the potential impact and options around the pay claim(s) and to share views on the impact these may have on the Council to influence these national negotiations.
- 11.3 The HR work plan for 2021/22 will include an updated timetable for policy review to ensure that progress is made in this area.
- 11.4 The HR team is leading on the Thrive at Work initiative. Created by the West Midlands Combined Authority, Thrive at Work is an organisational commitment focused on creating a workplace that promotes employee health and wellbeing through the use of key enablers, such as health and safety, manager training, etc., in addition to the promotion of healthy lifestyles, mental, musculoskeletal and physical health. The Council has existing workplace initiatives in place that meet various requirements within the Thrive at Work bronze standard, as well as some in the silver and gold standard categories. The initial stage is to submit evidence for foundation level and create an action plan to ensure progression of the related workplace commitments.

12 Report Implications

12.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

- 12.1.1 These will depend on whether additional resources are used 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.

12.2 Human Resources Implications

- 12.2.1 As detailed in the report.

12.3 Equality Implications

- 12.3.1 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.

12.4 Links to Council's Priorities

12.4.1 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

	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Assistant Chief Exec	28.76	29.04	450.78	89.11	15.67	3.07
Corporate Services	23.38	22.48	254.74	17.00	10.90	0.76
Streetscape	71.41	73.15	991.17	1523.81	13.88	20.83
Leisure & Comm Dev	46.90	47.99	618.35	762.98	13.18	15.90
Community Services	34.02	33.50	562.41	406.81	16.53	12.14
Finance,HR & Audit	16.46	15.89	114.84	28.00	6.98	1.76
Housing	75.11	78.12	960.90	692.08	12.79	8.86
Chief Exec	8.73	7.30	24.20	7.20	2.77	0.99
Total	304.77	307.47	3,977.39	3,526.99	13.05	11.47

SHORT TERM SICKNESS

	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Assistant Chief Exec	28.76	29.04	83.53	39.11	2.90	1.35
Corporate Services	23.38	22.48	160.90	17.00	6.88	0.76
Streetscape	71.41	73.15	518.63	418.08	7.26	5.72
Leisure & Comm Dev	46.90	47.99	177.18	162.74	3.78	3.39
Community Services	34.02	33.50	180.30	70.61	5.30	2.11
Finance & HR	16.46	15.89	49.64	28.00	3.02	1.76
Housing	75.11	78.12	357.11	169.27	4.75	2.17
Chief Exec	8.73	7.30	24.20	7.20	2.77	0.99
Total	304.77	307.47	1,551.49	912.01	5.09	2.97

LONG TERM SICKNESS

	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Assistant Chief Exec	28.76	29.04	367.25	50.00	12.77	1.72
Corporate Services	23.38	22.48	93.84	0.00	4.01	0.00
Streetscape	71.41	73.15	472.54	1,105.73	6.62	15.12
Leisure & Comm Dev	46.90	47.99	441.18	600.24	9.41	12.51
Community Services	34.02	33.50	382.11	336.20	11.23	10.04
Finance & HR	16.46	15.89	65.20	0.00	3.96	0.00
Housing	75.11	78.12	603.79	522.81	8.04	6.69
Chief Exec	8.73	7.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	304.77	307.47	2,425.91	2,614.98	7.96	8.50

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	188.84	358.21	78.55	41.45	2.53	260.33	16.00	1006.02	915.91	60.73	26.72	8.00	388.93	174.77	3,526.99

<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
Coronavirus	Coronavirus symptoms - confirmed via testing / following vaccination