

CABINET
14 MAY 2024

WORKFORCE REPORT & WORKFORCE DATA
JANUARY – MARCH 2024 (Q4 2023/24)
Report by Executive Director of Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

Executive Summary

2. This report provides the workforce profile for quarter 4 2023/24 including an overview of headcount, agency spend, sickness, turnover and other relevant management information and performance indicators (Appendix A). This report also provides an update on the Council's Our People & Culture strategy which aims to address the trends identified in this report, but importantly help the Council's ambitions to become an Employer of Choice.

Workforce Profile

3. Appendix A of this report provides data and information about the Council's directly employed workforce. The highlights from this data and information are:
4. The Council's directly employed headcount (excluding agency workers) equates to 5378 people (4510 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)) at the end of Q4. This is an increase of 419 people over the past 5 years and an increase of 25 since Q3 2023/24.
5. Total agency spend in Q4 was £9.1m compared to £9.0m in Q3. Total spend for the 2023/24 financial year was £36.0m compared to £40.0m for 2022/23. A task force remains in place to review monthly spend and implement necessary interventions.
6. 5% of the Council's workforce is 25 or under which remains static from the previous quarter. The average age of our workforce is 46. Benchmarking data from across a pool of 71 other councils across England including County, City and District councils has been gathered. The average age across the sample group is 47.
7. The rolling 12 monthly voluntary turnover is 12.9%, up from 12.1% at the same time in 2022/23. The average voluntary turnover across the sample pool of 71 other councils is 13%.
8. For Q4 2023/24, sickness absence per FTE has increased by 0.1 days to 9 days in the 12 previous months. The average across our sample pool of 71 other councils is 11 days per FTE. The top reason for sickness absence remains as stress, anxiety

and depression at 28.4% and this has increased when compared to the same period in 2022/23 when it was 23%.

9. 10% of the workforce are recorded as non-white which remains static from the previous quarter. The data from the sample pool of 71 councils is difficult to compare due to the way in which the data is collated and reported. 7% of the workforce are recorded as having a disability, up from 6% since the last quarter (versus 8% across 71 other councils).
10. Workforce data and trends are published in more detail on the Council's intranet.

Our People and Culture Strategy progress update

11. In January 2024 the Council's Our People and Culture Strategy was presented to Cabinet. The vision for the strategy is that *'we develop and maintain a 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'*.
12. The strategy focuses on 4 priorities:
 - **Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented People** - it is essential that the Council is able to attract, recruit and retain our talented People to deliver excellent services for the residents of Oxfordshire.
 - **Enabling Our People to thrive and perform** - creating a positive and inclusive work environment built on fairness, trust and transparency will allow the Council's People to thrive and perform.
 - **Enabling Our People to grow and evolve for the future** - providing growth opportunities both on and off the job to build our knowledge, skills and behaviours will help us all deliver the future together; and
 - **Enabling Our People to lead and transform for the future** - empowering our leaders to embrace the skills and behaviours needed to achieve high performance and effective outcomes.
13. Within the **'Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people'** strand, significant progress has been made with the new Applicant Tracking System, which will speed up recruitment. Implementation has started with the Council's supplier and the system is scheduled to go live in October 2024. The majority of our new in-house Talent Acquisition and Resourcing team has now been recruited, which will enable the Council to move away from the Integrated Business Centre (IBC). Work has been progressing well to develop our Employer Value Proposition and developing our employer brand, which will raise our employer profile.
14. Within the **'Enabling our people to thrive and perform'** strand, a new policy framework has been created and all policy reviews for 23/24 have been completed including: agile working, sickness, domestic abuse, additions to pay guidance and numerous minor policy updates. Work has now started on change management policies and toolkits. The 2024 employee engagement survey was launched in February 2024 and results are now being communicated within the organisation. Work has also begun in scoping our wellbeing services and corporate initiatives.

15. Within the '**Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future**' strand, a reciprocal mentoring scheme has been launched which focuses on equality, diversity and inclusion. The 12.3.2 managing for performance tool refresh has started. Work has begun to enhance the Council's early careers offer, training providers have been selected for our management trainee programme and candidates will start in September 2024; a work experience scheme is also in development.

16. Within the '**Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future**' strand, work is progressing to introduce a range of people management controls to enable the organisation to operate within the budget envelope. Further work will be scoped within this area when additional specialists are in post, funded through the transformation reserve.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Sustainability Implications

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

Risk Management

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

Financial Implications

20. The level of agency expenditure was a contributory factor in the year end directorate overspend for 2022/23 and has continued to impact on the level of directorate expenditure in 2023/24. On-going focus through the Our People and Culture Strategy is required to ensure that spend reduces further so that costs can be managed within agreed budgets for 2024/25.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

21. There are no potential legal implications of any actions/outcomes detailed within this report. (TO BE CHECKED)

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal

Lorna Baxter

Executive Director of Resources

Annex: Appendix A - Workforce Profile Q4

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Michael Fletcher, Head of HR Business Partnering
Advisory

April 2024