

CABINET REPORT
DATE - 21 MARCH 2023

WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA Q3 OCTOBER - DECEMBER
Report by Corporate Director Customers, Organisational
Development & 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 communities. The very nature of the services we provide, is people intensive. Our residents and our communities are reliant on the professionalism of our workforce to deliver high quality services and the future ambitions of the council.
3. This report provides an update on the key strategic workforce priority areas for Quarter 3 and a refreshed workforce profile at Appendix 1.

Quarter 3 – Strategic Workforce Priorities

- Workforce Planning
- Resourcing Strategy
- Equalities Diversity and Inclusion
- Gender Pay Gap

Quarter 3 – Key Activity

- Directorate Updates
- Apprenticeships
- Health and Safety
- Occupational Health
- Resourcing

Q3 Staffing data (October – December 2022)

Quarter 3 – Strategic Workforce Priorities

Workforce Planning

4. The new workforce planning tool has been finalised and HR have begun conversations with managers across the council to enable them to develop their

workforce plans. In future this will be linked into the service planning process cycle and will provide a more effective way of managing our staffing resource; their recruitment, retention, development and career progression, as well as helping to ensure we have the right people in the right place, doing the right roles, to meet service objectives.

Resourcing Strategy

5. Work is ongoing regarding the new resourcing strategy with priority now focused on the development and roll out of a new career's website in the spring.

Equalities Diversity and inclusion

6. Equalities, diversity and inclusion training has been identified as requiring improvement. The Council provides access to many training activities, but lacks a clear development pathway for staff, line managers and leaders and there is also reliance on self-directed e-learning. Inclusive Employers, a membership organisation for employers looking to build inclusive workplaces, were engaged to review the current offer and make recommendations for improvements. The review proposed clear trainer led pathways plus easy to access, self-directed learning with additional support for employees working across the organisation such as the policy team and HR. In addition, a pathway for employees supporting the staff inclusion networks has been recommended.
7. Work will commence in quarter 4 to develop the pathways including a robust communication and engagement plan as well as a monitoring and reporting mechanism.
8. It is recognised that people identify with more than one protected characteristic so leadership development for employees should be designed with "intersectionality" in mind. A Women of Colour in Leadership development opportunity has been taken up by 7 employees due to complete early quarter 1 2023-24. Learning from this programme will be reviewed when designing future leader programmes and as part of on-going review and development of the equality, diversity and inclusion Learning and Development offer.
9. The lack of GSCE English and maths is often a barrier to career progression so since 2021 Level 2 English and Maths has been offered to employees with a focus on employees in the lower pay quartile of the gender pay gap report. To date
 - 34 passes have been achieved
 - 37 courses of courses of study are currently active, of which 27 are women and 11 were started in Q3 (compared to 6 in Q2)
 - 34 expressions of interest have been received and are currently moving through the pre-enrolment stage.

Gender Pay Gap

10. Gender Pay Gap – Organisations with a headcount of 250 or more employees are required by central Government to produce an annual snapshot of their gender pay gap as at 31st March for publication by 30th March the following year.
11. The gap between female pay compared to males has risen slightly from 1.8% in 2021 to 2.3% in 2022, which represents a 41p pay differential per hour between female and male pay. (The differential was 31p per hour in 2021). This small increase is still well below that of the national public sector mean/median hourly pay.
12. The slight increase in the gender pay gap cannot be attributed to one single factor. Point 11 of the report states OCC's relevant overall headcount decreased from the previous reporting year - the number of males increased compared to females which decreased by 2.5% from 2021 which impacted on the pay gap data.
13. To address this, we are continuing to explore our inclusion initiatives through our EDI action plan, particularly where there are barriers for women to progress into higher paid roles. We are promoting flexible and agile working and family friendly policies to attract and retain staff in a competitive job market and in a geographical area with low unemployment. We will also be implementing a new Workforce Strategy and action plan for 2023-25 in Spring 2023. The strategy will be aligned with the Councils strategic priorities, will include the priorities in the already approved resourcing strategy, and EDI will be a key theme.

Quarter 3 – Key Activity

Directorate Updates

14. **Fire and Rescue** - Following rejection of the 5% pay offer, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) balloted its members in respect of strike action for Fire and Rescue staff employed on Grey Book terms and conditions. The outcome of this ballot was support for industrial action. However, planned strike action has been postponed following a revised pay offer, pending a further ballot of staff by the FBU. Planning work is taking place within Fire and Rescue to ensure that the service can continue to deliver services and provide support to staff impacted, should strike action take place.
15. **Environment and Place** – several consultations are underway including:
 - **OxCam Arc Project** - The Chief Executive of this project left employment with OCC on 27 October 2022. Work on the future of this initiative is being led by Cherwell District Council. There is uncertainty regarding future Government funding.
 - **Oxfordshire 2050 Plan** - The joint working with partner organisations on an Oxfordshire 2050 plan has now ended, resulting in three staff being issued with notice following consultation. One of those employees has secured an alternative post – commencing in January 2023.

- **E&P Transformation – Service Reviews and Corporate Director’s Office** - Further work has been undertaken across E&P to develop proposals for new structures and posts following service redesign work. This work continues into Q4. The new Director’s Office team structure was implemented on 1st November
16. **Customers Organisation Development and Resources (CODR)** – As a result of the Commercial Development Asset and Investment Directorate being disbanded, Law and Governance and Finance and Procurement are now standalone services forming a Corporate Services function reporting to the Chief Executive.
- **Property Services** transferred into CODR and is undergoing a review of its operating model and structure. A review of the Cleaning Service has been completed and several the recommendations are being considered.
 - **One Fleet** - Following a tender exercise, a fleet management system has been purchased and work is underway to import the organisation wide data in to the ‘central’ Fleet Management system. This is the first step to centralising control of the OCC fleet and all vehicle related activity. A larger program of work is being developed and the outputs of this will be reported in future cabinet reports.
17. **Law & Governance** – The new Head of Legal commenced employment in December and an Interim Head of Improvement Law & Governance role will lead on the ‘transformation’ of **all** areas in Law & Governance including Legal Services, Democratic Services, and Information Governance. The external Information Governance Service Review has completed with recommendations for the new structure.
18. **Children’s Services** – Children’s social care has made some progress in the recruitment of social workers. As of January 2023, 80% of permanent social worker positions in frontline statutory Family Solutions Plus (FSP) teams were filled compared to 62% in December 2021. In addition, there has been a reduction in the use of agency social workers overall and as of January 2023, 23% of this workforce were agency workers compared to 46% in December 2021.
19. Recruiting a higher number of Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS) into our ASYE programme is one of the contributing factors in reducing vacancies, in addition to their 100% retention rate. In addition, 6 International Social Workers at the end of Quarter 3.
20. A recruitment microsite for statutory children’s social care roles in FSP that are hard to fill is now live. As part of testing targeted approach via LinkedIn and Google search over 60 CVs were received in the first 2 weeks and these CVs are now being considered.
21. **Industrial Action** - We have been notified that the NEU have announced that they intend to hold strike action nationally on 3 days and on the following dates in our region in relation to their dispute over pay and conditions. Schools have been considering what arrangements will need to be in place to minimise the impact of

the strike and will notify parents/carers/staff of any potential partial school closures as soon as information becomes available. Guidance documents have been drawn up. Schools, nurseries and services with centrally employed teachers have been issued with guidance in respect of responding to strike action and handling employee queries. The strike dates are known to be:

- Wednesday 1 February 2023
- Thursday 2 March 2023
- Wednesday 15 March (London, South East, South West)
- Thursday 16 March 2023

22. **The Brazel vs Harper Trust** case which originated in 2017 focussed on holiday pay calculations for staff who do not work 52 weeks a year. The Supreme Court judgement made on 20 July 2022 established holiday entitlement should be aligned to 5.6 weeks per annum for part-year workers and workers with irregular hours (TTO and casual workers) and this became law. We had previously pro-rated 5.6 weeks annual leave as we would for part-time workers.

23. This legislation impacts:

- TTO employees on grades 1-6 with less than 5 years' service
- Employees in schools which have moved to Academy status within the last 2 years.

24. OCC proposed to implement the additional holiday entitlement with immediate effect and back date the entitlement to 1st October 2020 in line with the Deductions from Wages (Limitation) Regulations 2014 which permits 2 years pay from the date of when the Employment Tribunal heard the Complaint.

25. This proposal has been accepted by Unison and will be implemented in February. Arrears will be paid to approximately 1800 employees in February pay (across schools and directorates). The increase equates to 0.29 of a week's pay per annum to all term time only employees on grades 1-6 with less than 5 years' service. The majority of these staff are very part time, and the average increase to pay will be approximately £45 per year.

Apprenticeships

26. At the end of Q3 there were 254 Apprentices on programme, 56 of these were in schools. 79% of these are permanent staff undertaking an apprenticeship as CPD or career progression.

27. During Q3 22/23 there were a total of 35 new apprenticeship enrolments which is a slight increase compared to this quarter last year. Actual spend for Q3 was £250,351 the increase in spend was due to final completion payments for our first cohort of 12 Fire Fighter apprenticeships

28. The committed spend for the Q3 22/23 for new enrolments is £293,969. There has been a slight increase in enrolments this quarter but the budget cuts and the continued application of transformations in directorates is having an impact on these. The Apprenticeship Hub continue to support all colleagues with identifying

additional and appropriate apprenticeship opportunities. During Q4 we will be holding further webinars to promote The Leadership & Management, and Data apprenticeships where we will hopefully get further enrolments. This quarter we are also introducing a new L5 Coaching Professional Standard with an aim to develop more coaching capacity within the council, initial interest in this has been very high.

29. Q3 also saw the first completions of our 3rd cohort of Leadership & Management apprenticeships. Initial feedback from candidates has included the following:

- I have confidence that as a line manager I am on the right track.
- Better able to understand management processes and guidelines
- I have more confidence and time to dedicate to my team and develop team building with them.
- I am better able to communicate with my colleagues and understand their perspective and communication styles
- I feel better equipped to deal with workplace challenges.
- I am better able to understand the decision making processes and restrictions as a result
- I am proud that I managed a fulltime hectic job alongside the apprenticeship learning which I have never undertaken before. I am also proud that all my struggles and hard work resulted in a Distinction.
- Actually sticking with it and not quitting when I wanted to about halfway through
- I am more confident.
- My communication and understanding of my colleagues has led to better relationships with my colleagues and stake holders
- I recently had a meeting where myself and team took part in the Learning Styles questionnaire, which was extremely useful to myself and my team, understanding how they learn to improve our skills and service.
- By improving my communication this had led to significantly better relationships
- I am more confident to ask questions and challenge decisions and offer solutions or ideas.
- Increased awareness of data and use of data linked to our current data collection methods
- Reduced email traffic into Team Inbox that was not relevant to our team. Ask other departments to email teams directly.
- I ask more open questions and I am focussed on team building my new team.
- Improving working relationships with my team. Challenging some difficult behaviours.
- Currently lack of management roll, this could lead to skill fade following my apprenticeship

30. During Q3 22/23 there were 29 completions and 7 withdrawals.

31. The Apprenticeship Hub is continuing to review all withdrawal data to assess where trends are occurring and how the strategy for 2022/23 can be supported to minimise withdrawals. We are continuing to undertake monthly reviews with all training providers to manage on programme progression of learners and with managers to minimise withdrawals with early intervention.

32. Work continues with Adults and Children's services to develop a fit for purpose Social Care academy to support new career pathways at all levels. The proposal for our next cohort is to open this up to new recruits from outside the council who want to become fully qualified Social Workers.
33. With the presence and work of the Apprenticeship Hub becoming further engrained within the organisation we are further expanding on apprenticeship opportunities in all Directorates. Facilities, Climate Action group and Legal are three areas that are currently being reviewed with multiple apprenticeship posts being included within new structures.
34. A business case is being developed to create a trainee management programme specifically developed around the existing Level 6 Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeship. The purpose of the programme is to develop new leaders and manager of the future that are OCC developed in a large variety of services areas and Directorates. This is possible due to the modules of the programme which link to Finance, HR, implementing projects and leading on change programmes. This programme would be designed around OCC needs and could change the way we manage graduate programmes in the future.
35. National Apprenticeship week takes place w/c 6th February where we are planning to promote further apprenticeship opportunities and success stories throughout the week on different communication channels. We will look at the success of our apprenticeship offer, as well as hearing from some of our providers and local networks.
36. The Apprenticeship Hub have also kicked off Q3 with several webinars aimed at Leadership and Management Apprenticeships, as well as the Level 5 Coaching Professional programme. The Coaching Professional has been selected with the intent of lining to the Leadership and Management DTFT project, where the Coaching Apprentices will support and develop the new managers. For both webinars there are currently 30+ attendees from across the council attending.
37. In Q3 it was agreed at SLT that a levy share will be completed from Children's to locally based charities working within the Youth Support Sector. The purpose of the levy share is to support the sector more largely throughout Oxfordshire. As a product of this the Apprenticeship Hub are finalising how to manage the Directorate allocation of the levy, assessing how much is being spent compared to contributed, and identifying how to monitor lack of spend and what options we can provide across OCC. This will be reported on in future cabinet reports from Q4.

Corporate Health and Safety

38. Personal Safety and Security - Unfortunately, it's not uncommon for staff and councillors to be exposed to challenging behaviour in the course of their work. We want our staff to feel valued and appreciated and we expect them to be treated with dignity and respect. The Council's [Zero Tolerance Policy](#) outlines the Council's policy and procedures to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence from members of the public. Improving controls for lone working and personal safety has been a priority area of focus for the Corporate H&S Team during 2022/23

with new policy supported through the use of technology (mobile lone worker app) and training. More recently, a building security review is underway to ensure the council can continue to provide safe spaces for both staff and visitors.

39. Improving Reporting of Accidents and Incidents - As well as being a legal requirement, reporting accidents and incidents is essential to ensure corrective action is taken and demonstrate continuous improvement. A project to update and replace the existing H&S Share Point reporting system is in progress with Go-Live date planned for April 2023.
40. Regulatory Activity by the Health and Safety Executive - Supporting maintained schools with building compliance issues including inspections by the Health and Safety Executive. As previously outlined (see Q1 report) the HSE have undertaken their first regulatory inspection at Thomas Reade Primary School. The inspection was positive with the HM Inspector noting effective arrangements in place both operationally by the school and corporately by the Council as the Duty Holder. All maintained schools have been reinspected ahead of programme to assess the condition of asbestos and from January 2023 plans will be drawn to deal with any remediations.

Occupational Health

41. There were 239 referrals to Occupational Health for Q3. 24 of these referrals were for wellbeing assessments, the remaining 215 for health referrals. The number of referrals is equal to the previous quarter. Of those referred:
- 56.3% were working
 - 2% were absent for less than one week
 - 9.8% were absent for between 1- 4 weeks
 - 15% were absent for between 5 – 12 weeks
 - 7% were absent for more than 12 weeks
42. The top 3 reasons for referral are as follows:
- 34% Anxiety/stress/depression and other psychiatric illnesses
 - 13.5 % Musculoskeletal issues
 - 9.8% Other Known causes
43. The greatest proportion of referrals under the anxiety/stress/depression and other psychiatric illnesses category came from:
- Children's 33%
 - Schools 26%
 - Adults 18%

Employee Assistance Programme

44. Over quarter 3 there were 90 activities which took place with Vita – OCC's Employee Assistance provider. The top three categories were as follows:

- Emotional support – 65
- Legal support - 12
- Information and advice - 11

45. A number of the activities within the emotional support category were linked to more than one issue. For example, from the 65 calls, there were 62 links to personal issues and 25 links to work/career issues. Emotional issues often come from many areas of our lives, resulting in primary and secondary reasons being assigned when an individual seeks help, therefore the reasons are often higher than the activities.

46. The main directorates to access EAP are Children's services, Adult services and Schools

Wellbeing activities held October – January

Supporting your team through change	19 January
DAWN network meeting	9 January
NHS health check workplace	3 January
Neurodiversity wellbeing group	5 December
Celebration the contribution of disabled people in the UK webinar	7 December
Feeling better during the festive season	5 December
Men's health and epigenetics	24 November
Immunity webinar	16 November
Stress in the workplace	14 November
Myth busting menopause	17 October
Work life balance	10 October
Dyslexia awareness	13 October
The importance of emotional agility for workplace webinar	10 October
EAP awareness session	4 October
Women's health webinar	3 October

Resourcing

47. The Council has a small in-house resourcing team who advise and lead on specific resourcing campaigns across the Directorates. The system used for recruitment and transactional recruitment services is provided by the IBC Hampshire Partnership. A review of their services is underway, and result expected in February 2023.

48. The managed service for temporary agency worker resource currently delivered by Comensura is due to expire in November 2024. Planning has commenced with Resourcing and Procurement to consider future delivery models. Spend on agency workers continues to be significant. The Resourcing team are working with Comensura and Procurement to produce a paper with options to reduce and control spend for the remainder of the contract.

49. The team have been supporting a range of key resourcing initiatives across a range of Directorates including Children's Services, Adult Services, Environment and Place.

Q3 Staffing data (October – December 2022)

50. Appendix 1 of this report provides staffing data relating to the workforce profile including sickness absence, turnover, apprenticeship numbers and agency spend.

51. 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.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

52. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams as identified in the section above

Sustainability Implications

53. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report

Risk Management

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

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Annex: Appendix 1 - Workforce Profile Q3

Background papers: Nil

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February 2023