

Time began: 10.30am
Time ended: 11.07am

**Personnel Committee
24 June 2021**

Present Councillors Sandhu (Chair)
 Councillors Carr, A Holmes, Pegg, Dhindsa, Skelton,
 Prosser

Officers present Liz Best – Strategic Human Resources Manager
 Tania Hay – Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager
 Paul McMahan – Principal Lawyer
 Simon Brown – Legal Officer

01/21 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Eyre, Cllr Pandey and Liz Moore.

02/21 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

03/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

04/21 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 April 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

05/21 The Apprenticeship Project Update

The Committee received a report from the Head of Occupational Development on The Apprenticeship Project Update. This report was presented by the Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager.

The report provided an update on the Apprenticeship Project and the current key areas of work taking place. This included an update on the Council's Levy payments and drawdown to 11 June 2021. The report also provided an update on the creation of the new Employment and Skills Board.

The Committee noted that step 4 of the government's roadmap had been moved back and that as a result of this delay, most training was still taking place virtually. It was reported that some young apprentices were requiring

extra support due to the pandemic and that the Council was providing this support and prioritising their welfare.

It was reported that the council had received a mixed response from training providers on what the new normal may look like. It was noted that some providers were not intending to go back to face to face delivery and would continue with virtual classes and only deliver face to face assessments and exams. It was also noted that other providers were hoping to go back to face to face or a blended approach with the appropriate risk assessments in place and following social distancing guidelines.

The Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager informed the Committee that one of the Council's Social Work Apprentices had won the Nottingham Trent University Apprenticeship Award for Public Services. It was noted that the Council's management and leadership programme was continuing to be very successful and that several of the Council's Apprentices had recently completed their programmes receiving high grades.

The Chair and members of the Committee congratulated the winner of the Nottingham Trent University Apprenticeship Award for Public Services.

It was reported that the Council were now receiving expressions of interest for the next intake in September 2021 for levels 5,6 and 7. It was noted that the Council were continuing to work in partnership with the University of Derby to provide these programmes and that Q & A sessions had been organised to further promote this opportunity.

The Committee noted that as part of the LGA's support offer for Council's they offered Derby City Council the opportunity to undertake an Apprenticeship MOT. The Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager informed the Committee that the MOT was essentially a health check, a mini review of a local authority's apprenticeship programme and was designed to:

- develop a clear picture of a council's apprenticeship programme, consider what it is doing well and which areas it should consider for improvement
- understand what the apprentice experience is like at the council and share best practice. This includes speaking to apprentices directly.
- show how the council compares to the national and regional averages on apprenticeships starts, levy spend, schools and maturity model self-assessment
- provide an external assessment of the council's performance against the National Maturity Model to compare that with the council's own assessment.
- produce a short report setting out progress, comparisons, improvement priorities and identifying areas where LGA support can help.

It was noted that the review had taken place on 10 June and that the LGA's findings and report would be brought to a future Personnel Committee meeting.

The Committee noted that as of 11 June 2021, the Council had transferred a total of £2,978,702.62 into the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Levy Digital Account and had drawn down £1,206,841.96 for apprenticeship training programmes. It was reported that the Council was now experiencing the expiration of funds monthly: as of 11 June 2021, this amounted to £487,582.95 in total.

The Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager informed the Committee that total Levy drawn down including expired funds was £1,694,424.88 which equated to 57% of the Council's Levy fund.

It was noted that the Council were working with 14 training providers and were spending on average £35k per month. It was reported that the Council had 152 apprentices.

A councillor questioned whether it was possible to check how the government were spending the Council's expired funds. The Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager informed the Committee that expired funds went into a national pot and were then utilised by other local authorities to train apprentices. It was noted that it was not possible to ascertain exactly where the Council's expired funds were utilised as they were combined with those of other local authorities.

A councillor questioned how the Council planned to increase the percentage of the Levy Fund that the Council were drawing down. The Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager informed the Committee that the Council were constantly reviewing how the Levy Fund could be utilised more. It was noted that the Council were exploring ways to transfer funds to local businesses and to provide opportunities to children in care. It was reported that there was a period of 24 months to spend levy funds and that the Council were exploring skills gaps and were developing pathways that would fill these gaps and utilise the Levy Fund. The Committee noted that the Council had experienced issues with spending the levy Fund to begin with and were now having to play catch up.

It was noted that the Council was spending a much higher percentage of its Levy Funds than many other local authorities. It was reported that there were complex rules around how these funds could be spent which made it difficult to utilise them.

A councillor questioned how the Levy Funds were being used to support small local businesses. The committee noted that the ESFA had recently released new guidance on this and that from August 2021, there would be a new, streamlined, mechanism for small local businesses to bid for funds from the Council. It was reported that the Council also advertised the availability of these funds on its website.

A councillor questioned whether there was an update on the uptake of apprentices by local schools. The Committee noted that the Apprenticeship Team had found it difficult to engage with schools during the pandemic but

were continuing to contact schools to make them aware of this opportunity. It was reported that recently engagement from schools had increased with five schools approaching the Council.

A councillor questioned whether the Committee could support officers by writing to the ESFA encouraging them to relax the rules on how Levy funds could be spent. The Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager informed the Committee that this had been done in the past and that the Council had also communicated its position on this issue to government through the LGA. It was agreed that another letter would be written to the ESFA encouraging them to relax rules around how the Levy Fund could be spent.

The Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager agreed to provide the Committee with further information on how the Council planned to increase the percentage of the Levy funds it draws down at a future Personnel Committee meeting.

The committee noted that currently, the creation of the Employment and Skills Board was dependent on conversations within the Council's Learning Inclusion and Skills Service and Development and Growth Service. It was reported that a meeting had taken place on 15 June 2021 and that the Terms of Reference for this Board were now being discussed. It was noted that the two responsible Directors had committed to giving an update to the Committee at its next meeting.

A councillor asked whether a date had been set for the first meeting of the new Employment and Skills Board and was informed that a date had not yet been agreed. A councillor asked who would make up the membership for this new Board. The Committee noted that the proposed Board members were: Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Chair, Service Director for Learning, Inclusion and Skills, Head of Adult Learning Service, Head of Economic Growth and Head of Organisational Development and the Apprenticeship Project Manager.

The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below.

- 1. To note the update on the Apprenticeship Project and the current key areas of work.**
- 2. To note the Levy payments made to date, the drawdown for training programmes that we have instigated and expired funds as of 11 June 2021.**
- 3. To note the update on the creation of the new Employment and Skills Board.**

06/21 Attendance Management Project Update

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources on Attendance Management Project Update. This report was presented by the Strategic Human Resources Manager.

The report provided the Committee with an update on the Council's performance on attendance management at Quarter 4 2020/21. The report also provided an update on the overall year's performance against the Council's attendance targets.

The Committee noted that the top reason for absence in Quarter 4 was Coronavirus. It was noted that Covid-19 related absences had increased from 14.44% in Quarter 3 to 23.8% in Quarter 4 and had therefore become to the Council's highest absence reason in Quarter 4. It was noted that Stress/Anxiety, whilst being the highest absence in Quarter 3 at 26.71%, decreased to 19.93% in Quarter 4, a decrease of 6.78% from Quarter 3. The Committee noted that the actual cases identified as Stress/Anxiety in Quarter 4 was 84 against an actual case number of 104 in Quarter 3. It was also noted that Musculo-skeletal absences were the third highest reason for absence in Quarter 4 at 10.11%.

It was reported that the number of days lost per FTE in Quarter 4 showed a decrease from 2.84 in the previous quarter to 2.54 days lost.

The Committee noted that the outturn for 2020/21, at 10.47 FTE days lost, was an improvement on the outturn for 2019/20 of 12.78 FTE days lost.

It was reported that this reduction was notable, especially during a global pandemic. It was noted that managers had continued to be accountable for managing attendance effectively within their teams. The Strategic Human Resources Manager informed the Committee that if COVID-19 (Suspected and Confirmed) illnesses were removed, the outturn would be 8.94 FTE days lost, and the Council would have achieved its attendance target of 9.4 FTE days.

It was reported that the Council had hosted another on-line positive psychology event with its external partner, during February. It was noted that this focussed on Home Schooling and further events were planned over the coming months. The Strategic Human Resources Manager informed the Committee that the content of future events would be dependent on the context that the Council found itself in at the time. It was noted that Home Schooling had been the subject earlier in the year due to the challenges many colleagues were facing at that time. It was reported that these sessions were recorded and available to view for a period of 15 days for those who are unable to attend the live event.

It was noted that the Council had also made amendments to its Wellbeing pages on iDerby, the Council's intranet, to simplify navigation for those colleagues requiring immediate assistance. The Strategic Human Resources Manager informed the Committee that a "Need support now" button had been added reducing the time it took colleagues to access information.

It was reported that the Council continued to support colleagues through the Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) and had conducted a review of activity over the past 12 months to capture any lessons learnt from the mostly remote nature of the engagement that has taken place. It was noted that this review had provided an opportunity to consider repositioning the MHFA role in line with expected future demands over the coming months.

The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below.

- 1. To note that the Council's performance on attendance management Quarter 4 for 2020/21 was 2.54 days lost for each full-time equivalent colleague (FTE) against a target of 2.36 days lost per FTE for the period.**
- 2. To note the Council's outturn for the year 2020/21 was 10.47 FTE days lost against a target of 9.4 FTE days.**
- 3. To note that if the COVID-19 (Suspected and Confirmed) illnesses were removed from the attendance management data, the outturn would be 8.94 FTE days lost and the Council would have achieved its attendance target of 9.4 FTE days**

MINUTES END.