

Time began: 10.36am
Time ended: 11.57am

**Personnel Committee
4 November 2021**

Present Councillors Sandhu (Chair)
 Councillors Carr, Pegg, Dhindsa, Prosser

Officers present Liz Moore – Head of Human Resources
 Anna Mims – Head of Employment, Skills and Adult
 Education
 Paul McMahon – Principal Lawyer
 Tania Hay – Apprenticeship Project Manager
 Adele Ashmore – HR Lead - Strategic HR
 Helen Bounds – HR Lead - Policy

13/21 Apologies

Apologies were received for Cllrs Potter, A Holmes and Skelton.

14/21 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

15/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

**16/21 Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 September
2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

17/21 Attendance Management – Quarter 2 – 2021/22

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources on Attendance Management – Quarter 2 – 2021/22. This report was presented by the Head of Human Resources. The report provided the Committee with an update on the Council's performance on attendance management at Quarter 2 2021/22.

It was noted that the top three reasons for absence in Quarter 2 were:

1. Stress/Anxiety: 19.23%, a decrease of 0.04% on Quarter 1
2. Musculoskeletal: 14.54%, an increase of 1.17% on Quarter 1
3. Covid-19 related illnesses: 11.33%, an increase of 2.08% on Quarter 1.

The Committee noted that the top three reasons for absence in Quarter 2 reflected the order of top three reasons for absence in Quarter 1.

It was reported that all Directorates had reported a FTE day loss greater than their Quarter target and that this impacted negatively on the end of year forecast for 2021/22. It was noted that the potential overall year end forecast was 10.78 FTE days against a target of 8.5 FTE days.

It was noted that following the release of the Quarter 2 data the Service Actions plans owned by the Head of Service and their Management Team would be reviewed to identify opportunities for improvements and targeted work on reducing non-attendance across all teams. It was reported that managers were continuing to take a focused approach on attendance management with regular coaching from the HR Team. It was noted that the Council were mindful that as we head into Quarter 3 and the winter months, we may see an increase in cold/flu virus transmission and absence levels. It was reported that Heads of Service had appropriate access to detailed information about attendance in their services, on which they based their action plans.

It was reported that HR and Occupational Health had been working closely to address any areas for improvement in both process and approach to ensure all colleagues who would benefit from an Occupational Health appointment were assessed in a timely manner. It was noted that COVID-19 had an increased impact on absence in Quarter 2 and that COVID-19 absence would be monitored closely throughout Quarter 3, as Derby continued to live with the impact of COVID -19.

It was noted that the Council had taken a new approach to Occupational Health appointment management which would see a slight rise in cost but better, quicker results in getting people supported and where appropriate, back into work. Previously the Council had initial appointments with a Nurse, but evidence showed that a high proportion of these concluded with referrals to Doctors and a second appointment. It was reported that due to staffing changes, the Council had the opportunity to have all appointments with Doctors and so far, 44 of 45 people who had been seen had been deemed fit for work. The Committee noted that the Council would continue with this approach and review results to ensure it maintained the benefits of the cost increase.

It was reported that having a now well-established mental health offer, the Council were focussing on other areas. It was noted that the Council had recently formed a Menopause Group in preparation for events on World Menopause Day (18 October) which saw a high level of interest. It was noted that the aim of the Council's approach was to inform, support and empower its colleagues to enable them to ask for the support they need, and to support any managers and colleagues with information to support their team members or family and friends. The Committee noted the need for support in this area was undeniable with many of the group sharing their lived experiences and the challenges and impacts they have had. It was reported that Menopause

Friends groups and Menopause Mentors along with a new Wellbeing page on our intranet site about the subject would be launched in November.

A councillor commented that it was disappointing that there had been an increase in the number of days lost per FTE compared to quarter 1. The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that absence targets were taken seriously the commented that the overall trend was positive. It was noted that and that for 2020/21 absences were under target once COVID-19 was accounted for. It was reported that Action Plans were being reviewed in order to improve absence rates.

The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below.

- 1. To note that the Council's performance on attendance management for Quarter 2 2021/22 was 2.97 days lost for each full-time equivalent colleague (FTE) against a target of 2.12 days. This shows an increase against the previous Quarter 1 2021/22 result of 2.41 days lost per FTE for the period.**
- 2. To note that if the COVID-19 (Suspected and Confirmed) illnesses were removed from the attendance management data, the Quarter 2 performance would be 2.60 FTE days lost.**

18/21 Apprenticeship Project Update

The Committee received a report on the Apprenticeship Project update. This report was sponsored by the Head of Organisational Development and was presented by the Apprenticeship Project Manager.

The Committee noted that the Council had received a LGA Apprenticeships MOT. It was noted that this process was designed to help develop the Council's apprenticeship programme by:

- Understanding our current position on apprenticeships and which areas to consider for improvement;
- Show how we compare to the national and regional averages on starts, levy spend, schools and Maturity Model self-assessment;
- Provide an external assessment of our performance against the Maturity Model to compare that with our own assessment;
- Produce a short report setting out progress, comparisons, improvement priorities and identifying areas where the LGA support can help.

It was reported that the council had received the LGA's report and that overall, the findings in the report were very positive, with the Council performing well against the national and regional averages including:

- Apprenticeship starts – Since the introduction of the Levy and Public Sector Targets we have sat broadly in the middle of the sector – although we

have not met the target in any of the three years, we have performed slightly above the average council in each year. Rising to the second council in the East Midlands in 19/20, overall, in the middle third of all councils.

- Levy spending – on average Local Authorities in England spent 27.1% of their Levy between April 2017 and March 2020. We are above the national average having spent 30.84% by March 2020.
- Maturity Model – the LGA believe that we are performing well against the Maturity Model, we are in line with or ahead of the median council in the sector in three of the five categories.
- The LGA's assessment of our performance against the Maturity Model is relatively similar to our own self-assessment, with slight differences in two areas (a slightly lower rating in Planning, Delivery Structures and Processes and slightly higher rating in Engagement respectively).

The Committee noted that the LGA had given the Council six key recommendations 'six to fix' for targeted action;

1. Develop a new apprenticeships action plan to cover key targets for the programme, 'needs-based' goals and a multi-year spending plan.
2. Implement new Oversight Board and define its responsibilities in order to secure buy-in and drive the programme forward.

It was noted that the Council appreciated that its current apprenticeship plan did need refreshing to ensure it was current and reflected the key aims of the programme whilst embedding the council's corporate approach to apprenticeships. The development of a new plan was very much dependent on the completion of the organisational redesign of service delivery. It was noted that once this piece of work had been completed, we can focus the plan at how an apprenticeship first approach can support our council services.

3. Improve delivery structures.

It was reported that on the retirement of the Council's Liaison Officer, the team had taken the opportunity to redesign the role to have more focus on engagement. It was noted that a key part of the role was to capture feedback from apprentices and managers to support with the improvement of the programme and increase manager engagement. It was reported that once the redesign of service delivery had been completed, the Council would be looking to introduce apprenticeship champions in key service areas to promote the benefits of apprenticeships.

4. Increase engagement, with a focus on schools.

It was noted that with the current level of resources within the team and the level of financial contribution the schools make to the Levy fund, the Team's focus would continue to be our council service areas. It was reported that the Council's approach with schools would remain light touch, supporting them on

an as and when basis. Sending out periodical communications, potentially resuming attending key meetings depending on the pandemic risk assessments.

5. Develop an apprenticeship First approach for recruitment linked to a workforce development led approach.

It was reported that conversations were ongoing in light of the Council's financial position. The Resources Approval Board were aware that the government incentive payment of £3000 for every newly recruited apprentice had been extended until January 2022. It was noted that discussions continued to take place with Cllr Williams who was still very supportive of adopting the National Minimum Wage for our new start level 2 and 3 apprentices but given the Council's current situation this is unlikely to happen soon.

6. Develop Mentors.

It was noted that the Council was looking to build on its current Mentor capacity. One of its Organisational Development Consultants was managing the Mentor Network Group. It was noted that the Council were exploring utilising a buddying-up approach with higher level apprentices that had completed their apprenticeships. It was noted that the Apprenticeship Engagement Officer was establishing a peer support group for newly recruited apprentices.

It was noted that the Council's first Graduations were taking place with the University of Derby in November for its Leadership and Management programmes. It was noted that the Council's Chief Executive would be in attendance along with Officers from the Organisational Development Team (ODT). It was reported that the September cohort had successfully started on programme and that the Council had expressions of interest for the January 2022 intake, that were currently going through the application process. It was noted that the Council also had a approximately 10 colleagues starting on the Level 3 Team Lead/Supervisor programme with the Adult Learning Service (ALS) in November.

It was noted that between the end of August and the end of September the Council recruited 12 new apprentices across various council service areas. Which attracted approx. £40,000 of government incentive payments. It was noted that the Council had three vacancies out to advert, with one more potential vacancy going to the Resource Approval Board.

The Committee noted that the Apprenticeship Team was currently working with Children's Services to enable them to adopt the 'Apprenticeship First' approach for their mandatory training. It was reported that the council were aiming to start the first cohort of Residential Child Care Workers on programme with Derby College in November. It was noted that this would not only support colleagues to achieve the required levels of qualification but would address

capacity issues within the Children's Workforce Development Team and reduce budget pressure.

It was noted that the Apprenticeship Team was working with ALS to develop a training offer designed to support Adults Services with their mandatory training needs, workforce development and career pathways. This would include developing their Functional Skills, Apprenticeships and Diploma's. It was reported that the Council were aiming to table this offer at their Workforce Development meeting in November.

It was noted that the Apprenticeship Team worked in collaboration with ALS to deliver two workforce development drop-in sessions in November, with the aim of reiterating the benefits of apprenticeship programmes, raising awareness of the apprenticeship offer and clarifying roles and responsibilities when embarking on apprenticeship programmes. It was noted that a collaboration plan between ALS and the ODT to upskill the Council's workforce in Maths and English was currently being worked on.

It was reported that as of 11 October 2021, the Council had transferred a total of £3,148,340.10 into the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Levy Digital Account and had drawn down £1,440,216.56 for apprenticeship training programmes.

It was noted that the Council was now experiencing the expiration of funds monthly: as of 11 October 2021, this amounted to £527,700.47 in total. It was reported that the total Levy drawn down including expired funds was £1,967,917.03 which equated to 62.5% of the Council's Levy fund.

A councillor commented that a Skills and Employment Board would provide a good oversight of the Apprenticeship Team's work. The Committee noted that at the last Committee meeting, the Service Director for Learning, Inclusion and Skills had explained how oversight was being provided through a number of alternative instruments both internally and with partners.

A councillor questioned whether there was a timescale for implementing the LGA MOT's recommendations. The Apprenticeship Project Manager informed the Committee that the LGA would be returning in Spring 2022 to check what progress had been made.

A councillor asked whether the Levy Fund could be used to pay apprentices the national living wage. The Committee noted that the Levy Fund could only be used for training and not for salaries.

The Committee agreed that the LGA MOT had been successful and suggested that the apprenticeship programme should be promoted.

The Committee resolved to approve the recommendations detailed below.

1. To note the update on the LGA Apprenticeships MOT.
2. To note the update on our current Apprentices and the apprenticeship Programme.
3. To note the Levy payments made to date, the drawdown for training programmes that we have instigated and expired funds as of 11 October 2021.
4. To note that the LGA MOT had been successful
5. The apprenticeship programme should be promoted and it's profile should be raised.

19/21 Update on skills programmes and recruitment pipelines with E4E, Health and Social Care and the Parks Department

The Committee received an update on skills programmes and recruitment pipelines with E4E, Health and Social Care and the Parks Department. This update was presented by the Head of Employment, Skills and Adult Education.

The Committee noted that the Sector-based work academy Program (SWAP) reduced barriers to employment through:

- Confidence
- ESOL
- Post lock down anxiety
- Understand job application processes
- Lack of application and interview experience
- Nervousness around what employers expect

It was noted that SWAP provided an opportunity to showcase excellent terms and conditions of Derby City Council. It was reported that SWAP also has the potential to reduce agency bills and improve accessibility of Council jobs to Derby's communities.

The Committee noted that current Sector-based work academy programmes included:

- Street Pride - learner was offered the job as a gardener at DCC
- Grace construction CSCS SWAP course – 1 learner took up the opportunity for work experience
- Derby Adult Learning Admin SWAP planned for December 2021
- Westminster Construction – interested in a supported SWAP for admin and construction.
- CSCS construction SWAP with Linsco recruitment
- Trent Barton SWAP to support bus drivers recruitment

- DCC Residential Childcare course and HomeFirst care worker recruitment – but struggled with engagement - will try again this year now guaranteed first interview has been approved.

It was reported that over the past 12 months the Adult Learning Service had supported 795 Derby City Council Staff & Elected Members in completing 2799 Digital Skills modules. It was noted that the Council were uploading a button on iDerby e-learning linking directly to Derby Adult Learning Service courses. It was also noted that the Council were working with the Occupational Development Team to rollout a free English and Maths Level 2 offer to all Council staff and elected members.

It was reported that the Council had bid for and won a £121,000 Continual Personal Development Grant from DFE. It was noted that this grant would be used to support the upskilling of the Council's tutors to ensure that they had the skills and confidence to deliver training that met the skills white paper priorities.

It was reported that through E4E, local employers and local schools shared a common goal to connect and develop all Derby's young people so that they were best positioned for post-school life and the world of work.

It was noted that during the 2020-21 academic year, with the support of over 300 employer volunteers, E4E delivered 36 events, in 15 schools and supported 3822 students. It was also noted that 39 employers mentored students at-risk-of-NEET, on 1 to 1 basis.

Resolved to note the update.

20/21 Update on the Council's English Speakers of Other Languages programme

The Committee received an update on the Council's English Speakers of Other Languages programme. This update was presented by the Head of Employment, Skills and Adult Education

It was noted that the Council had received £400k in external funding from the Education & Skills Funding Agency ESFA for ESOL. It was reported that the Council had also received a £600k ESOL Integration Fund from MHCLH (Levelling Up) over 2 years and that this was due to end in April 2022.

It was reported that the Council were forecasting about 1200 ESOL learners before the end of July and that more learners were demanding low level ESOL learning. It was note that there were nearly 200 more learners than the Council's average enrolments over the past 3 years. It was reported that most learners were looking to improve English skills to help gain employment and that the Council were working at integrating employability into the classrooms.

The Committee noted that the Council's ESOL programme had seen positive progress including:

- Excellent reputation - word of mouth
- Dedicated staff
- Location - Mostly at the Derby Multicultural Centre DMC – Normanton
- Staff are being stopped in the street by potential learners
- Many of our staff are multi-lingual
- ESOL Integration has improved visibility and community engagement

It was noted that the Council were working with creative partners on the ESOL programme including:

- Artcore
- Baby People
- Quad
- CET
- Derby Theatre
- WEA
- LEE Café
- Gujrati community group
- DCC new and emerging communities
- Derby Museums

The Committee thanked the Head of Employment, Skills and Adult Education for the work their team was doing on the Council's ESOL programme.

Resolved to note the update.

21/21 Vaccination Policy

The Committee received a report on the Council's Vaccination Policy. This report was presented by the Head of Human Resources.

It was noted that the statutory requirement guiding this report was the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 ('the Regulations'). It was reported that these regulations required registered persons of all Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered care homes (which provide accommodation together with nursing or personal care) to ensure that a person does not enter the indoor premises unless they have been vaccinated. This was subject to certain exemptions.

The Committee noted that the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) Social Care Working Group had highlighted that people living in care homes had been particularly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, due to a combination of a heightened risk of severe outcomes following COVID-19 infection and the risk of outbreaks in closed settings. It was noted that vaccination made a crucial difference to some of Derby's most vulnerable residents and the Government had introduced this law to minimise outbreaks in Care Home settings.

It was noted that in response to the mandatory vaccination legislation a policy for staff had been developed. It was reported that the purpose of this policy was to set out Derby City Council's stance on the Coronavirus vaccine as it affected the Council's workforce and the related rights of its colleagues. It was reported that it was recognised that the national and global position with regard to vaccination had the potential to change. It was noted that whilst this policy provided guidance and instruction relating to the vaccination for Coronavirus, the policy may also be seen to apply to any further legislation relating to requirements for vaccinations against other virus or disease, for example, Influenza. It was noted that it had been written in this way as it was envisaged that the law may extend to other areas of care and may also extend to booster doses of Coronavirus vaccine.

The Committee noted that from 11 November 2021, all colleagues entering a care home would need to show proof of their vaccination or exemption. It was noted that if someone deployed in a care home, was not fully vaccinated (and not exempt), they would not be able to enter the care home. It was reported that in the event that colleagues deployed in care homes chose not to be vaccinated, managers would hold informal discussions with staff. It was noted that for those colleagues that worked directly in the care home setting, processes would be in place to explore whether a suitable alternative role was available. It was reported that for those colleagues deployed to work in care homes, processes would be in place to explore whether there were other ways to deliver the work differently. It was noted that the Council would explore any other options, but if not successful, then colleagues could be dismissed, as it would be unlawful for them to enter their usual workplace or a care home setting that they need to attend to fulfil their role.

It was noted that having the policy in place enabled the Council to clearly set out its position for its colleagues. It was reported that colleagues in roles which worked in or were deployed in the registered care homes had been communicated with about the new legislation and the vaccination requirement and potential employment implications.

A councillor expressed their disappointment with the Vaccination Policy. The councillor commented that vaccinated staff could still catch and spread COVID-19. The Head of HR informed the Committee that the Council were required to produce and implement this Policy in order to meet their statutory obligations under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 ('the Regulations').

The recommendation to approve the Vaccination Policy was put to a vote and was carried.

Resolved to approve the Vaccination Policy.

MINUTES END.