

To: Members of the Special Sub-Group

(Councillors Clews, Chapman, Bates, Farrow, Guilmant, Jarvis, Jenns, Stuart, Turley and M Watson)

For the information of the Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Democratic Services on 01827 719226 or via email – democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

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SPECIAL SUB-GROUP

14 JULY 2025

The Special Sub-Group will meet on Monday, 14 July 2025 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire.

The day after the meeting a recording will be available to be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel at [NorthWarks - YouTube](#).

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure**
- 2 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council Business.**
- 3 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

4 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to put questions to elected Members. Questions should be submitted by 9.30am two working days prior to the meeting. A period of five minutes will be allowed for each question to be answered.

Members of the public wishing to address the Board must register their intention to do so by 9:30am two working days prior to the meeting. Participants are restricted to five minutes each.

If you wish to put a question to the meeting, please register by email to democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk or telephone 01827 719221/719226/719237.

Once registered to speak, the person asking the question has the option to either:

- (a) attend the meeting in person at the Council Chamber.
- (b) attend remotely via Teams; or
- (c) request that the Chair reads out their written question.

The Council Chamber has level access via a lift to assist those with limited mobility who attend in person however, it may be more convenient to attend remotely.

If attending remotely an invitation will be sent to join the Teams video conferencing for this meeting. Those registered to speak should dial the telephone number and ID number (provided on their invitation) when joining the meeting to ask their question. However, whilst waiting they will be able to hear what is being said at the meeting.

5 **Update Report on Human Resources Issues - Report of Corporate Director (Resources)**

This report summarises work done by the Human Resources (HR) team in 2024/25 and highlights work to be undertaken in 2025/26. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2024 to March 2025 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

The Contact Officer for this report is Kerry Drakeley (719300).

STEVE MAXEY
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 5

Special Sub-Group

14 July 2025

**Report of the Corporate Director
(Resources)**

**Update Report on Human
Resources Issues**

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises work done by the Human Resources (HR) team in 2024/25 and highlights work to be undertaken in 2025/26. It provides details of the sickness levels for the period of April 2024 to March 2025 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

Recommendation to the Board

That the report be noted.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This report provides an update on Human Resources issues and the position on sickness for 2024/25.

3.1 Summary of Sickness Absence 2024/25 (April 2024 – March 2025)

- 3.1.1 Absence Management is recorded for all employees and is then analysed into short- and long-term absence. Comparing the same time period in 2023/24 to 2024/25, there is a decrease in both short-term sickness of 0.21 days per FTE and long-term sickness of 0.89 days per FTE. The position is summarised in the table below, with additional detail given at **Appendix A**.

Type	2023/24	2024/25
Short Term	4.90 days per FTE	4.69 days per FTE
Long Term	8.31 days per FTE	7.42 days per FTE
Total	13.22 days per FTE	12.11 days per FTE

- 3.1.2 The long-term sickness absence is being managed either by getting staff back to work or them exiting the organisation either on ill-health retirement, dismissal or by resignation. Those with significant long-term absence equates to 13 employees having lost a total of 1,167.82. Of these employees, 9 have returned to work, 3 are still absent and 1 has left the Council.

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- 3.1.3 **Appendix B** shows the reasons for the number of days lost per FTE. The main reasons for absence relate to Mental Ill Health, Muscular-Skeletal and ENT / Mouth.
- 3.1.4 There are a number of cases currently being dealt with under the Attendance Management Policy, and the current status of these cases are as follows:
- 11 employees are having management/formal reviews
 - 20 employees are at Stage 1
 - 2 employees are at Stage 2
- 3.1.5 In February/March 2024, the HR team undertook briefing sessions with managers, to equip them with the knowledge required to undertake effective handling of attendance management issues and the deal with the issues proactively. The level of sickness absence reduced in 2023/24 and 2024/25. In addition, the Council intends to review its Occupational Health Provider. Whilst the Council has been content with the services of the current provider for several years, it would be beneficial to review the available providers in the market to ensure that a cost effective, efficient service is delivered.

4 Recruitment, Retention and Selection

- 4.1 There were a number of starters and leavers between April 2024 to March 2025. There were 40 new starters. There were 41 leavers, including 10 retirements, 28 resignations, 1 TUPE transfer out, 1 dismissal and 1 death in service. This equates to a labour turnover of 14.97% (13.87% voluntary leavers).
- 4.2 The Council has continued with the strategy of reviewing all posts that become vacant. Those posts that need to be filled are recruited to internally where possible. During the current year, 35 posts have been filled internally; this supports the Council's ability in succession planning.
- 4.3 During 2024/25, the HR team had 3 employees leave (2 were successful in gaining new roles within the Council). The 2 new part time HR Assistants joined the Council in August and September 2024. A HR Officer role was vacant from the end of August 2024. Initially an agency worker was appointed, who was the subsequently made permanent in February 2025, following a recruitment campaign. The HR team are now fully staffed; however, the HR Manager intends to review the roles and level of resource required within the HR service.

5 Employee Relations

- 5.1 The HR team provides advice and support to managers on all HR issues. The HR Manager and the HR Officers provide support to managers and lead, where appropriate on investigations and disciplinary, grievance, and capability matters. There were 7 disciplinary investigations undertaken / commenced between April 2024 and March 2025.
- 5.2 The HR Manager and HR Officers also provide considerable support in the actions up to and including hearing and appeals (if required). Out of the 7 investigations, one investigation is currently ongoing, one investigation did not proceed to hearing, two investigations resulted in written warnings and three investigations resulted in final written warnings issued at the hearing.

- 5.3 Service restructures require staff consultations which the HR Manager and the HR Officer action with the line managers. These require HR to provide support to both managers and staff, with the queries and information they require during the process. In addition, there is the job evaluation process that need to be undertaken regarding any revised / newly created roles. During 2024/25, the HR team have supported restructures within Housing Maintenance, Communities and Corporate Services.
- 5.4 The HR team co-ordinated the Staff Survey 2024, which was sent to all employees in November 2024. A total of 169 employees completed the survey, which is a response rate of 51%. There were 47 questions in total, in 7 different areas (e.g. Communication, Management, Staff Morale).

The results of the survey can be found on the Council's website:

[Performance Indicators | Performance Indicators - Interactive Report | North Warwickshire Borough Council](#)

6 Pay & Benefits

- 6.1 The pay award for 2024/25 was agreed on 22 October 2024. The Pay Policy statement was updated for 2024/25 and published on the Council's website.
- 6.2 No pay award has yet been agreed for 1 April 2025 onwards. The Joint Trade Union Side (UNISON, GMB and Unite) lodged a pay claim on 31 January 2025. On 22 April 2025, the National Employers made a one year full and final pay offer of 3.20% to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive and on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer. The Unions are all conducting consultative ballots on the offer. Feedback is expected in due course.
- 6.3 Gender pay reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. The Council's report for the last reporting year (using a snapshot date of 31 March 2024) is:

- The mean gender pay gap for the Council is 1%
- The median gender pay gap for the Council is 0%

A positive pay gap indicates men are paid more than females and a negative pay gap indicates that females are paid more. Other public sector employers average a pay gap of 12.9% and all industries is 13.8% (Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2024 provisional data). At 1%, the Council's mean gender pay gap is, therefore, significantly better than other organisations within the public sector and private sector.

7 Learning, Training and Organisational Development

- 7.1 During the 2024/25 training year, the Council ran in house courses including Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Training, Modern Slavery, and Health and Safety courses (e.g., First Aid, Fire Marshall, Working at Height, Manual Handling, IOSH Managing Safely).
- 7.2 Our E learning programme covers Health & Safety, Fraud Awareness, Fire Awareness, Equality & Diversity, Customer Service, Data Protection, GDPR & Cyber Awareness, Freedom of Information and Bribery Act 2010.
- 7.3 The apprenticeship levy came into effect from 6 April 2017. The HR team have assisted Divisions with the consideration of apprenticeships, where appropriate. During 2024/25, the Council recruited an Apprentice Electrician and Apprentice Motor Vehicle Technician; and will be able to utilise the apprenticeship levy allowance to cover the training costs for these posts.
- 7.5 The 'THRIVE' organisational values were created following employee engagement and feedback; work will be ongoing to ensure that the values are embedded, and employees are fully committed to working in line with the values. The Staff Forum was launched early in 2024, and employees volunteered to head up 3 sub-groups of Communications, Management and Staff Morale. The results of the 2024 Staff Survey will be discussed at the next Staff Forum meeting, due to be in July/August 2025.

8 Safety Management

- 8.1 The Health and Safety Officer works with Managers and Directors in all service areas of the Council, to provide health and safety advice and support. Workplace audits are completed in partnership with Union representatives. Additional departmental audits, undertaken by the Health and Safety Officer are carried out to an agreed schedule.
- 8.2 Corporate health and safety groups established include the Health and Safety Working Party and the Strategic Health, Safety Group and Management Team Health and Safety Meetings. These groups support the development of a positive health and safety culture and effective health and safety management systems.
- 8.3 Accident/incident reports are reviewed by the Health and Safety Officer. Departmental Managers lead on remedial actions to prevent recurrences and have access to support from the Health and Safety Officer as required. During 2024/25, there were 54 reported employee accident/incidents, which are categorised as follows:
- 10 Manual Handling
 - 7 Slips/Trip
 - 6 Animal
 - 6 Other
 - 6 Road Traffic Accident (non-fault)
 - 4 Road Traffic Accident (fault)
 - 3 Violence/Aggression
 - 3 Impact with Object

- 3 Strain/Sprain
- 2 Medical
- 2 Vehicle Fire (improperly disposed lithium battery ignited in refuse truck)
- 1 Fall from Height
- 1 Entrapment

5 of these accidents were reported to HSE under RIDDOR regulations. In addition to the above, there were 48 reported near misses.

8.4 Central Midlands Audit Partnership (CMAP) have undertaken an audit on Corporate Health and Safety systems, compliance and management. The recommendations will be actioned accordingly and will feed into the Health and Safety work plan for 2025/26.

9 Policies Procedures and Processes

9.1 The HR work plan for 2024/25 included an updated timetable for policy review. Progress has been somewhat delayed due to other corporate work priorities required, onboarding new starters and capacity within the HR team.

10 Areas to be taken forward in 2025/26

10.1 The HR work plan for 2025/26 includes actions such as an updated timetable for Policy review, project work on the Leisure Project and business case/implementation of a HR system, and a review of the Council's Corporate Workforce Plan and the Human Resources Strategy.

11 Report Implications

11.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

11.1.1 There are costs associated with the use of additional staffing resources to cover periods of absence. Most short-term absence is absorbed within sections. However, if sickness is long term, and the service could potentially fail as a result of staff shortages, then there would be additional costs to maintain services, either through buying in extra resources or acting up arrangements.

11.1.2 The financial strategy included provision for a pay award of 4% for 2024/25. The pay award agreed exceeded the provision included by around £556,000, so is a significant added pressure on the financial position of the Council.

11.2 Human Resources Implications

11.2.1 As detailed in the report.

11.3 Equality Implications

11.3.1 Under the Equality Act there are specific responsibilities specified under the public sector equality duty to ensure that local authorities meet the general equality duty. In terms of Human Resources there are specific codes of practice for employment and for equal pay.

11.4 Links to Council's Priorities

11.4.1 Effective recruitment and management of the workforce contributes to the Council's priority of making the best use of our resources.

The Contact Officer for this report is Kerry Drakeley (719300)

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date

ALL SICKNESS

	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	29.79	31.26	136.99	204.77	4.60	6.55
Chief Exec	5.00	4.5	10.00	45	2.00	10.00
Community Services	32.78	31.97	360.03	305.17	10.98	9.55
Resources	16.33	16.81	120.18	224.31	7.36	13.34
Corporate Services	16.48	17.48	63.66	135.28	3.86	7.74
Housing	62.89	64.59	1322.20	950.82	21.02	14.72
Leisure & Communities	37.67	35.69	201.10	344.63	5.34	9.66
Streetscape	70.37	71.64	1371.14	1108.54	19.48	15.47
Total	271.31	273.94	3,585.30	3,318.52	13.22	12.11

SHORT TERM SICKNESS

	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	29.79	31.26	75.99	108.39	2.55	3.47
Chief Exec	5.00	4.5	10.00	45.00	2.00	10.00
Community Services	32.78	31.97	154.89	97.02	4.73	3.03
Resources	16.33	16.81	26.18	35.81	1.60	2.13
Corporate Services	16.48	17.48	40.15	66.00	2.44	3.78
Housing	62.89	64.59	373.58	327.43	5.94	5.07
Leisure & Communities	37.67	35.69	172.25	160.84	4.57	4.51
Streetscape	70.37	71.64	477.39	445.70	6.78	6.22
Total	271.31	273.94	1,330.43	1,286.19	4.90	4.70

LONG TERM SICKNESS

	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Division	Average FTE per Division	Average FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Environment	29.79	31.26	61.00	96.38	2.05	3.08
Chief Exec	5.00	4.5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Community Services	32.78	31.97	205.15	208.15	6.26	6.51
Resources	16.33	16.81	94.00	188.50	5.76	11.21
Corporate Services	16.48	17.48	23.51	69.28	1.43	3.96
Housing	62.89	64.59	948.61	623.39	15.08	9.65
Leisure & Communities	37.67	35.69	28.85	183.79	0.77	5.15
Streetscape	70.37	71.64	893.75	662.84	12.70	9.25
Total	271.31	273.94	2,254.87	2,032.33	8.31	7.42

Reasons for Sickness

APPENDIX B

Division	Back/ Neck	Chest	Cold/ Flu/ Infections	ENT / Mouth	Endocrine	Geni- Urin	Heart	Mental Ill Health	Muscular/Skeletal	Neurological	Pregnancy	Skin Conditions	Stomach	Total
NWBC	167.80	216.36	362.04	414.11	3.35	112.03	114.00	915.46	584.66	162.03	38.72	24.66	203.31	3,318.52

<u>Sickness Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
Back / Neck	Back & Neck problems
Chest	Chest / Respiratory: to include Chest infections
Cold / Flu / infections	Cold / Flu symptoms / Infections (<u>not</u> chest)
ENT / Mouth	Ear / Eye / Nose / Mouth including dental and sinusitis
Endocrine	Thyroid / Diabetes and other Endocrine related conditions
Genito-Urinary	Genito-urinary: including menstrual conditions
Heart	Heart / Blood pressure & circulation
Mental Ill Health	Anxiety, Depression / Stress / Mental Fatigue
Muscular-Skeletal	Musculo-Skeletal Problems
Neurological	Neurological; including headaches and migraine
Pregnancy	Pregnancy related
Skin Conditions	Skin Related Conditions
Stomach	Stomach, Liver, Kidney & Digestion; to include gastro-enteritis