

Time began: 10.30am  
Time ended: 11:14am

**Personnel Committee  
14 September 2023**

Present                      Councillor Evans (Chair)  
                                    Councillors Bonser, Amin, Eyre, A Holmes, Nawaz, Smale

Officers present        Rebecca Hilton-Barber – HR Advisor  
                                    Adele Ashmore – Strategic HR Manager  
                                    Tania Hay – Organisational Development Manager  
                                    Paul McMahon - Principal Lawyer

**07/23        Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor J Khan and Liz Moore.

**08/23        Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair**

There were no late items.

**09/23        Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**10/23        Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 June 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

**11/23        Colleague health and wellbeing update and  
Quarter one Attendance Management  
Performance**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Corporate Management which provided an update on Colleague health and wellbeing update and Quarter one Attendance Management Performance.

It was noted that an integral part of the Council's wellbeing offer was the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which was externally hosted. Colleagues could access information and advice on a range of health and financial matters, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. It was noted that the Council's usage was at 4.5%, above an industry average of 1.7%. A total of 13 new counselling cases were opened in June and 14 in July.

It was reported that the People Services directorate remained the highest user of the counselling service at 72% of all sessions during this period and that the

average take-up remained at 7 counselling sessions each. The most popular format for the session was telephone consultations.

The Committee noted that the top three reasons for accessing counselling sessions across all council directorates were anxiety, women's health and work-related conflict. Personal Issues accounted for 64% of access and work-related issues accounted for 36% of access which was an increase on the last report. Whilst the data of who accesses counselling was never disclosed to the Council, headline figures of levels of take up were shared at a directorate level.

It was reported that the Council's performance on attendance for the current financial year quarter one result of 2.78 FTE days lost showed a positive decrease against the quarter four 2022/23 period actual result of 3.00 FTE days lost. This was a positive decrease when compared to quarter one 2022/23 where the period result was 3.24 FTE days lost.

It was noted that the quarter one result gave a year-end forecast of 11.11 FTE days lost which would be 0.61 days higher than the year-end target of 10.5 FTE days lost, but positively lower than the 2022/23 13.34 FTE days lost end of year result.

It was noted that the top 3 absence reasons for quarter one were as follows:

1. Stress/Anxiety - 21.05% of all absence. (not including Depression/Psychological illness related absences)
2. Musculoskeletal - 17.24% of all absence.
3. Operations Post operative recovery & other hospital treatments - 6.87% of all absence.

It was reported that the Council would be exploring the following actions during 2023/24:

- Potential to develop the Council's existing mental health champion network into an over-arching wellbeing champion network to signpost colleagues on a range of health and wellbeing issues.
- Improving the understanding of occupational health and wellbeing and developing a culture of wellbeing – by regular team discussions to ensure that the Council's comprehensive wellbeing offer was understood, complemented by a wellbeing programme running throughout the year.
- Providing appropriate guidance based on national campaigns and relevant research in line with NHS partners. This would provide information to the workforce to allow them to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing.
- Providing the support and tools needed to make healthy choices, so that colleagues could continue to take responsibility for improving their own health and wellbeing.

- Developing a wellbeing activity calendar, and all the activity associated with the planned actions to be supported by the identified champion network.

A councillor asked whether there had been any issues with the Council's new absence reporting system. It was noted that the new system had received positive feedback so far and that e-forms were available to guide colleagues through the process.

A councillor asked how many colleagues had used the employee assistance programme. It was agreed that the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Manager would provide this information at the next meeting.

It was reported that more information on the deep dive into Peoples Services would be provided at the next meeting.

#### **Resolved:**

- 1. to note the colleague health and wellbeing offer that is available to the Council's colleagues, and the importance of supporting colleagues to take personal responsibility for their wellbeing.**
- 2. to note that from 1 June 2023, the Council has moved from an externally hosted absence reporting platform to colleagues contacting their manager if they are absent from work due to ill health.**
- 3. to note the Council's attendance management performance for quarter one of 2.78 FTE days lost and a year-end forecast of 11.11 FTE days lost for 2023/24, against a year-end target of 10.5 FTE days lost.**

## **12/23      The Apprenticeship Programme**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Corporate Management which provided an update on the Apprenticeship Programme. This included the findings of the LGA 22-23 Apprenticeship Survey.

It was noted that the LGA report included information on how councils had spent their Apprenticeship Levy. It was reported that nationally, regionally and by council type the Council had the highest spend percentage of 52% and the lowest expired funds percentage 15%. The Council also had 25% of unspent funds which was the second lowest of the comparators over the time period measured by the survey.

It was noted that levy transfers started in 2018, between then and to the time the survey was carried out (Jan 2022) the Council had created 27 apprenticeships with external employers which equated to 8% of its Levy spend, which again was the second highest percentage.

It was reported that the LGA survey had enabled the Council to assess its performance against the Maturity Model and also to assess how it had performed against the national, regional and council type median ratings.

#### Leadership, Culture and Engagement

Derby's rating was C+, comparing this to the national C+, regional C, and council type C+, it was noted that the Council was performing in line with its comparators within the Maturing rating.

#### Procurement and Provider Management

Derby's rating was B+, comparing this to the national C+, regional C, and council type C-, it was noted that the Council was performing better on this pillar than its comparators and are in the Mature rating.

#### Workforce Development

Derby's rating was C-, comparing this to the national C-, regional D+, and council type C-, it was noted that the Council was performing in line with the national and council type median and higher than the regional median, again placed in the Maturing rating.

#### Implementation

Derby's rating was D-, comparing this to the national C-, regional D+, and council type C-, it was noted that the Council was not performing as well as this area to its comparators particularly with its spending plan and measuring impact and the Council was placed in the Developing rating.

#### Apprentice Experience

Derby's rating was B-, comparing this to the national C-, regional C-, and council type C-, it was noted that the Council was outperforming its comparators and it was placed in the Mature rating.

#### Maintained Schools

Derby's rating was D-, comparing this to the national D+, regional D, and council type D+, it was noted that the Council was performing slightly below its comparators, and was placed in the Developing rating.

It was reported that between the start of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017 and 1 September 2023, the Council had transferred a total of £4,620,512 into its Apprenticeship Levy Digital Account. It was noted that to date the Council had drawn down £2,556,043 for internal apprenticeship training programmes and had transferred £177,292 of its Levy fund to a number of local employers.

It was noted that between November 2019 and August 2023, £660,903 of the Council's Levy fund had expired and had been returned to the government. It was reported that as of 31 August 2023, there was £1,406,654 in the Council's Levy fund.

A councillor asked how many apprentices were new starters and how many were internal. It was noted that 6 were new starters and 29 were internal.

**Resolved:**

- 1. to note the information on the Local Government Association (LGA) 2022-23 Apprenticeships Survey findings.**
- 2. to note the Levy payments made to date, the drawdown for training programmes and expired funds as of 1 September 2023.**

## **13/23      Market Rate Supplement Policy Update – Central Policy**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Corporate Management which provided an update on the Market Rate Supplement Policy Update - Central Policy.

It was reported that the main purpose of the policy was to clarify the process for managers assessing whether an MRS was appropriate in the first instance and then making an MRS application for CLT to consider. The policy also clearly set out expectations on how an MRS would be applied, reviewed and subsequently adjusted or removed.

It was noted that under policy aspects, the policy still emphasised that an MRS should only be used in exceptional circumstances but was strengthened to make clear there should be evidence to show both recruitment and retention issues with a post, along with service disruption.

It was reported that roles and responsibilities within the MRS policy remained largely unchanged but titles had been refreshed to make current. Roles and responsibilities within the policy were expanded upon as part of the procedure.

It was noted that whilst the terms of how an MRS would be applied to a post and maintained had not changed the policy did now clarify how an MRS would be automatically adjusted, without notice, in-line with changes to basic salary (such as incremental progression and pay awards) so that the value of the MRS did not exceed the amount evidenced by the local labour market and agreed by CLT in the MRS application.

The Committee noted that once in place an MRS must be reviewed regularly to ensure it remained objectively justified. The review process had been updated to remove any ambiguity as to the review period and reiterated expectations on managers to ensure a review occurred within the 24 months' timeframe.

It was reported that previously MRS recipients were given 3 months' notice of reductions or withdrawals of an MRS following a review, MRS recipients would now be given one month's notice of the change. This reduction to the notice period ensured payments were not extended beyond what was necessary and supported the Council's pressing objective to deliver services as efficiently as possible. An MRS was intended to be a temporary payment and as such the policy, and supporting guidance, reiterated the need, allocated in the roles and

responsibilities, for clear communication to recipients so that they understood the reasons for the payment and how it would be reduced or removed.

A councillor asked whether an equality impact assessment was considered in every case. It was noted that this was considered for every MRS.

A councillor asked why the policy had been updated. The Committee noted that the Council had begun to use the policy more regularly which had triggered the update.

**Resolved:**

- 1. to note the proposed main changes to the revised Market Rate Supplement Policy as set out in the Supporting Information section.**
- 2. to approve the revised policy (Appendix 1) and to note that subject to this ratification the revised policy, application forms and guidance will be published on the Council's intranet and a communication roll out of the changes will be shared with colleagues.**

MINUTES END.