

Staffing Committee

Date of Meeting: 25th April 2019

Report Title: HR and Health and Safety – Q4 Update Report

Senior Officer: Sara Barker, Head of HR

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to ensure Members are kept up to date with HR and OD developments and that the Committee's Terms of Reference are followed.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To note the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. To ensure Members are kept up to date with HR and OD developments and that the Committee's Terms of Reference are followed.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Council continues to embed a compelling vision which recognises the need for change and looks to a new future. The People Plan 2018-20 has been the name given to the HR team plan which has supported the delivery of changes through three objective areas relating to the cultural change element of the Brighter Future – Transforming our Council Together programme which are summarised below;

1. Our Culture – establishing and enabling our workplace vision
2. Our organisational development and delivery
3. Our employee experience

- 5.2. A copy of the People Plan 2018-20 is attached at Appendix One to this report for review. Staffing Committee members are asked to note progress

at the end of the first year of action.

- 5.3. To reflect the context of the HR team plan within the wider Workforce Strategy, moving into 2019-20 the plan will be renamed from the People Plan to the Workforce Strategy Action Plan.

6. HR POLICY REVIEW

- 6.1. The Policy Review project has made significant progress since the last meeting of Staffing Committee and numerous policies and procedures have been updated and approved by Cllr. Paul Findlow (Portfolio Holder).
- 6.2. In April, new policies for Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity at Work were agreed and launched. Following feedback received from operational experience, some minor changes were made to the management guidance which accompanied the Grievance Policy and in addition, some minor changes have been made to the Disciplinary Policy. All of these changes have now been approved.
- 6.3. In order to update Members, listed below are the policies that have been recently been agreed by CLT, Legal Services, Trade Unions and approved by the Portfolio Holder:
- Disciplinary policy (minor amendments referenced above)
 - Wellbeing policy
 - Leave and Time Off policy (including new provision for volunteering, up to two days per annum)
 - Maternity
 - Adoption
 - Paternity
 - Ordinary Parental Leave
 - Managing Attendance
 - Capability Policy
 - Recruitment
- 6.4. Work continues on the remaining policies detailed below and a further verbal update on progress will be reported to Staffing Committee in April.
- Leaving the Council
 - Work-life Balance and Flexible Working
 - Flexi-time
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Induction and Probation
 - Travel Expenses
 - Sickness Allowances
- 6.5. The e-learning package developed to support the updated Dignity at Work policy continues to be promoted to staff across the Council. As at 31st

March 2019 completion rates are outlined below;

- Dignity at Work 71%
- Disciplinary Procedure 95% (managers and supervisors)
- Grievance Procedure 81% (managers and supervisors)

Communication with individuals and their managers continues to ensure completion of this key training.

- 6.6. The above figures represent those that are able to complete online e-learning, however a proportion of the figures showing non-completion represent those that do not have access to e-learning or email. To meet the needs of these staff, additional support has been put into place through providing key learning summary packs and face to face briefings and discussion in team meetings.
- 6.7. 65 staff have completed the training through these methods so far, with team members trained to cascade through delivering the briefing themselves. Further support and updates on figures are expected through quarter one of 2019/20.

7. ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

- 7.1. The Attendance management Action Plan has progressed well against schedule. An update on the action plan is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 7.2. A governance framework has been implemented and forms part of the regular information provided to Directorate Management Teams, managers and HR representatives as well as to the Corporate Policy and Legal Services Portfolio Holder and Staffing Committee. This framework provides the basis to enable appropriate monitoring of absence levels in relation to the target of 10 days' absence per FTE in 2018/19. The actual level for 2018/19 as shown in paragraph 12.4 is 10.31 days' absence per FTE for the full year. This figure is lower than every previous 12 month period between April 2011 and March 2018, revealing a significant decrease in sickness absence.
- 7.3. The five main reasons for long term absences during 2018/19 have been stress, depression, medical investigations/operations, back pain and tumour/growth (non-specified). The main five reasons for short term absence are more general ailments as would be expected. These are colds, stomach/intestine problems, virus, vomiting and medical examinations. The recorded reasons reflect what is reported by the employee and/or on a fit note from their GP.
- 7.4. There is support for employees who are absent from work whether short or

long term. This support includes regular update/contact with line managers as to their progress and support, return to work interviews, Occupational Health consultations, stress and general risk assessments as required. Employees can also access support and advice through the Council's Employee Assistance Programme as well as the Council's dedicated Stop Bullying Behaviour Helpline. The Attendance Management Procedure sets out a structured approach for supporting employees whilst they are absent and in their return to work. Managers can also receive advice, guidance and support at formal meetings from Human Resources. Managers consider the recommendations of Occupational Health reports and the identified measures/actions from risk assessments for implementation to provide a supportive working environment to enable a successful return to work as well avoid/minimise further absences.

- 7.5. The new Wellbeing and Attendance Management Policies and Procedures will work in conjunction with each other to proactively promote health and well-being at work and providing appropriate support for employees when they are absent from work.
- 7.6. There are a range of measures to support managers with attendance management which include training sessions for line managers. The new attendance management policy has been agreed in principle by the trade unions and awaiting final sign off by the portfolio holder. An initial e-learning package is being developed to complement the new policy and procedure which will also be further supported by a refreshed face to face training. Bespoke attendance management sessions have been held to support managers with attendance management and these are being adapted into one of the key topics for the HR Surgery programme.

8. EXIT INTERVIEWS

- 8.1. All employees leaving the Council should be offered an exit interview with their grandparent manager prior to their leaving date. Copies of the exit interviews should be sent to HR for collating and statistical purposes; however there is no central recording system and the interview records are often retained locally.
- 8.2. The HR team is provided with a copy of the leaver questionnaire which is sent out by the Transactional Service Centre (TSC) when they complete the leaver payroll process. Of the 393 leavers for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, 74 questionnaires have been returned (19%).
- 8.3. A short, anonymous survey has been conducted by HR to collect information regarding:

- Exit interviews are being offered to those leaving the Council;
- When offered, are they taking place? and
- If they are not taking place, what are the reasons for this?

8.4. The information was collected for the period 1st April 2018 to 28th February 2019 and is summarised as follows:

- Respondents submitted information regarding 149 leavers of whom 127 (85%) were offered an exit interview and 107 (72%) exit interviews were conducted.
- Where exit interviews were not undertaken, the most common reason was that the leaver declined the invitation.
- The most commonly reported reasons for not offering an exit interview were that the employee left with no notice or that they left under the MARS scheme which included a separate exit interview.

8.5. Further promotion of the procedure for offering and conducting exit interviews will take place to managers in 2019/20 and once available, the functionality of the Business World system will be optimised in digitizing the process.

9. EDUCATION HR CONSULTANCY

9.1. An improved package (including Employee Assistance Programme offer, free mediation and Barred List check service) is offered to schools and academies for 2018/19 recognising the increasingly competitive market within which the Council is offering the buy-back of Education HR Consultancy Services. The buy-back in response to the services offered is 100 schools and academies for 2018/19.

9.2. Work is underway to finalise the Education HR Consultancy offer for 2019/20.

9.3. A number of new training interventions have been offered aimed at increasing income as part of the Governor Training Programme as well as specific and focused training. New and aspiring Headteacher briefings have commenced with two out of four sessions being delivered with a further two planned in the Summer term 2019. These have been very popular and have received excellent feedback. Courses for Governors regarding HR principles, Performance Management as well as Equality and Diversity have been delivered. These have been well attended and well received. In addition. Safer Recruitment accredited training and refreshers for recruiting staff have been developed and currently advertised for launch in 2019.

10. APPRENTICESHIPS STATUTORY REPORTING

- 10.1. As part of the Apprenticeship Levy reforms, the Council is now required to report annually to the Department for Education on its progress towards meeting a new target introduced by the Government of 180 new apprenticeship starts. This total is disaggregated across each area of the Council resulting in 96 new apprenticeship starts required across the Council and ASDVs and 84 across maintained schools. At the end of quarter 4, there have been 112 apprenticeship new starts across the Council.
- 10.2. The take-up of apprenticeships by maintained schools across Cheshire East continues to be slow, despite significant interventions which has presented an ongoing challenge in meeting the target number of apprenticeships overall across the Council. This is a trend that is replicated in Local Authorities across the Country and intervention work continues.
- 10.3. The Council's apprenticeship offer was highlighted as part of a press release for National Apprenticeship Week. This featured the Cheshire East Council Apprentice of the Year and outlined benefits of apprenticeships, eligibility information and close working with the Skills and Growth company.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

11.1. Accident & Incident Summary Data Q4 2018/19 (1.1.19 – 31.3.19)

	Total Accidents and Incidents	RIDDOR ¹ Reportable Accidents	
Q3: 2018-19	849	4	
Q4: 2018-19	838	1	
Council	RIDDOR¹	Schools	RIDDOR
392	1	446	0

11.2. Accident and Incident Summary Quarter 4

		Council Employees (average head count): 3560	Schools Employees (average head count): 3330
Accidents	Employees	79	52
Average Accident Rate Factor (Employees)		7.4%	5.2%
	² MOTP	181	383
Incidents	Employees	51	2
	MOTP	81	9
A&I Total		392	446

		Council	Schools
RIDDOR	Employees	1	0
	MOTP	0	0
RIDDOR Total		1	0

There was one RIDDOR reportable accident in the Council in January where an employee fell and sustained a facial injury resulting in an absence from work of more than 7 days.

There were no accidents or incidents involving the HSE in Quarter 4.

¹ RIDDOR – The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations

² MOTP – Members of the Public

11.3. Corporate Health and Safety Training Programme

8 courses were delivered to CEC and School staff during Quarter 4 2018/19

NO. OF COURSES	COURSE	ATTENDEES
1	First Aid at Work (3 days)	11 School
3	First Aid at Work re-qualification (2 days)	12 School 15 Council
1	IOSH Managing Safely (4 days)	7 Council 2 School
1	IOSH Managing Safely refresher (1 day)	5 Council 1 School
1	Prime accident Reporting course (3 hours)	15 School
1	Caretaker's Course	12 School
10	TOTALS	27 Council 53 School 80 Total

12. HR PERFORMANCE DATA – Q4 2018/19

12.1. Headcount & FTE (Excluding schools, agency workers and casuals)

Date	Headcount	Change from Previous Year (%)	Change from previous year (excluding ASDV TUPE Transfers) (%)	FTE	Change from Previous Year (%)	Change from previous year (excluding ASDV TUPE Transfers) (%)
30 Apr 2012	5,449	-7.01	NA	4080.2	-6.96	NA
30 Apr 2013	5,103	-6.35	NA	3880.7	-4.89	NA
30 Apr 2014	4,403	-13.72	-6.87	3232.7	-16.70	-8.28
30 Apr 2015	3,812	-13.42	-1.01	2883.5	-10.80	-0.19
30 Apr 2016	3,763	-1.29	-0.74	2891.7	0.28	1.02
30 Apr 2017	3,623	-3.72	NA	2835.3	-1.95	NA
30 Apr 2018	3,587	-0.99	NA	2824.5	-0.38	NA
31 Mar 2019	3,557	-0.84	NA	2771.5	-1.91	NA

Between April 2012 and March 2019, the overall Council employee headcount has reduced by 34.7% and the overall number of Council FTE employees has decreased by 32.1%. Between April 2014 and March 2019, the overall Council employee headcount has reduced by 19.21% and the overall number of Council FTE employees has decreased by 14.3% over the same period. As described previously, the larger reductions in staffing between both 2013-14 and 2014-15 include staff TUPE transferring to ASDVs. Between April 2018 and March 2019, the overall Council employee headcount has reduced by 0.8%, with the number of FTE employees also decreasing by 1.9% over the same period.

12.2. Leavers and Turnover (Excluding schools, agency workers and casuals)

Financial Year	Overall Headcount of Leavers	Overall Employee Turnover (%)	Headcount of Leavers without TUPE Transfers	Turnover without TUPE Transfers (%)
2009-10	838	13.2	838	13.2
2010-11	931	15.5	931	15.5
2011-12	830	14.7	830	14.7
2012-13	657	12.5	657	12.5
2013-14	1019	21.4	650	13.7
2014-15	1030	25.1	506	12.3
2015-16	566	14.9	545	14.4
2016-17	458	12.3	458	12.3
2017-18	402	11.1	391	10.8
2018-19	393	11.0	380	10.6

The table above provides the number of leavers between April and March 2019, including those who TUPE transferred to ASDVs. The total employee turnover rate is therefore 10.6% during this period, which is similar to the previous year 2017-18. However, the difference is not as pronounced as expected, which suggests that the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme may have captured employees who were intending to leave anyway, and the overall turnover rate in 2018-19 may not be affected by MARS. If TUPE transfers

are analysed separately there have been 380 leavers due to other reasons, which are summarised below. The turnover rate for all other leaving reasons is 10.6%.

There were 279 resignations during the reporting period, 28 of which were due to MARS applications. The turnover rate due to resignation is 7.8%, which is lower than the same time last year.

Financial Year	Resignation Headcount	Employee Turnover by Resignation (%)
2009-10	390	6.2
2010-11	362	6.0
2011-12	307	5.4
2012-13	324	6.1
2013-14	354	7.4
2014-15	301	7.3
2015-16	305	8.1
2016-17	311	8.4
2017-18	287	8.0
2018-19	279	7.8

The distribution of leaving reasons is shown below, with the exception of TUPE transfers and employees whose leaving reason is not given. The 'unsatisfactory' category includes those who left due to unsatisfactory probation or performance, gross misconduct, or disciplinary action; 'Other' reflects mutual termination or death.

Leaving Reason	Headcount	Proportion of all Leavers (%)
Resignation	279	71.0
Retirement	43	10.9
Redundancy	18	4.6
End of Contract	21	5.3
Unsatisfactory	7	1.8
Other	12	3.1

12.3. Redundancy

Nineteen people have left the Council under voluntary redundancy terms between 1 April and 28 February 2019. The total severance cost was £785,911 inclusive of redundancy and actuarial costs. Over the next five years, this reduction is estimated to save the Council over £3,007,606.

Year	Number of voluntary redundancies	Number of compulsory redundancies
2009 - 2010	280	0
2010 - 2011	399	0
2011 - 2012	264	4
2012 - 2013	94	2
2013 - 2014	124	4
2014 - 2015	30	0
2015 - 2016	98	1
2016 - 2017	22	1
2017 – 2018	22	1
2018 – 2019	19	1

12.4. BVPI 12: Days Lost to Sickness Absence per FTE Employee

Financial Year	Full Year Absence Rate
2011-12	11.67
2012-13	12.03
2013-14	11.33
2014-15	11.97
2015-16	11.14
2016-17	11.14
2017-18	11.18
2018-19	10.31

The table above shows the cumulative absence rate for Cheshire East Council for the 2018-19 financial year in comparison with previous financial years. The current figure of 10.31 days lost at the end of March 2019 is lower than the figure at the end of 2017-18 and much closer to the target of 10 days. It is also lower than every previous 12 month period between April 2011 and March 2018, revealing a significant decrease in sickness absence. Closer examination of the data suggests that this figure was achieved due to fewer absences in the third quarter of 2018-19.

12.5 HR Casework

The HR Team continues to work with managers to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity. Where these cannot be resolved, formal procedures are used to seek outcomes to concerns raised. The table below sets out those cases that were considered through HR formal procedures.

Summary of current formal case work by employee

	Capability	Disciplinary	Grievance	Dignity at Work	ET ¹
As at May 2016	4	2	3	1	1
As at Sept 2016	4	0	1	1	1
As at Dec 2016	4	6	6	1	0
As at March 2017	6	4	6	1	0
As at May 2017	6	6	7	2	1
As at Sept 2017	4	4	8	0	2
As at Dec 2017	4	6	6	1	3
As at March 2018	0	8	7	1	4
As at May 2018	0	6	6	0	3
As at Aug 2018	1	6	8	2	2
As at Dec 2018	1	3	3	1	2
As at March 2019	1	2	2	2	1

Summary of closed formal case work during period by employee

	Capability	Disciplinary	Grievance	Dignity at Work	ET
June – Sept 2017	3	5	5	1	0
Oct – Dec 2017	0	3	5	0	0
Jan – Mar 2018	0	4	5	0	0
April – May 2018	0	5	1	1	1
June – August 2018	0	4	2	0	1
Sept – Dec 2018	0	9	7	5	1
Jan – Mar 2019	0	4	3	0	0

¹ET - Employment Tribunal

Closed cases January – March 2019

Type of Case	Information/Length of Case
Capability	No cases concluded
Disciplinary	2x4wks; 1x 15mths
Grievance	1x14wks; 1x16wks; 1x22 mths
Dignity at Work	No cases concluded

With reference to the table above, casework matters are dealt with in as timely a manner as possible. There can be unavoidable slippage of time due to factors such as the general availability of the parties involved; for example, complainant, officers, trade union representatives as well as investigating officers. Longer term delays can be due to sickness absence. In respect of the grievance cases taking longest to conclude, the cases which took 22 months to conclude was delayed due to long term sickness.

Summary of new formal case work during period by employee

	Capability	Disciplinary	Grievance	Dignity at Work	ET
June – Sept 2017	0	3	6	0	1
Oct – Dec 2017	0	5	3	1	2
Jan – Mar 2018	0	3	2	0	0
April – May 2018	0	3	2	0	0
June – Aug 2018	1	4	4	2	0
Sept – Dec 2018	0	5	2	4	1
Jan – Mar 2019	0	3	2	1	0

13. Implications of the Recommendations

13.1 Legal Implications

13.1.1. Activity relating to the summaries in this report contributes to ensuring the Council's statutory HR and Health and Safety obligations are met.

13.2 Financial Implications

13.2.1 No direct financial implications arising from this report.

13.3 Equality Implications

13.3.1 There are no direct equality implications.

13.4 Human Resources Implications

13.4.1 Implications are dealt with in the body of the report.

13.5 Risk Management Implications

13.5.1 No significant risks identified as a result of this update report. Risks relating to specific matters are dealt with separately.

13.6 Rural Communities Implications

13.6.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

13.7 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

13.7.1 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

13.8 Public Health Implications

13.8.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

14 Ward Members Affected

14.8 No specific wards affected.

15 Access to Information

15.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

16. Contact Information

16.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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