

CABINET – 25 FEBRUARY 2020

WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA Q3 2019/2020

Report by Deputy Director, Human Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.**

Executive Summary

2. Our workforce is the most valuable asset the council deploys. It is our people that make a difference to our residents and our communities. The very nature of the work, and the services we provide, is people intensive. Our residents are reliant on the professionalism of our workforce to deliver high quality services and the Council's future ambitions.
3. This report provides an update of HR activity and staffing data for Quarter 3 (1st October – 31st December 2019). The staffing data for Quarter 3 is provided at Appendix 1.

Human Resources – Quarter 3 Overview of Activity.

4. Areas of focus for the HR team have been:
 - The broad HR principles underpinning Organisation Change and Development including service re-design.
 - Embedding of the changes to Vacancy Management to bring improved control to our establishment, to ensure continued recruitment to priority areas and to seek and maximise opportunities for redeployment where relevant.
 - The re-tender of the Occupational Health contract and Employee Assistance Programme. These are two key contracts that enable the Council to best support a healthy workforce and offer a range of accessible support such as counselling, debt advice, legal advice and support with health and wellbeing needs.
 - Embedding the changes to the Cycle Scheme.
 - Support for senior recruitment and joint appointments.

Quarterly Update

Organisational Change and Development including Service Re-design

5. During the quarter, HR has provided support for four key strands of Service Re-design, namely, Communities, Strategic Capability and the development of proposals for the Provision Cycle and Business Administration Service. OD has provided support to the Finance team as the new structure and ways of working start to embed and develop for the future. Work to support the

development of consultation proposals in readiness for the delivery of the Family Safeguarding Plus model in the Children's and Families Directorate and in the Property and Facilities Management area of the Communities Directorate continue and remain on track.

6. As part of consultation, staff who may be affected by any of the proposals for change are deemed a priority in terms of potential redeployment opportunities. Where redeployment cannot be facilitated, there is an effective outplacement service delivered by an external partner which provides staff with dedicated skills and career development advice. HR also tracks all displaced staff who apply for any council vacancies to ensure their progress is monitored and a guaranteed interview is offered if the essential criteria of the job role is met. Vacancy Management plays a key part in the successful redeployment of affected staff.

Vacancy Management

7. The Vacancy Management (VM) process continues to support recruitment to priority areas and effectively supports establishment control and redeployment activity.
8. VM is in place to ensure there is a global view of all vacancies that arise throughout the council. The VM process enables appropriate challenge and thought to be applied when considering recruitment to vacancies, for example, is it possible to re-organise workload, does the vacancy provide an opportunity to consider joint working and critically, the impact of potential organisation change in terms of redeployment.
9. Decision making remains the responsibility of the Corporate Director and vacancies and the approval of them takes place at Directorate Leadership Teams (DLT). DLT's are supported by the HR and Finance Business Partners. If a decision cannot be reached by the DLT, the vacancy is referred for consideration by CEDR.
10. A report detailing all vacancies that have been considered, agreed and declined by DLT's is provided to CEDR on a fortnightly basis.

Re-Tender of Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme contracts

11. These are two key contracts that provide support for the health and wellbeing of our staff. Although the re-tender process experienced a short delay to the timescale set out in the Quarter 2 report it remains on track with a contract start date of 1st September 2020. The closing date for the submission of tenders has passed and the evaluation process is underway.

HR Support for Key Priorities

12. HR continues to support a significant level of organisational change, development and service redesign. Support is provided to Senior Responsible

Officers to develop proposals, write and roll out consultation frameworks in line with policies and legislation, consultation with the Trade Union and carry out job evaluation as new structures and roles are developed.

Cycle Scheme

13. Following recent changes, the Cycle Scheme is available to all staff 12 months of the year, a change that has been positively received.
14. To date there has been a steady increase in take up of the scheme with 22 applications received for bikes & accessories since it went all-year round in early December 2019 with a total value of over £15,000.

Support for senior recruitment and joint appointments

15. The HR team has provided support to the CEO and the Joint Shared Service Personnel Committee with the recent joint appointment of the Corporate Director for Commercial Development, Assets and Investment. Work has commenced to recruit to the role of Corporate Director for Children's Services following the current postholder's resignation.

Quarter 3 Staffing Data (1st October – 31 December 2019)

Introduction

16. Appendix 1 of this report provides staffing data relating to the workforce profile, sickness absence, turnover, apprenticeship numbers and agency spend.
17. Workforce data and trends are published in more detail on the Council's intranet. This includes a breakdown of staffing numbers and trends over the past five quarters by Directorates and Schools, including temporary and part time employees, turnover and sickness rates along with diversity and salary profiles. This data provides information by service and includes the spend and use of agency workers.
Appendix 2 of this report provides total agency spend by quarter since 2016 to present.
18. Appendix 3 of this report provides total agency spend in £'s by Directorate and quarter since 2016 to present.

Quarter 3 Update

Staffing

19. Staffing numbers have shown a very small increase between Quarter 2 (5021) and Quarter 3 (5030), (4086.97 FTE) including our retained fire service but excluding schools. This small increase in headcount is most likely to be as a result of vacant posts in Quarter 2 being filled with new starters commencing in Quarter 3.
20. Our workforce is made up of 2734 full time and 2296 part time employees.

21. The workforce gender split remains consistent with two thirds women and one third men. The age profile highlights a slightly higher older workforce with 54% aged 45 years and over however overall the age profile for the council is well dispersed across all age bands.

Turnover

22. The Council's Directorate rolling turnover rate for the last 12 months is 10.9%. However, across the whole workforce (including schools), our 12 month rolling turnover rate increases to 16.3%. Discounting Academy conversions, which account for more than 3% of all turnover in Q3, our turnover rate continues to be lower than the mean figure for Councils in England of 13.7% (LGA 2016/2017 reported June 2018).
23. Turnover in Quarter 2 spiked at 4.1% but this has returned to 2.7% in Quarter 3 which is within more regular parameters for the Council.

Spend on agency workers

24. Agency workers are a critical part of the council's workforce. They can provide a cost effective and flexible solution to cover temporary work demands. The Council has a managed service contract with Comensura which focuses on the provision of temporary agency and interim workers through a central electronic portal to an approved supply chain of compliant tiered agencies.
25. A managed service provides the following benefits:
- Improves oversight of agency spend and trends and helps to improve demand management and the consideration of alternative resourcing solutions
 - Secures the most competitive terms with agencies
 - Grows the supply chain to respond to temporary orders quickly
 - Reduces the time managers spend liaising with agencies and negotiating terms of business
 - Ensures all suppliers understand and comply with council vetting requirements
26. Demand for agency workers is sometimes due to the need to cover hard to fill vacancies such as children's social workers and in these circumstances, can be more costly than direct employment. Measures continue to be taken through recruitment initiatives to keep this number to a minimum.
27. The total spend on agency workers via the Comensura contract for Q3 increased slightly to £3,354,448, compared to Quarter 2 (£3,121,063).

28. Using benchmark agency charges against actual costs, the Comensura contract has saved in excess of £340,000 in charges to date in the financial year 2019/20.
29. There remains some historical off-contract spend which is now more easily identified. In Quarter 3 off-contract agency spend was £870,247.
30. Appendix 2 details total Agency spend in Quarter 3 (£4,224,695) compared to £3,694,397 in Quarter 2. However, it should be noted that some off-contract costs for Q1 and Q2 previously coded incorrectly (and therefore not included in our agency cost analysis) have been corrected and appear in Q3.
31. Appendix 3 details total Agency spend across all Directorates. It is relatively stable, and in most areas is decreasing except across Children's Services where there has been an increase of £185,785 from the previous quarter. The off-contract spend coded incorrectly for Q1 and Q2 amounts to £103,062 and accounts for the majority of the increase in agency costs in Customers and OD for Q3. It is important to note that many agency staff are funded from additional monies from central government and from partner organisations to support operational delivery.
32. The main reason for requesting an agency worker continues to be to cover a vacancy followed by project work and current temporary workload. The top two most frequently requested job categories continue to be qualified social and health care workers and admin, followed by engineering and surveying roles.

Conclusion

33. In readiness for financial year 2020/21, HR will be taking a new approach to HR strategy and this will include the development of a HR dashboard to report a range of HR metrics and key performance indicators. This will continue to be provided quarterly along with a summary of key HR activities.

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Appendices
Appendix 1 – Workforce Profile Report
Appendix 2 – Agency Trend Analysis
Appendix 3 - Directorate Agency Trend Analysis

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