

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Date:	Tuesday, 17th April, 2012
Time:	2.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2012.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests and for members to declare the existence of a party whip in relation to any item on the agenda.

4. **Public Speaking Time/Open Session**

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers.

Note: In order for officers to undertake any background research, it would be helpful if members of the public contacted the Scrutiny officer listed at the foot of the agenda, at least one working day before the meeting to provide brief details of the matter to be covered.

For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

Contact: Mark Nedderman

Tel: 01270 686459

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5. **Work Programme Progress Report** (Pages 5 - 12)

To consider a report of the Borough Solicitor.

6. **Forward Plan - Extracts** (Pages 13 - 18)

To note the current forward plan, identify any new items, and to determine whether any further examination of new issues is appropriate.

7. **Sickness Absence Report** (Pages 19 - 24)

To consider a report of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

8. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded.

The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

PART 2 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

9. **Review of Arrangements to Manage Workforce Change** (Pages 25 - 40)

To consider a report of the Head of HR and Organisational Development.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
held on Tuesday, 6th March, 2012 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J P Findlow (Chairman)
Councillor D Newton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors G Baxendale, B Burkhill, S Corcoran, W S Davies, F Keegan,
B Moran, G Wait, D Neilson and D Topping

178 OFFICERS PRESENT

Lisa Quinn Director of Finance and Business Services.
Mark Nedderman Senior Scrutiny Officer

179 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

180 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

181 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Committee.

182 BUDGET TASK GROUP

The Committee considered a report of the Borough Solicitor relating to the work of the Budget Task group in 2011/12.

In June 2011, the Committee had set up a Budget task group consisting of the following 6 Members:

Councillor P Findlow (Chairman), Councillors B Burkhill, D Newton, B Moran, F Keegan, and G Wait.

The group initially met on 25 July and set a task of providing an 'effective and timely input into the budget setting (Business Planning) process to 'influence the budget setting process and to submit initial comments on the draft budget prior to approval'.

The group met on nine occasions throughout the business planning process for the period 2012/2015; the last meeting being held on 13 February 2012.

The report summarised the activity of the group throughout that 8 month period and recommended some improvements to the process in future years.

The group had concluded that although it was important for Corporate Scrutiny Committee, through the Budget task group, to take a holistic view of the budget, the other 5 Scrutiny Committees should not be ignored and in future years, it was suggested opportunities should be made available for all Overview and Scrutiny committees to have an input into the business planning process on a committee by committee basis.

Members considered it essential to have timely access to up to date information on the proposed budget. During the business planning process it had been noted that the new style of business plan had gone through several mutations which resulted in confusion as to whether Members had in their possession the latest version of the plan. It had been suggested to the group that the best solution to this problem was to access the information electronically. The group concluded that consideration should be given to making sure that all members were provided with appropriate hardware to enable them to access financial information electronically. It was also important that measures were in place to ensure that changes made during the process were tracked and easily identifiable during the progress of the business plan, particularly where savings and growth items that had been included.

Although the concept of linking the budget to corporate priorities was commended by the group, in practice, Members found the new style of document difficult to follow and lacked detail. Consequently, Members had requested that consideration be given to improving the narrative in future years and to providing more detailed figures.

The Scrutiny Chairmen's group had recently considered a protocol produced by the Director of Finance and Business Services. The protocol aimed to formally recognise the involvement of the 6 Overview and Scrutiny committees in the Business Planning Process. The group supported the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group's position and subsequently recommended as the first step to secure wider involvement, that Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be given an opportunity to comment on the emerging priorities influencing the business plan, at the latest by September of each year.

At its meeting held on 2 March 2012, the Scrutiny Chairmen's Group had recommended that this Committee consider widening the membership of the Budget task group in future to include representatives from the 5 other Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Director of Finance and Business Service be requested to report back to a future meeting of the committee with proposals to address the issues raised by members of the committee regarding the format of the current business planning process without the need to abandon the new integrated corporate plan and budget approach;
- (b) That the Budget Task Group continue in the 2012/13 financial year with an open invitation to each of the other 5 Overview and Scrutiny committees to send a representative.

The Committee reviewed the work programme for 2012/13.

The Procurement and Shared Services Portfolio Holder at a recent 1:1 Meeting had reported that the voluntary redundancy scheme was due to be reviewed in March and that statistics were now available in relation to the Council's sickness records.

Councillor Sam Corcoran also suggested that the Committee should consider reviewing the Council's policy in respect of exemptions on Council tax for second and empty homes in anticipation of an expected change in legislation.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That the Head of HR be requested to consult Members of this committee informally in respect of the Review of the Council's Policy on Voluntary Redundancy prior to the Cabinet taking a decision in April 2012;
- (c) That the Head of HR be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee on Sickness records at Cheshire East;
- (d) That The Director of Finance and Business Services be requested to submit a report to a future meeting to brief Members on the current arrangements which provide discounts in respect of Council Tax for empty properties and second homes in Cheshire East, with a view to the policy being reviewed.

184 **FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS**

The Committee considered items listed in the current forward plan.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be received.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 2.55 pm

Councillor J P Findlow (Chairman)

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.CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**REPORT TO: CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 17 April 2012
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Work Programme update

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 To review items in the 2011/2012 Work Programme listed in the schedule attached, together with any other items suggested by Committee Members.

2.0 Recommendations

That the 2011/2012 work programme be reviewed.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is good practice to agree and review the Work Programme to enable effective management of the Committee's business.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

**6.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction
- Health**

- 6.1 Not known at this stage.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Not known at this stage.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 None.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 There are no identifiable risks.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 The schedule attached has been updated since the last meeting.

10.2 Members are asked to review the schedule and if appropriate add new items. When selecting potential topics, Members must have regard to the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy – ‘Ambition for all’ and also to the general criteria which should be applied to all potential items when considering whether any Scrutiny activity is appropriate. Matters should be assessed against the following criteria:

- Does the issue fall within a corporate priority;
- Is the issue of key interest to the public;
- Does the matter relate to a poor or declining performing service for which there is no obvious explanation;
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends;
- Is it a matter raised by external audit management letters and or audit reports?
- Is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service;

10.3 If during the assessment process any of the following emerge, then the topic should be rejected:

- The topic is already being addressed elsewhere
- The matter is subjudice
- Scrutiny cannot add value or is unlikely to be able to conclude an investigation within the specified timescale
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11 Access to Information

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

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Designation: Senior Scrutiny Officer
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Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 17 April 2012

Issue	Description/Comments	Suggested by	Portfolio Holder as at October 2011	Corporate Priority	Current Position R,A,G	Date for completion
Budget	Consultation group set up to review consultation arrangements for 2011/2012.	Committee	Resources	Nurture Strong Communities	Budget Task Group to continue in the new civic year with open invitations for each of the other O&S Committees to send a representative.	Start date June 2012 and ongoing
Business Generation Centres	Review the formal response of Cabinet and subsequent actions	Portfolio Holder	Prosperity	Create Conditions for Business growth	Formal Cabinet response received January 2012. Actions to be reviewed in 6 months time.	July 2012
Mayoralty/Civic arrangements in Cheshire East	Review procedures and support for the mayoralty and arrangements for civic duties.	Portfolio Holder	Resources	Nurture Strong Communities	To determine whether any action is required in respect of this matter.	17 April 2012
Procurement	To review procurement arrangements in Cheshire to	Portfolio Holder	Procurement and Shared Services	Nurture Strong Communities	Presentation received on 4	TBA

	ensure that the Council is achieving best value.				October 2011. No further action planned at the moment but the situation to be kept under review.	
Shared Services	The Committee received a presentation on the latest position with regard to shared services and the possible creation of a Separate legal entity for certain core services on 1 November 2011	Portfolio Holder	Procurement and Shared Services	Nurture Strong Communities	A joint meeting is due to be held with this colleagues in Cheshire West and Chester in April/May 2012	TBA
Future Political Management arrangements in Cheshire East	To review the range of options likely to be available to local authorities in the Localism Bill in respect political management structures	The Committee	Resources	Nurture Strong Communities	The Joint working Group has now held 2 meetings and is exploring options	TBA
Temporary Agency Staff Contract	To be consulted on the procurement of temporary agency staff – a joint arrangement with Cheshire West and Chester Council.	The Committee	Procurement and Shared Services	Nurture Strong Communities	Report on considered on 25 November 2011. The matter to be reviewed in 6	12 June 2012

					months.	
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FORWARD PLAN 1 APRIL 2012 - 31 JULY 2012

This Plan sets out the key decisions which the Executive expect to take over the next four months. The Plan is rolled forward every month. It will next be published in mid April and will then contain all key decisions expected to be taken between 1 May and 31 August 2012. Key decisions are defined in the Councils Constitution.

Reports relevant to key decisions, and any listed background documents may be viewed at any of the Councils Offices/Information Centres 6 days before the decision is to be made. Copies of, or extracts from these documents may be obtained on the payment of a reasonable fee from the following address:-

Democratic Services Team
Cheshire East Council ,
c/o Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach Cheshire CW11 1HZ
Telephone: 01270 686463

However, it is not possible to make available for viewing or to supply copies of reports or documents, the publication of which is restricted due to confidentiality of the information contained.

A decision notice for each key decision is published within 6 days of it having been made. This is open for public inspection on the Council's Website, Council Information Centres and Council Offices.

The law and the Council's Constitution provides for urgent key decisions to be made. A decision notice will be published for these in exactly the same way.

Forward Plan 1 April 2012 to 31 July 2012

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-32 Land at Pyms Lane and Minshull New Road, Crewe	To consider the sale of the freehold interest at Pyms Lane, and to explore the sale of land at Minshull New Road.	Cabinet	5 Mar 2012	N/A	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-33 Improvements to Adults Social Care Services	To approve the decommissioning of named social care establishments and invest in other respite and day service provision to improve service delivery.	Cabinet	5 Mar 2012	Public meetings, day centre and stakeholder meetings, questionnaires, Council web site.	Adult Social Care	Lorraine Butcher, Strategic Director (Children, Families and Adults)
CE11/12-35 Options for Waste Treatment PFI Project	To approve the recommendations of the Joint Waste Board to formally abandon the Waste Treatment PFI procurement project and to write off capital expenditure.	Cabinet, Council	5 Mar 2012	N/A	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-36 Connecting Cheshire - Superfast Broadband	To consider the Cheshire, Warrington and Halton local broadband plan and investment to provide for 90% coverage across the borough.	Cabinet	5 Mar 2012	Public launch, presentations to local business groups, town and parish councils and the telecommunications sector.	Sustainable Communities	Lisa Quinn, Director of Finance and Business Services
CE11/12-38 Review of the Local Development Scheme	To consider the revised Local Development Scheme 2012-2014 which sets out the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan.	Cabinet	5 Mar 2012	N/A	Sustainable Communities	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-34 Proposed Expansion of Oakefield Primary and Nursery School, Crewe	To approve the expansion of Oakefield Primary and Nursery School, Crewe from 315 to 420 school places, with a proposed implementation date of September 2012.	School Organisation Sub-Committee	6 Mar 2012	School organisations, East Cheshire Association of Primary School Heads, local Headteachers through meetings and the School Organisation website.	Children and Families	Lorraine Butcher, Strategic Director (Children, Families and Adults)

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE10/11-49/1 Future Operation Knutsford Cinema	To decide on the future running and preferred operating model.	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Cabinet Member for Prosperity	Not before 15th Mar 2012	Local community groups and Knutsford Town Council.	Health and Wellbeing	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE10/11-49/2 Future Operation of Crewe Lyceum Theatre	To decide on the future running and preferred operating model.	Cabinet	2 Apr 2012	Voice for Crewe, local community groups, Crewe Charter Trustees,	Health and Wellbeing	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-27 Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy	To approve the policy.	Cabinet	2 Apr 2012	The public and the third sector, including on line consultation.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-28 Admission Arrangements and Local Authority Co-ordinated Scheme 2013	To approve changes in admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for which the LA is the admission authority.	Cabinet	2 Apr 2012	With admission authorities and neighbouring authorities.	Children and Families 14th December 2011	Lorraine Butcher, Strategic Director (Children, Families and Adults)

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-37 Tatton Vision - Catering Service Delivery	To consider options for the future provision of catering.	Cabinet	2 Apr 2012	N/A	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-40 Corporate Equality and Diversity Objectives	To consider the results of a consultation on the Council's objectives, to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2012.	Cabinet	2 Apr 2012	Public consultation via the website has taken place.	Sustainable Communities	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-41 Future Operation of the Old Town Hall, Macclesfield	To decide upon the future running and preferred operating model for the Old Town Hall.	Cabinet	30 Apr 2012	With Macclesfield Charter Trustees and Macclesfield Forum.	Environment sand Scrutiny	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-42 Review of Discretionary Rate Relief Policy	To amend policy so applicants for discretionary rate relief must also apply for small business rate relief if appropriate, award top-up relief to those qualifying for mandatory rural settlement relief and to remove any legacy authority protection.	Cabinet	30 Apr 2012	N/A	Corporate	Lisa Quinn, Director of Finance and Business Services

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	Relevant Scrutiny Committee	How to make representation to the decision made
CE11/12-39 Cheshire Shared Services Legal Entity	To consider the actions necessary to set up a Separate Legal Entity (SLE) for the ICT, HR and Finance and Occupational Health Shared Services, in shadow operation from 1 April 2012 prior to transfer to a SLE proper from 1 April 2013.	Cabinet	28 May 2012	With Chester West and Chester Council.	Corporate	Lisa Quinn, Director of Finance and Business Services
CE11/12-21 Cheshire Homechoice - Allocation Policy Review	To approve the allocation policy for adoption.	Cabinet	23 Jul 2012	Partner housing providers, Homechoice officers, housing benefits, Police and community safety, tenants and residents.	Environment and Prosperity 21st February 2012	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-30 Strategic Tenancy Strategy	In accordance with the Localism Act to publish a Tenancy Strategy setting out the broad objectives to be taken into consideration by Social Landlords when producing their own policies, and on the granting and reissuing of tenancies.	Cabinet	23 Jul 2012	Registered Providers and their Board Members, Stakeholders. Further guidance awaited from DCLG.	Environment and Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)
CE11/12-29 Crewe Green Link Road Highway Scheme - Revised Area of CPO	To consider an amended area for the compulsory purchase of land associated with this scheme.	Cabinet	20 Aug 2012	Affected land owners and developers.	Prosperity	John Nicholson, Strategic Director (Places and Organisational Capacity)

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**REPORT TO: Corporate Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Meeting: 17 April 2012
Report of: Head of HR & OD
Subject/Title: Sickness Absence Report

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of sickness absence rates within the Council and sets out the future plans for optimising attendance.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Sickness absence is treated seriously by the Council and has been reviewed regularly since Cheshire East Council was established in 2009.
- 2.2 During 2009/10, the average number of days lost due to sickness was 7.05 which rose to 8.19 days during 2010/11. Based on the sickness absence rate up to the third quarter of 2011/12, it is anticipated that a similar or marginally higher rate will be reached during the last financial year. This set against a target figure of 9 days.
- 2.3 By way of comparison, a North West Employers survey carried out in April 2011 determined that the average sickness absence rate for Unitary Councils in the North West was 9.15 days. Setting this in a wider context the annual report of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) into Absence Management for 2011 confirms that for employers in public services with 5000 or more staff, the average number of days lost was 9.6 days and for private sector services was 11.8 days. This report reveals that absence rates increase with the size of the workforce and the CIPD had previously hypothesised that this was because people who work in smaller organisations work in smaller teams where their absence is more likely to be noticeable and disruptive. However they now believe that it is more likely to be due to organisational culture and perhaps the sick pay schemes on offer, which are more generous in the larger organisations in both the private and public sectors.
- 2.4 Over sixty percent of all working days lost due to sickness is categorised as long term sickness and accounts for approximately a quarter of all the employees absent. (Long term sickness is defined by the Council as 15 working days or more).
- 2.5 There are a number of contributory factors that may be leading to an increase in sickness absence statistics. It is considered to be partly due to the current sickness reporting arrangements which are felt to be robust and hence more accurate. The introduction of Dashboard reports has also enabled managers to monitor sickness in their areas much more easily. With the initial

restructuring of the Council now completed, following Local Government Reorganisation, managers have been appointed to substantive positions, have been trained in attendance management and reporting procedures and are more familiar with the systems.

- 2.6 It is also not unexpected that some employees may be experiencing stress and anxiety. Over recent years the Council has been comprehensively restructured and like all public sector organisations has experienced a challenging financial situation leading to further reviews and uncertainty for staff, which included the recent review of their terms and conditions of employment.

2.7 HOT SPOTS

- 2.7.1 During the early part of this financial year, the Waste & Recycling Service accounted for the highest number of days lost due to sickness absence (510 days) which equated to 37% of all absences in the Directorate. Furthermore over half of the employees absent due to long terms sickness in the Places Directorate work in the Service (24 in number). Streetscape and Bereavement Services experienced the next highest number of days lost due to sickness (268 days) with 10 of the 23 employees who were absent in this period being on long term sickness absence.

- 2.7.1 As a consequence of this, the Waste & Recycling Service was identified as a “hot spot” and used as a pilot for strategic intervention. Together with the local management team, the HR team analysed the sickness patterns of all employee’s and agreed a plan which included:

- Ensuring that return to work interviews were conducted rigorously and in a timely manner;
- Reviewing longer term absence and ensuring that all such employees had attended Occupational Health for further advice guidance and support;
- Where cases were more serious, management held case reviews with HR and Occupational Health to ensure that employees and their absences were being dealt with appropriately;

- 2.7.2 In addition, the Health and Safety Team were involved in reminding employees of preventative measures in relation to injuries, as part of which management reviewed all manual handling training to ensure that employees had attended updating training as appropriate.

- 2.7.3 As a result of these measures absence rates in the Waste & Recycling Service reduced from an average of 2.25 days per employee in the second quarter to 2.11 days in the third quarter of 2011/12.

This approach will be rolled out during 2012/13 for other “hot spots” beginning shortly with Individual Commissioning in Adults Services.

3.0 REASONS FOR ABSENCE

3.1 The following health conditions have consistently been the top three causes of hours lost due to sickness for Cheshire East since 2009:-

- Mental health disorders (including stress, depression and anxiety)
- accounted for over 30% of all hours lost during the third quarter of 2011/12.
- Digestive & Respiratory problems
- accounted for almost 17% of all hours lost during the third quarter
- Musculoskeletal system problems
- accounted for just over 14% of all hours lost in the third quarter

3.2 The highest number of incidents of sickness however, were due to digestive and respiratory problems. Absences relating to these two conditions were overwhelmingly short-term.

3.3 The following table highlights the reason for the highest number of occurrences and highest percentage of hours lost by Directorate:-

	Reason for highest % of occurrences (primarily accounting for short term absences)	Reason for highest % of hours lost
Places	Digestive Problems	Musculoskeletal
People	Digestive Problems	Mental Health Disorders
HR&OD	Digestive & Respiratory Problems	Digestive Problems
Policy & Performance	Digestive Problems	Mental Health Disorders
Legal & Democratic	Respiratory Problems	Respiratory Problems
Finance	Digestive Problems	Musculoskeletal

4.0 FUTURE ACTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Council's current sickness absence rate is not acceptable and impacts on the Council's ability to deliver services and the costs of so doing. To address this, management will be further supported in their responsibilities to effectively manage their teams and in particular attendance, in the following ways:

4.2 The Oracle HR Information System has been updated and from May 2012 will begin to send out alerts to line managers when employees hit the trigger points at which further action should be taken under the Council's Attendance Management Policy. These alerts are; automated, timely and will essentially

replace the need for a manager or HR Officer to monitor information in order to identify the need to take action. The alerts will be sent via Dashboard and it will therefore be essential for managers to log onto the system on a daily basis and to take appropriate action under the Council's policy in response to each alert.

- 4.3 The Attendance Management Policy will be reviewed with a view to simplifying the process and ensuring that the trigger points are appropriate in the circumstances and support managers in taking action on attendance at a timely and early stage.
- 4.4 The HR Delivery Team will continue to provide coaching and training for managers in attendance management, both through the Corporate Training Programme and also on a local one-to-one or team basis as required and considered effective. This training will focus on the proactive management of attendance with a view to retaining employees in work and to support them in returning to work as soon as is practically possible.
- 4.5 During May the Council will hold a number of Health and Wellbeing events. These events will not only raise awareness and provide valuable information and support around some key 'health and wellbeing' themes such as healthy eating, exercise and stress, they will also highlight the range of resources and facilities available to employees and managers through the Council's Occupational Health service, HR and our benefits providers.
- 4.6 In addition to these events, the HR team will continue to work closely with the Occupational Health Service to identify pro-active health promotion strategies and activities that can be rolled out across the Council and sustained in the longer term. In particular, the immediate focus will be on strategies relating to stress management. Work on this has already begun with improved ways of working such as manual handling training being provided in order to help reduce the number of musculoskeletal conditions and absences being experienced. To promote this work and highlight the range of resources available, the HR team has developed a comprehensive stress management site on the intranet which signposts employees and managers to these resources and helps them to identify and manage stress in the workplace.
- 4.7 The Council is also exploring whether an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) could be introduced. An EAP is a resource for employees to enable them to access support, usually in the form of counselling, to help them deal with difficult issues (whether work-related or in their personal life). There is plenty of evidence to show that an EAP can contribute to the Council's efforts to control or reduce absence levels, both in duration and total number. For example, an EAP can provide additional support for an employee on long term sick leave which may enable them to return to work sooner. It can also play an important role in helping individuals manage their stress levels as the counselling service provided by an EAP can help individuals cope with pressures, worries and stress, to the benefit of their performance and productivity at work.
- 4.8 HR Business Partners will continue to attend; Service Area, Departmental and Senior Management Teams in order to; share attendance reports; to highlight

any problems locally and to remind managers of the procedures and support available.

- 4.9 Messages regarding general wellbeing and the need to address sickness will continue to be promoted through Team Talk.
- 4.10 As part of the pay consultation for 2013/14 the Employer's Organisation at a national level have invited the unions to commence discussions immediately on a range of related issues covering pay, terms and conditions and reform of the national negotiating machinery. It is understood that the terms of the sick pay scheme will form part of these discussions.

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