

**CABINET**  
**17 September 2024**

**WORKFORCE REPORT & WORKFORCE DATA**  
**APRIL – JUNE 2024 (Q1 2024/25)**

**Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer**

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

**Executive Summary**

2. This report provides the workforce profile for April to June (Q1) 2024/25 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 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 5380 people (4523 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)) at the end of Q1. This is an increase of 44 people over the past year and an increase of 2 FTE since Q4 2023/24. A breakdown of staff numbers and agency workers is shown in Table One. The numbers relate to the old service structures and some of the changes in employee numbers may reflect internal transfers between services. The new Services will be used in the next quarter's report.

**Table One - Employee and Agency Numbers by Service Area**

<b>Services</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Agency Workers (excluding off contract agency workers)</b>
Adult Social Services	<b>974</b> (853.6 fte) of which 50 were apprentices (5.1%) of directorate workforce <b>Decrease of 11</b> employees from Q4 2023/2024	<b>105</b> compared to 112 in Q4 2023/2024 <b>Decrease of 7</b>
Children's Services	<b>1621</b> (1371.3fte) of which 69 were apprentices (4.3%) of directorate workforce <b>Decrease of 9</b> employees from Q4 2023/2024	<b>201</b> compared to 190 in Q4 2023/2024 <b>Increase of 11</b>

Customer & Culture	<b>111</b> (98.4 fte) of which 8 were apprentices (7.2%) of directorate workforce <b>Decrease of 3</b> employees from Q4 2023/2024	<b>1</b> compared to 7 in Q4 2023/2024 <b>Decrease of 6</b>
Environment & Place	<b>646</b> (578.1 fte) of which 31 were apprentices (4.8%) of directorate workforce <b>Increase of 38</b> employees from Q4 2023/2024	<b>68</b> compared to 63 in Q4 2023/2024 <b>Increase of 5</b>
Fire Officer & Community Safety	<b>668</b> (589.5 fte) of which 33 were apprentices (4.9%) of directorate workforce <b>Decrease of 9</b> employees from Q4 2023/2024	<b>0</b> compared to 3 in Q4 2023/2024 <b>Decrease of 3</b>
Public Health	<b>361</b> (229.9 fte) of which 3 were apprentices (1.7%) of directorate workforce <b>Decrease of 7</b> employees from Q4 2023/2024	<b>1</b> compared to 0 in Q4 2023/2024 <b>Increase of 1</b>
Resources and Law & Governance	<b>997</b> (803.2 fte) of which 46 were apprentices (6.7%) of directorate workforce <b>Increase of 3</b> employees from Q4 2023/2024	<b>66</b> compared to 70 in Q4 2023/2024 <b>Decrease of 4</b>
	<b>Overall Increase of 2 FTE</b>	<b>Overall Decrease of 3 workers</b>

5. Total agency spend (including identified off-contract spend) in Q1 2024/25 was £7.99m as compared to £8.41m for the same quarter in 2023/24, a decrease of £0.42m. When compared with the previous quarter Q4 23/24 there has also been a decrease of £1.02m from £9.1m. The total agency spend (including identified off-contract spend) for the 2023/24 financial year was £36.07m compared to £39.71m for 2022/23. This is a £3.64m decrease in spend year on year. The reduction in agency spend is positive, indicating better cost management for the last three years and is continuing on a downward trajectory. 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 static percentage suggests currently there is no significant change in attracting younger talent. Targeted recruitment campaigns, apprenticeships, internships, work experience to attract younger talent in the future is likely to boost the numbers of this group of staff through our Early Career's Offer.
7. This quarter has seen a voluntary turnover of 4.6% Year to Date. In contrast to the voluntary leavers in the same quarter last year, this represents an increase of 1.6%. A deeper dive will provide further insight to understand the reasons for leaving.
8. 9.1 FTE days were lost per employee to sickness in the past four quarters ending in Q1 2024/25 in contrast to 9 FTE for the previous 12 previous months in 2023/24. The top reason for sickness absence remains as stress, anxiety and depression at 33.2% and this has increased when compared to the last quarter in 2023/24 when

it was 24.8%. The top reason is of concern and is currently being reviewed as part of Our People and Culture Strategy. Effective ways to support wellbeing and absence due to stress, anxiety and depression continue to be explored. Further analysis is required to understand this figure further and whether this is work based stress or other stress. This will provide a better guide on the measures which can be put in place.

9. 12% of the workforce is recorded as non-white, this represents an increase of 2% in contrast to the previous quarter (Q4 2023/24). 9% of the workforce are recorded as having a disability, up by 1% since the last quarter. The increase in diversity is positive, reflecting more inclusive recruitment and a more inclusive workforce. The Council will continue to promote diversity and inclusion initiatives and following a recent review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within recruitment processes, will improve the accessibility and transparency of the appointment processes further.
10. Workforce data and trends are published in more detail on the Council's intranet: [Workforce data | Oxfordshire County Council Intranet](#)

### **Our People and Culture Strategy progress update**

11. In January 2024 the Council's Our People and Culture Strategy was approved by 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 and the system is currently being tested with a small number of vacancies; full go live is scheduled in September 2024. The new in-house Talent Acquisition and Resourcing team is in place, which will enable the Council to move away from using Hampshire's Integrated Business Centre (IBC). Work on our Employer Value Proposition and employer brand, which will raise the Council's employer profile, has been

progressing well and both are near completion. This improvement will reduce time to hire, ensuring the Council retains applicants by providing an excellent candidate experience. Hiring managers will be able to fill posts sooner reducing the need for and cost of interim or casual back fill arrangements.

14. Within the '**Enabling our people to thrive and perform**' strand, a new policy framework has been created and all policy reviews for 2023/24 have been completed including: agile working, sickness policy and toolkit, domestic abuse, additions to pay guidance and numerous minor policy updates. Work has now started on the 2024/25 policy reviews; new TUPE guidance has been created, new change management policies and toolkits are in development and work is about to start on capability and disciplinary policies and toolkits. The 2024 employee engagement survey, which was launched in February 2024, has now been completed and results have been shared to inform service level approach to improved employee engagement. Discovery work has been started to determine how the 2025 employee engagement survey will be carried out. Wellbeing also remains a key focus particularly on supporting mental health, stress and anxiety.
15. Within the '**Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future**' strand, a reciprocal mentoring scheme is up and running, which focuses on equality, diversity and inclusion. The 12.3.2 managing for performance tool refresh is in progress. Work is progressing to enhance the Council's early careers offer; candidates will start on the two management trainee programmes in September, the first cohort of work experience students will join the Council in October and discovery work for our internships programme has been completed.
16. Within the '**Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future**' strand work is progressing, and a range of people management controls have been introduced to enable the organisation to operate within budget, focusing on agency usage, honorariums, overtime and purchasing annual leave scheme. Work has started on providing resilience for leaders during transformational change. Further work will be scoped within this strand 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 both 2022/23 and 2023/24. On-going focus through the

Our People and Culture Strategy is required so that costs can be managed within agreed service budgets for 2024/25.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

### **Legal Implications**

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

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

### **Lorna Baxter**

Executive Director of Resources

Annex: Appendix A - Workforce Profile Q1 24/25

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Lorraine Amor, HR Assistant Business Partner

August 2024