

## CABINET

17 June 2025

### HR & CULTURAL CHANGE – QUARTERLY EMPLOYEE DATA REPORT JANUARY 2025 TO MARCH 2025 (Q4 2024/25)

Report by Director of HR and Cultural Change

#### RECOMMENDATION

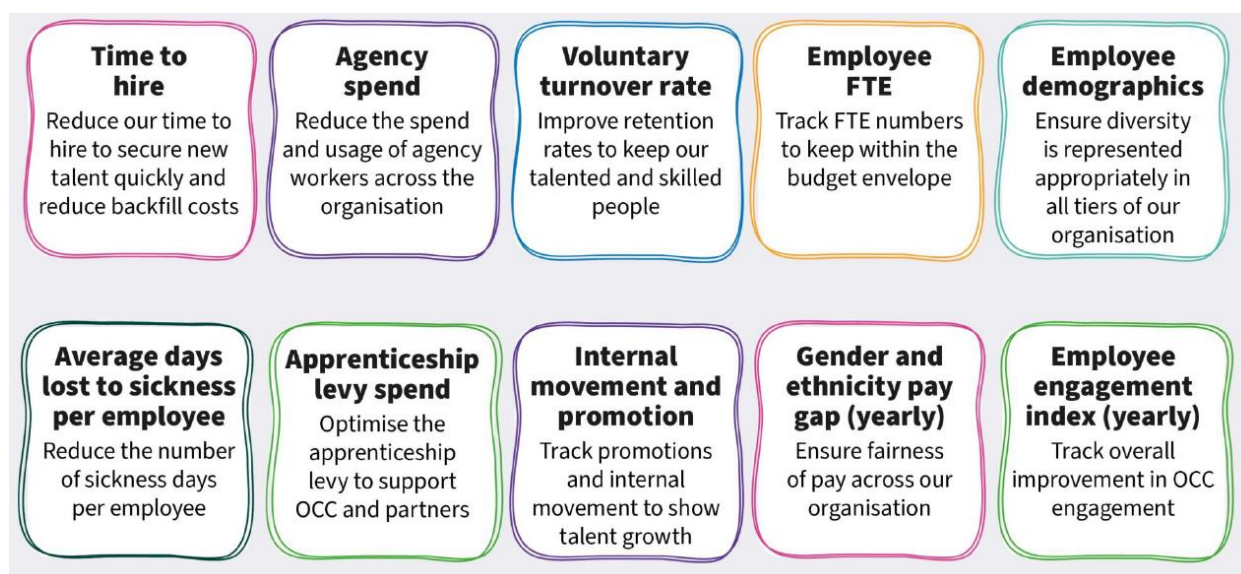
1. Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

#### Executive Summary

2. The people who work for Oxfordshire County Council are what makes the organisation so special. Every day, they make millions of moments for thousands of people – bringing lasting change to all the county's communities. Their professionalism and commitment to delivering high-quality services supports the Council's ambition to become a greener, fairer and healthier county.
3. Together, Oxfordshire County Council is on a journey to Deliver the Future Together and become an Employer of Choice. This ambition is underpinned by the Our People and Culture Strategy (Annex 3), which was approved by Cabinet in January 2024. The strategy aims to develop an inclusive and empowering culture, enabling all colleagues to be the best they can be to deliver excellent services for everyone the Council serves.
4. This report provides an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy (as measured by the achievement of its key performance indicators) and summarises the main employee-related trends for Q4 2024/25 (Annexes 1 and 2).
5. **Our people and culture strategy**
  - 5.1. The vision for the Our People and Culture Strategy is that 'we develop and maintain high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents'. The Strategy focuses on priorities under 4 pillars, ATTRACT, THRIVE, GROW and LEAD:



5.2. Organisational people and culture KPIs (key performance indicators) – for the targets set for the KPIs see Annex 2.



## Time to Hire

6. A new applicant tracking system (ATS), Tribepad, was introduced at the council in September 2024. Over the next few months, reporting from Tribepad will enable the HR and Cultural Change team members to start tracking the time to hire as one of the KPIs under the Our People and Culture Strategy.

## Agency spend

7. Agency spend via the Council's agreed provider of agency workers, HAYS, decreased from £6.82m reported in Q3 24/25 to £6.56m in Q4 24/25.
8. Q4 24/25 has also seen a reduction in the off contract (i.e. not via the main agreed provider of agency workers, HAYS) agency spend, from £1.74m in Q3 to £1.68m in Q4 (Annex 1).
9. The total (HAYS and off-contract) agency spend reduced from £8.56m in Q3 24/25 to £8.24m in Q4 24/25. Year on year the total (on and off-contract) agency spend for Q4 reduced from £9.10m in Q4 23/24 to £8.24m in Q4 24/25.

10. The highest agency spend in Q4 continues to remain in Children's Services, Adult Social Services, Environment and Highways, Law and Governance and Property (Annex 2).
11. The total annual agency spend continues to see a downward trend from £40.03m in 22/23 to £35.52m in 23/24 and £33.14m in 24/25.

### **Voluntary Turnover Rate**

12. Voluntary annual turnover at the Council has decreased from 11.7% to 11%, a positive trend exceeding our People and Culture Strategy target of 11.5% p.a.
13. Involuntary annual turnover has remained at 2.5% in Q4.
14. The overall (voluntary and involuntary) turnover in the 12-rolling months has decreased from 14.2% in the period ending at the end of Q3 24/25 to 13.5% in the period ending at the end of Q4 24/25.
15. Year on year, voluntary turnover rate decreased from 13% in Q4 23/24 to 11% in Q4 24/25.

### **Employee FTE (Full Time Equivalent)**

16. In terms of directly employed colleagues (i.e. excluding agency workers), the Council's FTE (full time equivalent) figure has decreased from 4,654.79 FTE in Q3 24/25 to 4,606.23 FTE in Q4 24/25 (which equates to a decrease from 5,493 to 5,454 people). Further details are shown in Annex 2.
17. There were 118 new starters in the last quarter, and 157 leavers. It's the second consecutive quarter where the number of the Council's directly employed colleagues has reduced.
18. Amongst the 118 people who joined the Council in Q4, 98 colleagues (83%) are on a permanent contract, while 20 colleagues (17%) are on a fixed term or temporary contract. 61 of the new starters (over 50%) have been recruited into posts which are either hard to fill or essential to the delivery of statutory services.

### **Employee demographics**

#### **19. Ethnicity:**

- 19.1. the percentage of colleagues declaring as being from an ethnic minority background has increased from 11% in Q3 24/25 to 12% in Q4 24/25 (the Council's target is 12.25%).
- 19.2. the percentage of promotions/secondments awarded to those who declared as being from an ethnic minority background increased from 9% in Q3 24/25 to 11% in Q4 24/25.

- 20. Gender - the majority of colleagues at the Council are female (66%), this trend remains stable.
- 21. Age – percentage of colleagues at the Council who are under 26 remains stable at the end of Q4 24/25.
- 22. Disability - the percentage of colleagues at the Council declaring a disability increased from 8.7% at the end of Q3 24/25 to 8.8% at the end of Q4 24/25.
- 23. Disability - the percentage of promotions/secondments awarded to colleagues at the Council declaring a disability decreased from 7% in Q3 24/25 to 4% in Q4 24/25.

### **Average Days Lost to Sickness**

- 24. The sickness absence rate in the rolling 12-month period has increased slightly from 8.6 days absence per FTE in Q3 24/25 to 8.7 days absence per FTE in Q4 24/25.
- 25. There has been a decrease in the sickness absence recorded quarter on quarter, from 4.54% in Q3 24/25 to 4.31% in Q4 24/25.
- 26. There has been a decrease in the sickness absence recorded year on year, from 9 days absence per FTE in Q4 23/24 to 8.7 days absence per FTE in Q4 24/25.

### **Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Levy utilisation**

- 27. During Q4 2024/25 there were a total of 41 new apprenticeship enrolments and the total number of apprentices on programme increased from 329 in Q3 24/25 to 340 at the end of Q4 24/25 (this figure includes colleagues undertaking apprenticeships in schools).
- 28. The actual spend on apprenticeships for Q4 24/25 was £369,093, with a total spend for the year 24/25 at £1,337,587. This is the largest apprenticeship spend recorded by the Council to date.
- 29. The Apprenticeship Levy utilisation has increased from 80.1% in Q3 24/25 to 89.6% in Q4 24/25.
- 30. Year on year, the Apprenticeship Levy utilisation has increased from 66.5% in Q4 23/24 to 89.6% in Q4 24/25.

### **Movement and promotion**

- 31. Movement and promotion at the Council remains stable quarter on quarter at 6.9% (mobility rate) in Q4 24/25.
- 32. Year on year, the mobility rate at the council increased from 6.1% in Q4 23/24 to 6.9% in Q4 24/25.

## **Gender and ethnicity pay gap March 2025**

33. In March 2024, the Council's Gender Pay Gap was 2.95%, and the Ethnicity Pay Gap was 2.59%.

34. This year's figures (March 2025) will be shared with the Remuneration Committee in the first instance as part of the annual Pay Gap Report. The Report will be published more widely shortly after that, and the figures for this year will be included in the next Quarterly Report (Q1 2025/26).

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

35. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams.

## **Sustainability Implications**

36. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

## **Risk Management**

37. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

38. The Our People and Culture Strategy referred to in this report (Annex 3) directly underpins the Council's ambition to become an Employer of Choice.

## **Financial Implications**

39. The level of agency expenditure was a contributory factor in the year end service area overspend for 2023/24.

40. Focus on this through the Our People and Culture Strategy has helped to reduce costs and has contributed to services managing expenditure within the agreed budget in 2024/25.

41. Continuing focus is required so that costs can be managed within agreed service area budgets for 2025/26.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

## **Legal Implications**

42. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal & Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

## **Staff Implications**

43. Staff implications are considered across all our workstreams and covered in this report.

### **Cherie Cuthbertson**

Director of HR and Cultural Change

### **Annexes:**

ANNEX 1 Quarterly employee data dashboard Q4 2024-2025 \*

ANNEX 2 Quarterly employee data dashboard - additional data Q4 2024-2025

ANNEX 3 Our People and Culture Strategy v2

**Background papers:** Nil

**Contact Officer:** Katrina Pennington

**14 May 2025**

\*note that the off-contract agency spend figure for Q3 24/25 has been revised following a review of the coding of the relevant expenditure. As a result this has been revised to £1.74m of spend as reported in this (Q4 24/25) report.