

# Item 04

Time began: 10.00am  
Time ended: 11.05am

## **Personnel Committee 3 October 2019**

Present                      Councillors Potter (Chair), Cllr Carr (Vice Chair) Councillors  
Holmes, Eldret, Froggatt

Officers present        Liz Moore – Head of Human Resources  
Tania Hay – Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager  
Diane Sturdy - Organisational Development Manager  
Hanna Prince – Health and Wellbeing Advisor  
Paul McMahon - Principal Lawyer  
Zoe Bird – Human Resources Shared Services Manager  
Sarah Cook – Human Resources Advisor

### **09/19        Apologies**

Apologies were received from Paul Simpson and Councillors Pegg and Testro.

### **10/19        Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair**

There were no late items.

### **11/19        Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

### **12/19        Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 July 2019**

The minutes of the meeting on 4 July 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **13/19        Attendance Management Project Update**

Councilors noted an update from the Organisational Development Manager on the progress of agreed commitments at the pre-meeting, including changing the measurement of sickness absence from rolling 12 months to actual 12 month totals.

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources. The report was presented by the Organisational Development Manager and the Health and Wellbeing Advisor and provided an update to the committee on recent progress on Attendance Management.

Councillors noted that at the end of July 2019, the full time equivalent days lost per Full Time Employee (FTE) was 12.71 days over the 12 month rolling period, against a Council target of 11.5 FTE days for 2019/20.

It was also noted by Councillors that the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) had confirmed their commitment to managers managing attendance and delivering an

improvement in performance. Monthly data reports on sickness absence rates were now presented at Directorate Management Team meetings, and also to the CLT Performance Board. It was noted that the format for reporting to CLT had changed and now focused on management actions and areas for concern.

Councillors noted that the Councils Return to Work compliance for the rolling 12 months to end of July was 72.9% and that the target for return to work compliance was 90%.

It was reported that CLT had recently reviewed a report, following an investigation into stress and mental health levels in the Council. CLT had reaffirmed their commitment to addressing the issues highlighted in the report, which included but were not limited to:

- High workload and budget cuts were causing stress among the work force
- A need to communicate better with colleagues that don't use IT in their roles
- A need for more proactive management
- A lack of engagement in training
- Colleagues perceived a tick box approach to wellbeing
- A fair and consistent application of policy was needed
- There were issues with the legacy left by previous leaders
- More openness, honesty and accountability was needed
- A need to minimise structure changes
- Colleagues want to work on their agreed work plans

Councillors were informed that FirstCare now had an absence monitoring tracking facility which had been added to the system. This allowed managers to track and update any action that they took when employees hit absence trigger alerts.

Councillors noted that it was now easier for managers to use and keep all of their health, wellbeing and attendance support and actions in one central system. It was also noted that FirstCare were currently rolling out an upgrade to the system to all clients and that this would come into effect at the Council by October 2019.

It was reported that further work was required to reach colleagues in remote locations. Councillors noted that the Mental Health First Aid service had been accessed 87 times since July 2019 and that the Council currently had 140 Mental Health First Aiders. It was noted by Councillors that the Council planned to raise this number to 400 within the next year. It was reported that Return to Work compliance for stress/ mental health was below the Council average at 69.6% compared to 72.1%.

A Councillor stated that it was vital that management and frontline staff were trained in stress management and that frontline staff did not receive abuse from the public. Councillors questioned whether the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders was sufficient for dealing with stress/ mental health problems for People's Services. A Councillor suggested that People's Services had a particular problem with restructuring and suggested that it would be helpful to invite a representative of People's Services to a future meeting in order to explore these issues further.

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

- 1. To note the updated absence data and the continued support from the project group, with the aim of reducing sickness absence rates in the Council.**
- 2. To invite a representative of People's Services to attend a future Personnel Committee meeting with a view to exploring what assistance, other than Mental Health First Aiders, could be provided to People's Services in order to improve absence rates.**

## **14/19      The Apprenticeship Project Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Service Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development. The report was presented by the Apprenticeship Levy Project Manager and provided an update on the Council's Levy payments and drawdown up to 20 August 2019.

Councillors noted that as of 20 August 2019 the Council had transferred a total of £1,778,976.24 into the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Levy Digital Account and had drawn down £383,074 for apprenticeship training programmes. It was reported that this equated to spending 21.53% of the Council's Levy fund which was above the national average spend of 14%.

Councillors were informed that the Council had 36 new start apprentices and 84 existing colleagues on various programmes, with the total number of colleagues on apprenticeship programmes being 120. Councillors noted that new starters were on level 2 and 3 programmes whilst existing colleagues ranged from level 3 to level 7 programmes.

Councillors noted that the project group was currently focusing on key work streams, including but not limited to:

- Processing the applications for 13 vacancies that were advertised in July for council directorates and maintained schools.
- A cohort of 15 due to start on the Level 3 Team Lead / Supervisor programme on 26 September 2019.
- A cohort of 7 due to start on the Level 5 Operational Departmental Manager on 30 September 2019.
- A cohort of 7 due to start on the Level 6 Chartered Manager on 2 October 2019.
- A cohort of 2 due to start on Level 7 Senior Leadership on 7 October 2019.
- Working with the Adults and Childrens Social Care Teams to change the training model to access the Levy for Levels 2, 3 and 4 programmes.
- Working with Adults and Childrens Social Care Teams to identify a cohort of suitable apprentices to start the Social Worker degree programme in January 2020, rather than October 2019.

- Working with School Improvement Team, exploring reinstating the work experience programme and supporting schools with their pupil recruitment and selection activities and careers advice.
- Continuing to support the Care Leaver Apprenticeship Programme Project.

It was reported that the draft Apprenticeship Strategy had been agreed in principle. It was noted by Councillors that the Apprenticeship Project Manager and Project Administrator contracts were initially one year temporary contracts funded from central reserves both ending in the Autumn 2019. It was also noted that both contracts had been extended to the end of the financial year, funded by the HR budget to enable current work to continue.

Councillors noted that employers who pay the apprenticeship Levy and had unused apprenticeship funds could transfer up to 25% of their annual Levy to other employers should they choose to. It was reported that in order to optimise the use of the 25% Levy, transfer options that were currently being explored included:

- The deployment of the Nursing Associate apprenticeship programme into private, independent and social care settings. Following a scoping exercise carried out by Joined up Careers across Derby City and Derbyshire, a proposal was being put forward to potentially access a proportion of the Council's 25% transfer.
- Derby Homes had put forward a proposal to access a proportion of the Council's 25% transfer.

Councillors also noted that Derby City council was the only member of the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership not to be in a position where the government was retrieving unspent apprenticeship funds. It was also noted by Councillors that an apprentice from Derby City Council had achieved a regional award for the first time and that Derby City Council were considering bringing back an in house apprenticeship awards ceremony to be held in February 2020.

It was reported that the Council was the only regional body that had collaborated with the university to develop leadership development qualifications supported by the Levy and were seen as trailblazers in this area. It was also reported that the number of individuals completing these qualifications would continue to grow.

It was noted by Councillors that under the Council's new mentoring scheme around fifty colleagues had received mentoring training to support individuals on management level qualifications. It was reported that Derby was a trailblazer in this field, being the only Council we were aware of offering this type of qualification and level of support.

The chair expressed his support for an annual in house apprenticeship awards ceremony. Councillors conveyed that they were pleased to see local education institutions benefiting from the apprenticeship programme. A councillor queried why the Social Worker degree programme would now start in January 2020 rather than October 2019. Councillors noted that the authority board had been unable to sit in

September, and as the rescheduled meeting was due to be held in November, this programme needed to be pushed back to January 2020.

A Councillor asked whether information could be provided at a future meeting on how long apprentices stay with the council and the diversity and gender makeup of current apprentices. Officers confirmed that this could be provided at a future meeting.

A Councillor asked whether local businesses, Enterprise for Education and Derby Renaissance Board were being consulted regarding the 25% Levy Transfer. The officer confirmed that the Head of Economic Growth is a part of the apprenticeship group and that all comments would be fed back to this group.

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

- 1. To note the Levy payments made to date and the drawdown for training programmes that we have instigated as of 20 August 2019.**
- 2. To note the number of new start and existing staff on apprenticeship programmes.**
- 3. To note progress made on the key work streams.**
- 4. To note the development of a two year Apprenticeship Strategy.**
- 5. To note the options put forward regarding the 25% Levy Transfer.**
- 6. To request that a breakdown of how long apprentices continue to be employed by the Council be provided at a future meeting, along with a breakdown of the diversity and gender makeup of the Council's apprentices.**
- 7. To request that local businesses, Enterprise for Education and Derby Renaissance Board are all consulted with regarding the 25% Levy Transfer.**

## **15/19      Temporary Agency Usage January 2019 to March 2019**

Councillors considered a report of the Service Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development. The report was presented by the Human Resources Shared Services Manager and provided figures on agency use through the Matrix contract covering the period April 2019 to June 2019.

Councillors noted that in quarter 1 2019/2020 total spend on agency staff at the Council had risen, largely as a result of a national 2% pay rise that agency staff were entitled to. It was also noted by Councillors that the total hours worked by agency staff during this quarter had also risen and that this trend needed to be monitored.

It was noted by the board that despite pay increases, there had been a significant fall in total agency spend between quarter 1 2016/2017 and quarter 1 2019/2020. It was also noted that 94% of total agency spend covered staffing costs with £280,000-£300,000 a year being spent on Matrix and agency fees.

Councillors noted that the People's Services directorate accounted for the highest spend in quarter 1 2019/2020 at £591,325 followed by Communities and Place at £439,038. Councillors were informed that agency workers made up around 4-5% of

the Council's workforce and that this figure was to be expected for an organisation of Derby City Council's size.

Councillors were updated on the pay arrangements for agency refuse collectors and were informed that these individuals received one hours pay on days where they were sent home due to there being no work available. Councillors noted that the Council had 15 agency workers that had been employed through an agency for over two years and that three of these were refuse workers.

A Councillor asked whether statistics for agency worker sickness rates could be provided. Councillors noted that as agency workers were not employed by the Council these statistics were unavailable. It was also noted that in general agency workers had more of a disincentive to take unauthorised time off as they would not be paid for this.

Councillors asked whether the Council payed agencies directly and whether agency staff working for the council were receiving the correct pay for their jobs. Councillors noted that the Council use Matrix, a neutral vendor, to employ agency workers and that Matrix ensures that agency workers were payed the correct salary.

A Councillor requested that holiday cover be looked into. It was noted that trends for holiday cover could be provided at a future meeting and that holiday cover is mostly used by frontline services.

A Councillor asked whether feedback was available from agency staff that have rejected full time employment offers from the council. Councillors noted that in most instances where full time employment offers were rejected, this was due to the worker in question having to take a pay cut should they accept full time employment. Councillors also noted that some agency workers rejected full time employment offers as they enjoyed the flexibility provided by agency work.

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

- 1. To note the content of this 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.**

**MINUTES END**