

Time began: 4.00pm  
Time ended: 4.55pm

**Personnel Committee  
16 November 2020**

Present                      Councillors Hezelgrave (Chair)  
                                    Councillors A Holmes, Testro, McCristal, Pegg, Sandhu

Officers present        Liz Moore – Head of Human Resources  
                                    Paul McMahon – Principal Lawyer

**01/20        Apologies**

Apologies were received from Tania Hay.

**02/20        Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair**

There were no late items.

**03/20        Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

**04/20        Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 December  
                                    2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

**05/20        The Apprenticeship Project Update**

The Committee received a report from the Service Director for Human Resources and Occupational Development. This report was presented by the Head of Human Resources.

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 16 October 2020. The report also provided an update on the retention rate for apprentices once they had completed their initial programme along with a breakdown of the ethnicity, gender and salary banding makeup of the Council's apprentices and ethnicity and gender data for apprentice starts and achievements in the D2N2 region.

The Head of Human Resources reported that the Council's training providers were continuing to deliver their apprenticeship programmes, initially moving their training delivery online. It was noted that tutorials and 1:1's were being

held using various communication applications. It was noted that with the appropriate risk assessments in place and social distancing guidelines being followed, some of the Council's providers were starting to reintroduce classroom-based delivery. The Head of Human Resources reported that officers were holding regular account management meetings with key providers, which included apprentice progress reports.

It was noted that there had been an impact on the number of new start apprentices due to Covid19 and that the Council had only had two new starts since March. It was reported that various managers were exploring the viability of advertising for a further seven new starts within different service areas. It was noted that as it was becoming apparent that remote working would be in place for a large proportion of the workforce for the foreseeable future, officers were exploring the possibility of encouraging recruitment where appropriate.

It was reported that there had also been an impact on the numbers of colleagues being put forward by their managers for apprenticeship programmes due to the current circumstances.

It was noted that the current numbers on apprenticeship programmes were:

19 Team Lead/Supervisor Level 3  
24 Operational/Departmental Manager Degree Level 5  
16 Chartered Manager Degree Level 6  
13 Senior Leader Masters Degree Level 7

The Committee noted that 18 apprentices had asked to have a break in learning due to the impact of COVID-19 and that the University of Derby had been supportive of the requests. It was noted that some colleagues had resumed their studies in September with some requiring a longer break and that the Council were not paying the University during this break. It was reported that work was being taken to explore the development of the internal delivery of Social Care level 2 and 3 apprenticeship programmes and that the aim was to design the programmes to support the Council to continue to develop its social care staff in line with current legislation.

It was noted that progress on the transfer of a proportion of the Council's unspent levy account had been made; with the Council is now transferring funds to two local employers. The Committee noted that the newly appointed Principal Employment and Skills Manager, within the Economic Growth Service would be accountable for coordinating and implementing a strategic approach on the 25% Levy transfer moving forward.

The Head of Human Resources reported that the Council were now utilising the YPO (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation) as its main procurement method. It was noted that this was a very flexible 'Light Touch Regime' framework which would enable the Council to continue to procure training services whilst remaining compliant with its procurement and financial procedures.

The Committee noted that the government had confirmed that all apprenticeship frameworks would be withdrawn by the 2020/21 academic year and would be replaced by standards. It was reported that the last date for new starts for all remaining live apprenticeship frameworks was 31 July 2020 and that all starts from 1 August 2020 would be on new, employer-designed standards.

The Head of Human Resources reported that as part of the transition to standards after 31 July 2020 there would no longer be Business Administration Level 2 or Teaching Assistant Level 2 programmes. It was reported that this would impact on the new start apprentice numbers for the Council as these were its traditional entry level apprenticeships. The Committee noted that the Council had 14 Business Administration Level 2 apprentices and 11 Teaching Assistant apprentices who were either on Level 2, or who started on Level 2 and have progressed to Level 3.

The Committee noted that as of 16 October 2020, the Council had transferred a total of £2,563,890 into the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Levy Digital Account and had drawn down £899,426 for apprenticeship training programmes. It was also noted that as of November 2019, the Council had experienced expiration of funds on a monthly basis, and that as of 27 August this amounted to £277,989. It was reported that the total drawn down including expired funds was £1,177,415 and that this equated to 46% of the Council's Levy fund.

The Chair asked what happened to Levy funds that the Council did not use. The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that these funds expired and that a comparison of expired Levy funds between Derby City Council and other Local Authorities would be provided once this information became available.

The Head of Human Resources reported that measuring leavers between 1 January 2020 and 25 August 2020, the Council's retention rate for new start apprentices once they had completed their initial programme was 75%. It was noted that apprentices coming to the end of their fixed term training contract were given support and advice, and were given priority, following staff who had been redeployed, for recruitment to any appropriate vacancies within Derby City Council.

It was reported that if an apprentice was aged between 16 and 18, or they were 19 or older but in the first year of their apprenticeship, they attracted the National Minimum Wage for an Apprentice. It was noted that when an apprentice had completed one years' service of their apprenticeship, and they were above 19 years of age, then they were legally entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age group.

The Chair commented that it was concerning that the Council's apprentices were being payed in line with the National Living Wage while other members of staff were being payed in line with the Living Wage Foundation's version of the

'living wage'.

A councillor questioned whether the Council had been successful in encouraging schools to hire more apprentices. The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that the Apprenticeship Project Manager continued to work with schools in order to assist them with recruiting more apprentices.

**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 16 October 2020.**
- 3. To note the retention rate for apprentices once they have completed their initial programme.**
- 4. To note a breakdown of the ethnicity, gender and salary banding makeup of the Council's apprentices and ethnicity and gender data for apprentice starts and achievements in the D2N2 region.**
- 5. To refer to the Apprenticeship Board to investigate whether apprentices at the Council should be payed the 'living wage' as defined by the Living Wage Foundation.**
- 6. To refer to the Apprenticeship Board to investigate how local schools could be assisted in helping young people to secure apprenticeships.**
- 7. To refer to the Apprenticeship Board to investigate how the Council could help to increase the number of first-start apprenticeships in Derby.**

## **06/20      Attendance Management Project Update**

The Committee received a report from the Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development on Attendance Management Project Update.

This report was presented by the Head of Human Resources and provided an update on the Council's performance on attendance management at Quarter 1 2020/21.

The Committee noted that the Quarter 1 2020/21 period actual of 2.24 days showed a decrease from the Quarter 1 2019/20 period actual where the result was 2.89 days lost per FTE. It was noted that the Quarter 1 result of 2.24 days lost was below the quarterly target of 2.36 days. The Committee noted that the top three absence reasons (non-schools) in this period were Stress/Anxiety at 31.02% absences; Coronavirus: COVID19 (Suspected and Confirmed) which was 12.27%; and Depression/Psychological Illness at 6.66% of all absences.

The Head of Human Resources reported that the Quarter 1 period fell at the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore Coronavirus:COVID-19

(Suspected and Confirmed) as the second highest reason for sickness absence during this period was perhaps not surprising.

The Committee noted that the number of days lost due to stress and anxiety had decreased very slightly in Quarter 1 in 2020/21 compared to the same period in 2019/20. It was reported that managers continued to offer support and advice to colleagues absent due to stress/anxiety and continued to support their return to work.

It was noted that many frontline services and key workers had continued to provide excellent services in person throughout the pandemic. It was reported that following the government's initial advice to stay at home and save lives, many colleagues whose roles enabled them to do so had been working from home since 23 March 2020 and had been carrying out their full contractual hours from home, rather than from their usual work location. It was noted that it had been suggested that the significantly increased homeworking may have had a positive impact on the sickness absence figures during Quarter 1, compared to the same period last year. The Committee noted that the Council didn't hold data about how many colleagues worked from home in Quarter 1 2019/20 and how many in Quarter 1 2020/21 and therefore the Council couldn't draw a correlation between increased working from home and a reduction in sickness absence for this period.

The Head of Human Resources reported that a short on-line wellbeing survey was carried out in June 2020, primarily aimed at those colleagues who were working some, or all, of their contracted hours on a remote basis. The Committee noted that there were approximately 900 responses, with the following results:

- 91% of respondents knew how to access wellbeing support
- 80% felt connected to their teams/service
- 88% felt valued and supported by their manager
- 83% felt well-informed about what was happening in the council

It was noted that the majority of respondents felt supported and knew how to access support from a wellbeing perspective and that a follow up on-line wellbeing survey would be issued shortly, to get updated feedback from colleagues.

The Chair asked for the results of the upcoming wellbeing survey to be brought to a future meeting.

It was noted that future reports to Personnel Committee about attendance management performance would be set in the context of a redefined approach on leadership and also wellbeing. It was reported that the future focus on wellbeing would include promoting early intervention and increasing resilience and personal ownership of wellbeing, as well as embedding the extensive virtual wellbeing offer.

A councillor questioned whether a comparison was available for the number of calls to the Wellbeing Support Team from colleagues so far this year compared with the same point in 2019. The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that these figures weren't available but that data on the Employee Assistance Programme was available and that this would be passed on to the Committee.

**The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below.**

- 1. To note that the Council's performance on attendance management Quarter 1 for 2020/21 was 2.24 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 future focus on attendance management will be as an outcome of the Council's leadership and wellbeing approach, and that future reports will be within the context of this approach.**

## **07/20      COVID-19 and workforce response**

The Committee received a report from the Service Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development on COVID-19 and workforce response.

This report was presented by the Head of Human Resources and provided an update on how the Council's colleagues had responded and adapted to the challenges of COVID-19 in continuing to deliver great services to the citizens of Derby.

It was noted that the Council's workforce had played a major role in enabling the Council to continue to deliver key services. It was reported that many Council colleagues had been required to adapt quickly to new ways of working, and in some instances, work in new roles or services. The Head of Human Resources reported that colleagues and partners had delivered services around a common purpose during the pandemic, and that this ability to coalesce around a clear mission and purpose was a strength to build on for the Council's future service delivery.

It was noted that in order to temporarily reallocate colleagues at short notice to key services as quickly as possible to support service delivery, the Council had set up a Hub to match skills and demand. It was also noted that over 160 Council colleagues were temporarily reallocated into a variety of roles, including in the Community Hub; cemetery and crematorium; refuse collection; residential care homes; Carelink; Derby Direct; and pickers for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the centralised PPE hub/store which was set up at London Road to supply PPE to Council colleagues and providers across the City.

It was reported that a number of colleagues had also temporarily supported the NHS on a short-term basis, helping to set up GP mobile hubs and marshalling

car parking at local temporary test and trace sites. It was noted that Derby Homes had also enabled some of their team to temporarily support the delivery of Council services.

It was noted that managers had been required to adjust to managing and enabling their teams remotely, as well as recruiting and inducting new starters during a pandemic. The Committee noted that a positive outcome from this had been a focus on outcomes being delivered rather than the focus on work being delivered within the pre-COVID working hours pattern. It was noted that this was an important feature to take forward in the Council's focus on outcomes and outcome-based accountability, rather than an emphasis on carrying out tasks.

The Chair commented that it was positive to hear that managers had responded well to the circumstances facing them and had learned new skills.

The Committee noted that the ICT team had played a major role in responding at pace to deliver hardware and software upgrades, to enable a move to working remotely for many colleagues. It was also noted that virtual meetings had become a regular feature of the working day, and the ability to connect and collaborate with colleagues and external partners had been enhanced.

The Chair commented that it was positive to hear that the IT Team had responded quickly and successfully to the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

It was reported that developing a culture where colleagues took personal accountability for their health and wellbeing was a key area of focus for the Council, and that an on-line wellbeing survey would be issued shortly, to get updated feedback from colleagues.

The Head of Human Resources reported that collaborative working and co-production of solutions, working at pace and being citizen-focused to improve lives in the city also informed how the Council developed its colleagues with the skills and leadership capability to focus on the priority needs for Derby. It was noted that a report would be brought to a future Personnel Committee meeting to set out the updated organisational design approach.

**The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below:**

- 1. To note the content of the report.**
- 2. To continue to monitor the appropriate use of agency staff, the length of agreements and to consider other alternatives whenever possible to ensure that a reduction is achieved.**
- 3. To note the increase over the previous quarter.**
- 4. That the Personnel Committee express their thanks to the Council's workforce for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

MINUTES END.