

To: Members of the Special Sub-Group

Councillors Hayfield, Phillips, Smith, M Stanley and Sweet

For the information of the other Members of the Council

SPECIAL SUB-GROUP

23 February 2012

The Special Sub-Group will meet in the Committee Room, The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Thursday 23 February 2012 at 10.30am.

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 2 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests. (Any personal interests arising from the membership of Warwickshire County Council of Councillors Hayfield and Sweet, and membership of the various Town/Parish Councils of Councillors Phillips (Kingsbury) and M Stanley (Polesworth) are deemed to be declared at this meeting).**

- 3 **Review of Flexible Working Policy and Leave Guidance** – Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Summary

This report reviews and updates the Flexible Working Policy and Leave Guidance at Appendix A of this report. The policy has been consulted on with senior managers and the trade unions.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374)

- 4 **Progress Report on Human Resources Issues** – Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Summary

This report advises Members of progress against the Human Resources Strategy Action Plan, work being done by the Human Resources team, the sickness levels for the period of April 2011 to December 2011 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374)

- 5 **Human Resources Strategy** – Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Summary

This report presents a revised Human Resources Strategy for Members to consider for adoption.

The Contact Officer for this report is Sue Garner (719374)

**PART C – EXEMPT INFORMATION
(GOLD PAPERS)**

- 6 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Recommendation:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

7 Accommodation Project – Presentations and Appointment of Project Manager – Report of the Assistant Director (Streetscape) TO FOLLOW

The Contact Officer for this report is Richard Dobbs (719440)

JERRY HUTCHINSON
Chief Executive

For general enquiries please contact David Harris, Democratic Services Manager, on 01827 719222 or via e-mail – davidharris@northwarks.gov.uk. For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the report.

Agenda Item No 3

Special Sub-Group

23 February 2011

**Report of the
Assistant Director
(Finance and Human Resources)**

**Review of Flexible Working Policy
and Leave Guidance**

1 Summary

- ...
- 1.1 This report reviews and updates the Flexible Working Policy and Leave Guidance at Appendix A of this report. The policy has been consulted on with senior managers and the trade unions.

Recommendation to the Sub-Group:

**To adopt the revised Flexible Working Policy and Leave
Guidance**

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Human Resources policies are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain up to date and incorporate any changes in legislation. The Flexible Working Policy and Leave Guidance was adopted in 2009 and implemented early in 2010. It was agreed to review this in January 2011. The policy and leave guidance has been amended to include how it has been applied in practice and to provide clarification to ensure consistency in its application.

3 Background

- 3.1 North Warwickshire Borough Council had a flexible working task and finish group, which met during 2006 and 2007. The group agreed to trial a number of pilots and following their review the HR Manager would produce a policy on flexible working.
- 3.2 Overall these were successful and there were a number of examples where employees had not needed to take emergency leave or sickness leave due to the flexibility available to them.
- 3.3 In 2008 the Chief Executive set up a group, 'Improving the Way We Work', which identified inconsistencies in the application of leave.
- 3.4 In writing the policy the HR Manager sought to standardize custom and practice in the Authority, address employee concerns by providing a leave guidance table as an appendix to the policy, used benchmarking with other Authorities, considered the legal requirements and used ACAS guidance.

- 3.5 The leave guidance attached as an appendix to the policy provides a table of the type of leave, the amount of leave allowed, and the approval process.
- 3.6 Following the adoption of the policy in November 2009 the policy was implemented in early 2010. Since its implementation flexible working has become part of North Warwickshire Borough Council's culture and is embedded in the way we operate. The application of the policy has ensured that the working day has been covered more effectively whilst it has enabled employees to manage their work and personal commitments. It has encouraged a spirit of 'give and take' between the Council and its staff.
- 3.7 Feedback on the application of the policy was sought through the staff survey, from the Improving the Way we Work Group, Managers, Staff and the Trade Unions. All of the recommendations have been considered and wherever possible included in the review of the policy.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Human Resources Implications

4.1.1 As detailed in the report.

4.2 Risk Management Implications

4.2.1 This policy has allowed individual employees to manage their work and personal commitments more effectively, which has assisted in the reduction of sickness absence.

4.3 Equalities Implications

4.3.1 Equality Impact Assessment Summary Sheet attached.

4.4 Links to Council's Priorities

4.4.1 The use of this policy will reduce the risk of inconsistencies. Proper management of employee issues through policies contributes to the effective use of resources.

The Contact Officer for this report is Janis McCulloch (719236).

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

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Sheet

Please complete the following table summarised from the equality impact assessment form. This should be completed and attached to relevant Board reports.

Name of Policy Procedure/Service	Reviewed Flexible Working Policy and Leave Guidance
Officer Responsible for assessment	Janis McCulloch

Does this policy /procedure /service have any differential impact on the following equality groups /people

- (a) Is there a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contribute to promoting equal opportunities and improve relations or:
- (b) could there be a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. disadvantage them in any way

Equality Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	Reasons/Comments
Racial	None	None	
Gender	None	None	
Disabled people	None	None	
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people	None	None	
Older/Younger people	None	None	
Religion and Beliefs	None	None	
People having dependents caring responsibilities	Yes		There is a structured approach to supporting carers
People having an offending past	None	None	
Transgender people	Yes		There will be a documented process to follow when the need arises

If you have answered **No** to any of the above please give your reasons below

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide reasons for their 'No' answers.

**FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY AND
LEAVE GUIDANCE
REVIEWED OCTOBER 2011**



**North Warwickshire
Borough Council**

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document balances the degree of flexibility offered to employees against the requirement to ensure the efficiency and standards of the Council's services, and the way in which they are provided.
- 1.2. It must be recognised that there is no entitlement to paid time off. As an example, there is no automatic right to paid time off for Hospital, Medical or Dentist Appointments and employees should, where possible, make appointments outside of normal working hours. Employees should use flexi/flexible working arrangements wherever possible. However, where the employees are unable to work within the rules of the flexible/flexible working section of this policy they must get their time off authorised by their line manager to attend appointments during working hours, and agree that paid time off to attend the appointment will normally be given.
- 1.3. If necessary, advice and guidance can be obtained from Human Resources.
- 1.4 The reference guide to Authorised Leave is given at Appendix 2.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 The policy applies to all employees.

3 PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 When agreeing flexible ways of working the guiding principles are:
 - The service must not suffer
 - There would be no additional costs
 - There would be no negative impact on colleagues both inside and outside of the service
- 3.2 Inevitably over the course of an employee's service with the Council they will experience situations which put demands on their time and causes conflict between work and life commitments. In order to provide employees with flexibility in balancing these work-life responsibilities, the Council endeavors to:
 - Promote equality
 - Promote employee well-being through its promotion of work-life balance;
 - Ensure a fair and consistent approach to managing employee attendance;
 - Provide assistance and support to employees when absence from work is necessary.In addition the Council will use flexible working to:
 - Help with business continuity
 - Help with emergency planning
 - Help with value for money
- 3.3 However, employee sickness can have an adverse impact on the Council's overall performance and performance rating. Therefore, notwithstanding the overriding aim to provide flexibility, the Council looks to promote:

- High attendance levels;
- The avoidance or minimisation of disruption to service delivery;
- An understanding that each employee holds an important role within the Council, regardless of their current circumstances;
- Good working relationships amongst all employees.

3.4 Throughout this document direction is given as to the amount of time off that is appropriate for different circumstances. It should be recognised, however, that where appropriate, line managers in consultation with HR may use their discretion in the interpretation and application of the guidance to ensure both the well being of the employee and the requirements of the service.

3.5 Time off from work, as defined in this document should not, however, be seen as an automatic right and entitlement. Inevitably, instances will arise where the line manager may have to refuse the request for time off either for business reasons or in relation to the specific request made. Wherever this is the case the employee will be given a full explanation of the reason behind the refusal and, where appropriate, alternative leave arrangements will be discussed and agreed. This explanation and any alternative arrangements will be specified in writing if requested by the employee.

3.6 Where there is a service qualification for eligibility to particular types of leave covered by the provision of this document, this is stated. Each type of leave is regarded as a separate entitlement. However, the granting of leave remains at the discretion of the line manager and/or the Assistant Director, as appropriate.

3.7 Where an employee is experiencing emotional or difficult circumstances it may be appropriate for them to be granted leave under one of the categories listed and then discuss the situation with Human Resources.

3.8 The entitlements to leave given are for full time employees, this entitlement should be calculated as a pro rata amount for employees working on part time or term time only basis or pro rata to the length of the contract for employees on temporary contracts.

3.9 Where leave is paid, the employee will receive their normal salary payment including all regular contractual payments.

4 TYPES OF ABSENCE

4.1 There are a number of different forms of leave covered and these fall into a number of broad categories. This document covers each type of leave in turn and gives a full explanation of the entitlements, statutory and non-statutory, paid and unpaid, and the procedure for applying for leave in each instance.

4.2 There will be occasions when employees will request authorised leave for reasons not covered in this document or in the reference guide at Appendix 2. In these circumstances the Assistant Director/Head of Service in consultation with HR will decide whether authorised leave will be approved.

5 FLEXTIME/FLEXIBLE WORKING

5.1 Accommodating flexible working does depend upon the service provided. Where the service can accommodate this it allows employees to stagger their start and finish times with the opportunity to build up hours to be taken at a future time for personal or domestic requirements. It ensures that the working day is covered more effectively and has a mutual benefit to the employee and the organisation. It enables employees to manage their work and personal commitments and encourages a spirit of 'give and take' between the employer and the employee. However, for this to work teams must ensure that 'work comes first' in all but exceptional circumstances. This requires some basic principles to be followed:

- Minimum cover is required during normal office hours
- There needs to be a shared understanding within teams of the level of cover required to ensure that the service is delivered to the required standard.
- Service delivery must not suffer
- Flexible working for a team member must not impact negatively on the rest of the team or other sections
- Flexible working is always subject to the exigencies of the service
- Managers have the responsibility to ensure an appropriate level of service at all times
- Managers, having consulted with the team, have the right to change arrangements in the interests of operational efficiency or quality of service

Provided the work is covered the following applies:

- There are no standard core hours
- Employees can start and finish their working day between the hours of 7.30am and 7.30pm Monday to Thursday and 7.30am and 7.00pm on Friday at the Council offices to meet the needs of the service. Flexible working is not limited to these hours provided working outside of these hours is agreed by the line manager. Operational staff who can work flexitime may start earlier to meet service needs.
- Where an employee is asked not to work extended hours due to an absence of 'business need' they will, upon request, be given a written explanation of the manager's decision.
- Customer based services must have cover for the hours when open to the public. eg 8.30am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday for the Council House. ** see footnote*
- Where more than 6 hours are worked in any day a 30 minute lunch break must be taken
- Smokers are not allowed to take smoking breaks during the working day

**Footnote ICT systems are supported from 8.50am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday and although systems may be available outside these times, this cannot be assumed or guaranteed*

- Time sheets must be completed daily, using the NWBC template flexi sheet within TRIM where available and submitted to the line manager at the end of the 4 week accounting period.
- At the end of each 4 week accounting period Line Managers must review the timesheets for accuracy and compliance of this policy; cross reference Annual leave records/Toil records/Carer's Leave records to the timesheet and raise any discrepancies with the individual immediately in order that they can be rectified
- The maximum surplus allowed is 16 hours – pro rata for part-time employees (except for employees on annualised hours). All hours in excess of this are lost at the end of the period (except if agreed in advance with management to be banked as Toil or Carers Leave)
- The maximum deficit allowed is 4 hours
- Flexi leave is taken once the hours are banked. This will include time banked during the current flexi period.
- A maximum of two days can be taken in the flexi period for full time employees
- Flexi leave is booked and authorised by the line manager in the same way as annual leave
- TOIL is where an employee needs to work hours in excess of the 16 hours to complete a piece of work, a project etc. This has to be agreed in advance and authorized by the line manager. It could be that the Line Manager has asked for the additional hours to be worked or in the case of seasonal fluctuations it is necessary to agree TOIL (See Appendix B for more details)
- Where employees are lone workers a safe system of work must be in place for when they are working. See Appendix A of the Lone Working Policy
- Internal Audit will undertake sample checking of flexi sheets to ensure adherence to and consistency with the policy
- Any employee found to be abusing the system will place themselves in a position where the Disciplinary Policy applies and the remedy may be the removal of the right to flexible working to fixed hours of work to suit the business.

Employees are in a position of trust especially when working from home.

Working from home where appropriate:

- Must be authorised by the line manager
- Work to be done must be agreed with the line manager
- When the work will be done must be agreed with the line manager eg out of office hours
- Hours worked should be documented on their flexi time sheet stating home in the 'code' column
- The employee must be contactable

Employees away from their place of work on business or on training should book their time as follows:

- If the journey were the same distance/time as it would take to get to their normal place of work they should book from arrival until the event

finishes minus their lunch break on their flexi sheet if they go straight home.

- If the journey takes longer than the time that it would take to get to their normal place of work they should book the excess to and from the venue and the time at the event minus their lunch break on their flexi sheet.
- If the event involves an overnight stay they should book the journey to and from the venue as above and the start and finish times of the event for each day. They should not book time spent in the evening networking/dining.

The submission of the timesheet/flexi sheet is a representation of the hours that an individual has completed in the course of their duties. If there is any suspicion of fraud or that an individual is abusing the system, the Line Manager should report the matter to Internal Audit or follow the reporting procedures within the Fraud and Corruption Policy. Following an investigation any employee found to have submitted false information on their timesheet/flexi or abusing the system may be subject to criminal and/or disciplinary action. See footnote 1.

6 MEDICAL, DENTAL AND HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS

6.1 See Appendix 2 for guidance.

7 ANNUAL LEAVE / BANK HOLIDAYS

7.1 The holiday year runs from 1 April to the 31 March. All employees are entitled to this leave in line with their contract of employment.

7.2 All holiday should be taken within the year that it is accrued. A member of staff wishing to carry over up to 5 days leave from one leave year to the next must agree this with their line manager provided it is not in breach of the Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

7.3 In exceptional circumstances leave may be brought forward from the next year. Staff wishing to do this must agree this with their line manager provided it is not in breach of the Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2007. Employees leaving the Authority will have to pay back any leave taken that is in excess of their entitlement.

7.4 Employees under suspension are entitled to accrue leave during this period but are required to advise their managers if they take holidays away from home at anytime so that it can be deducted from their leave card. Employees are on trust to be honest about holidays taken. If the period of suspension takes them into a new entitlement year then any outstanding leave from the previous year should be carried forward.

Footnote 1: Contrary to the Fraud Act 2006

- 7.5 All holiday dates must be approved in advance by the line manager. As much notice as possible of a proposed holiday date must be given to the line manager to ensure adequate staffing coverage at all times.
The legal guidance in the Working Time regulations is that the notice the employee gives to the employer should be at least twice as long as the amount of holiday they want to take (eg the employee would give two week's notice for one week's holiday). The employer can refuse permission for the holiday as long as they give notice which is at least as long as the holiday requested (so to refuse a request for one week's leave, the employer has to tell the employee one week in advance). However, in practice teams agree time off well in advance with each other and their line manager to ensure the service is covered. The maximum annual leave that a line manager can authorise is three weeks. It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure sufficient cover for his/her service. In exceptional circumstances where an employee requires more than 3 weeks annual leave at one time, this will need to be authorised by the Assistant Director/Director/ Chief Executive as appropriate.
- 7.6 Employees who are contracted to work bank holidays and extra statutory days will have the bank holidays and extra statutory days added to their annual leave entitlement
- 7.7 Part time employees, particularly those who do not work every or the same days each week should have their leave including bank holidays and extra statutory days calculated in hours to ensure that they receive the correct leave for their contracted hours
- 7.8 Managers should respond to a request as soon as is practicable. If a line manager has to refuse a holiday request, this should be done in good faith and on reasonable grounds, not simply on an arbitrary basis. If a request is refused the reasons should be given to the employee. This shall be in writing if the employee requests so.
- 7.9 If an employee becomes ill during a period of leave, sickness will replace the leave provided the employee follows the sickness reporting procedure.
- 7.10 If an employee is unable to take all of his/her leave due to sickness by the end of the year, this will be carried over to the next leave year.
- 7.11 Leave entitlement is pro rata to the hours worked for part time and job share employees regardless of which days are worked.

8 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

- 8.1 In the event of a life threatening illness of a close relative, up to three days leave of absence with pay will normally be granted for any one occasion. The decision should be made in consultation with HR.

- 8.2 A close relative is defined as mother, father, guardian, sister, brother, husband, wife, partner, son, daughter, grandparent, grandchild, father in law, mother in law, partners' parents.
- 8.3 In the event of the death of a close relative, up to five days leave of absence with pay will be granted. In determining how much leave to grant, managers should take into account travel and the help that is to be given with funeral arrangements when granting bereavement leave.
- 8.4 Extended family ie uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, spouse or partner's sister, brother, grandparent are normally excluded. However, where employees have been raised by any of these relatives the same arrangement as for a close relative will apply.
- 8.5 In the event of a death of an extended family member one day will be granted for attending the funeral. Shift workers and staff on rota will be granted the hours they were due to work on the day of the funeral.

9 INCLEMENT WEATHER

- 9.1 Employees should take reasonable steps to get into work but if they feel unable to do so they will have to make up the time, book leave or work from home. This should be agreed with the line manager within a reasonable time on the day.
- 9.2 Employees who have taken reasonable steps to get into work on time and are on fixed hours ie not on flexitime or must be at their desk for when the phone lines open arriving late in the morning, where their lateness is directly attributable to the adverse weather conditions, will not lose pay or be required to make up lost time.
- 9.3 Employees who have declared a disability relating to mobility problems and cannot work from home should not attempt to come to work and will not lose pay or be required to make up the lost time.
- 9.4 Depending on the numbers able to get into work, there may be a need to ask some employees to cover different duties to those they normally undertake in order to keep priority services running. The alternative duties shall be reasonably comparable or of lesser demand than their normal duties.
- 9.5 Where the Council cannot provide employees with work and they are sent home or in exceptional circumstances the premises are closed employees will receive pay for their contracted hours on that particular day

10 INTERVIEWS

- 10.1 If an employee applies for vacancies within North Warwickshire Borough Council or another local authority, (including any associate employer for the calculation of continuous service for redundancy purposes), time off will be granted for the actual interview, plus reasonable traveling time.

10.2 Employees who are officially “at risk” of redundancy will be afforded reasonable time off for interviews with any prospective employer.

11 INFERTILITY TREATMENT

11.1 North Warwickshire Borough Council will grant up to three days' leave in any one year for an employee to undergo fertility treatment.

11.2 Rest periods after treatment will be classed as sick leave and will require a medical certificate. This time would not be counted with regards to Attendance Management monitoring of sickness absence.

11.3 In order to qualify for time off for infertility treatment, the employee must have a minimum of 12 months continuous service with North Warwickshire Borough Council.

11.4 Time off for fertility treatment up to the permitted number of days will be paid at the employee's normal rate of basic pay.

11.5 Any employee planning to undergo fertility treatment must:

- inform his/her line manager as soon as his/her plans to undergo fertility treatment have been confirmed;
- provide a statement from a qualified medical practitioner that fertility treatment has been recommended and approved;
- produce an appointment card for each occasion on which time off is requested;
- try to arrange appointments at times that will cause the minimum amount of inconvenience to North Warwickshire Borough Council;
- give as much notice as possible of the days on which time off is required.

11.6 Any information provided to the line manager will be maintained in strict confidence.

12 TRANSSEXUALS AND GENDER REASSIGNMENT

12.1 The Council's policy on transsexuals and gender reassignment, including working arrangements, is given in Appendix 1.

13 COSMETIC SURGERY

13.1 Cosmetic surgery which is concerned with the enhancement of appearance through surgical and medical techniques, eg face-lifts or breast implants will have no entitlement to authorised leave. The employee will be expected to request annual leave, unpaid leave or flexible working. Where failure to undergo the procedure presents a threat to the employee's physical or mental well being advice will be sought from Occupational Health and this may be covered by the Attendance Management Policy

14 OTHER ELECTIVE SURGERY

- 14.1 Elective medical procedures such as laser eye treatment or sterilisation would be covered under medical appointments

15 CARER'S LEAVE

- 15.1 Proper provision for employees with family responsibilities is a vital ingredient in promoting equal opportunities. Caring responsibilities are not just restricted to childcare, a growing number of employees provide care for the elderly and disabled relatives.
- 15.2 A carer is anyone whose life is in some way restricted because of the need to take responsibility for the care of a child, a person with a disability or an elderly person. It is not a substitute for regular childcare eg getting a child to and from school or nursery.
- 15.3 Carer's leave is intended to enable employees to combine work and their caring responsibilities. To be successful it must be operated in a spirit of 'give and take' and with an acceptance of the principal that the efficient functioning of the Council's services and the interests of the public are paramount.
- 15.4 Employees when they become a carer should register with their line manager and HR to use carer's leave. An employee would approach their line manager who would then contact HR to confirm that they support the request. HR will put them onto a register and issue them with a carer's leave card. An employee could be a carer to more than one person at any one time eg a child and an elderly relative.
- 15.5 An employee registered with their line manager and HR as a carer will be allowed to bank up to a maximum of two weeks of their weekly contracted hours for time off in lieu to be used in either emergencies or planned hospital visits for the person/persons they are caring for.
- 15.6 Any carer's leave will be recorded on a carer's leave card and must be monitored and authorised by the line manager prior to reclaiming the leave.
- 15.7 Once an employee has used their two weeks carer's leave, one further week can be banked. However, an employee can only be allowed to take a maximum of three weeks carer's leave in any twelve-month period ie a rolling year. This can be extended at the discretion of the relevant Assistant Director or member of Management Team
- 15.8 As it is a rolling year the number of hours banked can be carried over from one leave year to another subject to the maximum above.
- 15.9 Employees who are registered carer's and are also eligible for flexi time will still be allowed to build up flexi time in addition to their carer's leave.

- 15.10 Employees must not work less than their contracted weekly hours including credits in respect of sickness, annual leave, carer's leave, bank and statutory holidays and other authorised credits. However, employees may be up to 4 hours down under Flexi time arrangements.
- 15.11 On leaving the employment of the Council, the employee will, during the period of notice, work the contracted hours for the period of notice in question, decreased by the amount of any carer's leave banked outstanding at the beginning of the notice period, or be paid for the banked carer's leave at the discretion of the Director. Carer's leave when claimed will only be paid at plain time.
- 15.12 Employees who abuse the carer's leave by taking the leave for other than the reasons stated above will place themselves in a position where the Disciplinary Policy applies. The remedy may be to return to their normal working pattern.

16 SPECIAL LEAVE

See Appendix 2 for guidance

- 16.1 This covers:
- Blood Donation
 - Bone Marrow Donation, Organ and Tissue Donation
 - Blind and Partially Sighted Employees
 - Miscarriage or Still Birth
 - Dependency/Emergency Leave

17 PLANNED PARENTAL LEAVE

See Appendix 2 for guidance

- 17.1 This covers:
- Antenatal Care
 - Maternity Leave
 - Adoption Leave
 - Paternity Leave
 - Parental Support Leave
 - Parental Leave

18 RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

- 18.1 Employers are not required to provide time and facilities for religious or belief observation in the workplace. However, it is good practice to accommodate wherever practicable requests related to religious or belief observations. North Warwickshire Borough Council has an established procedure for booking leave as set out in Paragraph 7.4. Discussion and flexibility between staff and managers usually results in a mutually acceptable outcome that balances the need of the individual, the business and other employees. All requests will be considered sympathetically and where it is reasonable and practical for the employee to be away from work, and they have sufficient holiday entitlement in hand, the request will be granted.

19 PUBLIC DUTIES:

See Appendix 2 for guidance

19.1 This covers:

- Called to be a witness at Court or Tribunal
- Member of a local authority, a police authority, any statutory tribunal, a health authority, a primary care trust, or a governing body
- Jury Service
- Magisterial and Justice of the Peace Duties
- Election Duties
- Services Leave
- Reservist Mobilisation

20 MISCELLANEOUS

See Appendix 2 for guidance

20.1 This covers:

- Examination and Study Leave
- Sickness Absence
- Unpaid Leave
- Time off in lieu
- Unauthorised Leave

21 MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

21.1 The provisions of this policy will be subject to regular review and as required by changes in legislation and guidance. The first review will be in January 2011 when the next review date will be set. The Human Resource Section will monitor the policy.

21.2 The policy has been reviewed in October 2011 and the next review date is set at October 2013.

22 COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

22.1 The provisions of this policy and any updates will be communicated to all employees of the Council.

TRANSSEXUALS AND GENDER REASSIGNMENT

1. Transsexual people are those who decide to adopt the opposite gender to that assigned at birth because they do not feel that their gender identity matches that assigned to them. Gender reassignment is the process of changing to the new gender identity. This may involve surgical treatment but some transsexual people will not undergo surgery for personal reasons, such as age, health or finance. The process of gender reassignment will normally involve a period of at least one year when the transsexual person must live and work in the gender to which he/she is reassigning (the 'real life test') and undergo hormone treatment. If the person decides to undergo surgery, this will follow the real life test.
2. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment is defined as someone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning his/her sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. It is no longer necessary for the individual to be under medical supervision or surgery. It is sufficient that he/she decides to live as a member of the opposite sex. The definition covers a woman who has decided to live as a man, but has not and will not undergo any surgical or medical procedures or treatments. However, the act does not cover, for example transgender people such as cross dressers.
3. North Warwickshire Borough Council is committed to ensuring that transsexual people are treated with respect and that it does not discriminate unlawfully. This commitment is an important aspect of its overall commitment to providing equal opportunities in employment.
4. North Warwickshire Borough Council will put this commitment into practice and will help, transsexual people and other employees to deal with any practical issues that may arise. This should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.
5. Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment. An employee who discriminates against another employee on grounds of gender reassignment may be held liable for unlawful discrimination and be required to pay compensation as well as, or instead of, the employer. The Council has a Dignity at Work Policy, which any employee alleged to have discriminated against another employee would be investigated under. If it was found that there was a case to answer this could lead to a disciplinary hearing.
6. The employee should discuss with the line manager and HR what time off is likely to be required and when, if known. The employee may require time off for medical or other treatment. Time off for these purposes should be treated no less favourably than time off for illness or other medical appointments. The employee may also need time off for additional appointments, such as electrolysis. Where possible flexible working will be used to accommodate these appointments. Where this is not possible holiday or unpaid leave should be taken for these purposes. Some employees may wish to take a

period of leave before returning to work in their new gender. This will need to be agreed whether this is to be part of the employee's normal annual leave entitlement or unpaid leave.

7. HR in consultation with the employee will appoint a person who will be the transsexual employee's principal contact in relation to the transition and who will manage the transition from North Warwickshire Borough Council's perspective. This would be a member of the HR team and/or the welfare representative from the trade union. This contact person should meet with the transsexual employee at an early stage and agree the process for managing the transition. This should then be recorded as a written action plan. With the employee's consent HR will arrange consultation with Occupational Health to help with agreeing an action plan.
8. The contact person and the transsexual employee should set out in writing a plan for managing the transition at work. This plan and any notes from the meeting should be kept strictly confidential in the employee's personnel file. Matters to be addressed in the plan may include:
 - whether the employee is to remain in the same job or be redeployed;
 - time off;
 - timing of change of social gender and information to be provided;
 - dress codes;
 - use of single-sex facilities;
 - insurance and pension; and
 - records and confidentiality.
9. Any information provided to the line manager will be maintained in strict confidence. The reason for the employee's absence will be disclosed only on a 'need-to-know' basis and in consultation with the employee.
10. The employee may give the North Warwickshire Borough Council his/her consent to disclose the reason for the absence to colleagues.
11. Where the reason for the absence is disclosed to colleagues, North Warwickshire Borough Council will ensure that the employee, on his/her return to work, is treated with sensitivity and dignity, in accordance with the North Warwickshire Borough Council's dignity at work policy. Inappropriate jokes or comments about the employee's surgery will be dealt with under the North Warwickshire Borough Council's Dignity at Work Policy.
12. Where the outcome of the surgery is unexpected and the employee suffers an injury, North Warwickshire Borough Council's sick pay will apply, following receipt of the relevant sickness certificate.
13. **Third-party harassment** occurs where an employee is harassed due to gender reassignment by third parties such as clients or customers. The employer should take steps to protect the employee from such third-party harassment. An employee who is subject to third-party harassment must report this to their line manager. The line manager will work with the harassed employee to take action to protect the employee. All of the agreed actions will be documented on the third-party harassment form.

Law Relating to this Document

Leading statutory authority

Human Rights Act 1998
Data Protection Act 1998
Gender Recognition Act 2004
Equality Act 2010

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL REFERENCE GUIDE TO LEAVE

TYPE/REQUIREMENT OF LEAVE	AMOUNT OF LEAVE	APPROVAL PROCESS	COMMENTS
Flexi Time/Flexible Working	Leave will be granted in line with the this policy	Line Manager to Approve	
Medical, Dental and Hospital Appointments	<p>Routine appointments should, where possible, be made outside of normal working hours. Where possible flexi time should be used. Eg a referral from a GP, check ups etc. Where someone has to have treatment that lasts longer than half a day and he or she are unable to make the time up they should by mutual agreement with their manager take longer than the current flexi period to make their time up or when unfit to work on that day should book sick leave. Where an employee has a cluster of appointments by mutual agreement they will be allowed to take longer to make the time up. This could be up to 3 months depending on the circumstances. Employees using flexitime to take time out for hospital appointments only need to take the hours that they need for the appointment. Eg they can leave work and return, come in later or leave early depending on the time of their appointment. They need to inform their line manager of what they need to do to attend the appointment.</p> <p>In circumstances where the employee cannot</p>	Line Manager to approve	<p>Where an appointment results in treatment or the issue of a sick note this will be covered by the Managing Attendance Policy</p> <p>Eg a blood test at a hospital for an employee who can't work flexibly, the employee would need to agree the paid time off with their manager</p>

	<p>work within the rules of the flexi/flexible working policy, the line manager must authorise their time off and agree the time to be paid to attend the appointment. Employees must give as much notice as possible of appointments.</p> <p>Where treatment forms part of an agreed phased return eg someone has been absent and they have to go for cardio treatment once per week, this maybe agreed as part of the phased return for them to attend and would be built into their rehabilitation</p> <p>Part 2, 7.7, green book - Paid time off will be granted for the purpose of cancer screening</p>		
Annual Leave/Bank Holidays	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
Compassionate Leave	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
Inclement Weather	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
Interviews	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
Infertility Treatment	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
Transsexual & Gender Reassignment	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
Cosmetic Surgery	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
Other Elective Surgery	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	

Carer's Leave	Leave will be given in line with this policy	Line Manager to approve	
<p>Special Leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blood Donation ▪ Bone Marrow Donation, Orqan and Tissue Donation ▪ Blind and partially Sighted Employees • Miscarriage or Still Birth (prior to 24th week of pregnancy) • Dependency/ Emergency Leave 	<p>Paid leave for up to 4 sessions in a rolling year, a maximum of 1 hour per session Paid leave for up to 5 days in a rolling year</p> <p>Necessary paid time off to attend the training of a new guide dog</p> <p>Paid leave for up to 5 days in any one request dependent on the individual's needs and in addition to any sickness absence taken</p> <p>These are given in line with statute. (unpaid leave. Number of days granted will be dependant on the circumstances)</p>	<p>Line Manager to approve Line Manager to approve</p> <p>Line Manager to approve</p> <p>Line Manager to approve</p>	<p>If the procedure results in unanticipated complications this will be covered by the Attendance Management Policy</p> <p>Miscarriage or Still Birth after the 24th week of pregnancy is covered in maternity and paternity leave</p> <p>Please consult with HR. Employees may if they wish and with agreement make their time up.</p>
<p>Planned Parental Leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antenatal Care • Maternity Leave • Adoption Leave • Paternity Leave • Parental Support Leave • Parental Leave • Maternity Support leave 	<p>These are given in line with statute, the green book and the Council's policies</p>		<p>Please consult with HR</p>

<p>Religious Observance</p>	<p>Where appropriate, Annual Leave should be taken for religious holidays or festivals.</p> <p>Time required for the purpose of observing prayer times will be given consideration, but shall be in the employee's own time.</p>	<p>Line Manager to approve</p> <p>Assistant Director to approve following referral from line manager</p>	
<p>Public Duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Called to be a witness at court or tribunal ▪ Called to Jury Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Magisterial and Justice of the Peace Duties ▪ Election Duties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Services Leave <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reservist Mobilisation <p>A Member of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A local authority 	<p>Paid Leave up to 5 days in a rolling year</p> <p>Leave is given as required and employee claims salary allowance from the court. Payment is evidenced and this is then deducted from employee's salary</p> <p>Paid leave for up to 10 days in a rolling year</p> <p>Necessary Paid Leave</p> <p>Non Regular Forces - Paid leave for up to 10 days for Annual Instruction. Civil Defence - Paid leave for up to 5 days for Annual Instruction. Requests for Voluntary Mobilisation and call-ups for Compulsory Mobilisation will be given consideration.</p> <p>Paid leave for up to 5 days in total in a rolling year</p>	<p>Line Manager to approve</p> <p>Line Manager to approve</p> <p>Assistant Director to approve</p> <p>Assistant Director to approve</p> <p>Line Manager to approve</p>	<p>Consult with HR</p> <p>Where the Public Body is not mentioned, the Assistant Director/Head of Service will consult with HR</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A police authority ▪ Any statutory tribunal ▪ A health authority ▪ A primary care trust ▪ A governing body of an educational establishment 			
Examination and study leave	Leave will be granted in line with the Council's Post Entry/Training Policy	Line Manager to approve	
Sickness Absence	Refer to Attendance Management Policy		Consult with HR
Unpaid Leave	All requests for leave without pay will be given consideration	Assistant Director to approve	To ensure consistency across the Authority please consult with HR before making a decision
Time off in lieu	These are hours recorded on the timesheet that are in excess of the 16 hours flexi time allowed in a period. This may be accrued in special circumstances to meet a business need. This has to be agreed in advance of the accrual.	Line Manager to approve	As this is compensatory time off for additional hours worked it should be taken within 3 months. Where there is a business reason eg the busy period is not over this may be extended to 6 months. The time off is booked in the same way as annual leave. It can be carried from one leave year to the next if it meets the 3 month rule
Unauthorised Leave	Any unauthorised leave shall be without pay and will be considered a breach of contract, which may result in disciplinary action.		Consult with HR

Agenda Item No 4

Special Sub-Group

23 February 2012

Report of the Assistant Director (Finance and Human Resources)

Progress Report on Human Resources Issues

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report advises Members of progress against the Human Resources Strategy Action Plan, work being done by the Human Resources team, the sickness levels for the period of April 2011 to December 2011 and provides some further information on action taken in managing absence.

Recommendation to the Sub-Group

That the report be noted.

2 Report

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the Human Resources (HR) Strategy Action Plan and under Health and Absence Management gives the position on sickness for the period of April 2011 to December 2011.

3 Recruitment, Retention and Selection

- 3.1 The Flexible Working Policy was implemented from the start of January 2010. There have been only minor issues around the wording on the timesheet and these have been resolved in consultation with the trade unions. The policy is currently under review. To aid the review a section on the policy was included in the staff survey, the results of which were positive overall. A wide consultation exercise has been undertaken and all of the feedback has been considered and where possible been accommodated. The reviewed policy is the subject of a separate report to this Special Sub Group.
- 3.2 The recruitment application form has been updated and is being used both electronically and in hard copy.
- 3.3 There were a number of starters and leavers between April 2011 and December 2011. There were 28 leavers, including 2 end of contracts, 2 redundancies, 3 employees who retired and 2 dismissals. There were 16 starters. This equates to a labour turnover of 8.07%.
- 3.4 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.

4 Pay and Benefits

- 4.1 In 2009/10, the HR Manager started to undertake an Equal Pay Audit in partnership with the trade unions. This has been extended to include gender, ethnicity and disability to comply with equality reporting under the Equality Act 2010. The audit has been completed and the results will be put on the Council's website shortly.
- 4.2 It was decided nationally that there would be no cost of living pay increase for 2011/12. The HR manager attends annual Local Government Employer (LGE) briefings and will also attend any LGE pay briefing sessions held in the forthcoming year.

5 Learning, Training and Development

- 5.1 In the 2010/11 training year, Principal Officers received a 360-degree appraisal. The HR department completed the questionnaire and analysis in house and the feedback was provided by an external consultant. In the 2011/12 training year, the process was rolled out to the next level of Principal Officers, and was completed by the end of December 2011.
- 5.2 The learning and development arm of the Staffordshire Plus Project has continued to meet to share information, learning and training. The HR Manager is part of this group. Working in collaboration with the other Local Authorities in the group, the Council has continued to benefit from cost effective or free training. The Council has joined the partnership for E learning with this group, which is a cost effective way of delivering some areas of training. The HR Manager is part of the project group that prioritised which modules were developed first and is ensuring that NWBC's needs are met from the E learning.
- 5.3 During 2011/12 training year, the Council has run in house courses including Health and Safety courses (e.g. Risk Assessment and Safety Audit), IT courses, Fire Awareness and the Corporate Induction programme (which is run every 6 months in house).
- 5.4 The HR section has run basic skills and NVQ courses to raise the minimum skills level across the Council. These courses are fully funded by central government. 18 employees in total completed the basic skills courses (14 in numeracy and 4 in literacy). These have been promoted through Insider and the college held a drop in session over lunchtime for employees to get their queries answered. The HR section have organised another numeracy and literacy course for the 2011/12 training year. There are currently 9 employees on the waiting list for either literacy or numeracy. It is expected that this will be the last cohort as the number of employees who still need this training are diminishing. The NVQs available are Business Administration, Customer Service, IT, and Team Leader. Currently we have Neighbourhood Wardens completing an NVQ in Customer Service.

5.5 The appraisal form has been reviewed and in line with the new Retirement Policy there is a section to record conversations about short, medium and long term plans, including retirement plans.

6 **Safety Management**

6.1 The basic Occupational Health and Safety Level 2 course was being run as a rolling programme with the aim of having all employees qualified to this standard. The government funding available for the Health and Safety Level 2 course has been removed. This is one area that can be delivered through E learning. The E learning project group has reviewed the module on health and safety and it is expected that this will be piloted and then rolled out in the ensuing months.

6.2 The HR Team now has 3 officers with the NEBOSH qualification. This enables the team to provide support for managers in completing risk assessments and providing health and safety advice, where needed.

6.3 The section has now customised the HARRIET Health and Safety Assessment system. The system has been piloted with the Streetscape division and is now being rolled out across the Authority.

6.4 The Council continue to run Healthy Workforce days, with sessions held on the 8 and 9 November 2011.

7 **Health and Absence Management**

7.1 **Summary of Sickness Absence 2011/12 (April 2011 – December 2011)**

7.1.1 The number of recorded days sick for the period April 2011 to December 2011 was 1,802.10 days, equating to 5.22 days per full time employee (FTE). For the same period last year the number of recorded days sickness was 2,702.57 days with a FTE of 7.77 days per employee. Appendix A shows these figures by Division for both years, and also shows the split between long and short-term sickness.

7.1.2 The variations between the two years show that there has been an overall decrease of 900.47 days in sickness for the period April 2011 to December 2011. This has produced a decrease of 2.55 days, from 7.77 to 5.22 days per FTE.

7.1.3 Short-term sickness in April – December 2011 has increased by 0.05 days per FTE, compared with the short-term sickness in April – December 2010. Short-term sickness absence reports are sent to Assistant Directors on a monthly basis. HR also meet with the Assistant Directors on a bi-monthly basis to provide advice and to discuss what action they have taken within their Divisions. The aim of these reports and meetings is to increase managers' awareness of sickness absence within their Divisions, which should aid proactive and consistent management of absence issues and will contribute to a reduction in the short-term absence figures.

7.1.4 Long-term sickness in April – December 2011 has decreased by 2.59 days per FTE, compared with the long term sickness in April – December 2010. 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 or by resignation. Those with significant long-term absence equates to 3 employees having lost a total of 328 days per FTE. Of those, one employee is still on long-term absence and two employees have successfully returned to work.

7.1.5 The Government's new fit note, a statement of fitness for work, was implemented on the 1 April 2010. Replacing the sick note with a fit note focuses on what people can do and has the aim of improving communication between employers, employees and doctors. The implementation within the Council has run smoothly and has had a positive effect on attendance management.

• • • 7.1.6 Appendix B shows the reasons for the number of days lost per FTE. The main reasons for absence relate to: Operation/Post Op, Muscular, Stress and Back illnesses.

7.2 Ill Health Monitored Under the Attendance Management Policy

7.2.1 Under the Attendance Management Policy where ill health is having a detrimental effect on an individual's ability to perform their job, or where the trigger points have been exceeded under the policy, then managers will seek to manage these cases in a pro-active way. The Attendance Management Policy sets out the procedures to be used, starting with management reviews to Case Management stages 1, 2 and working through, if necessary, to the end of the process at stage 3.

7.2.2 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:

- 0 employees due to start management/formal reviews
- 11 employees are having management/formal reviews
- 3 employees are at Stage 1
- 1 employee is at Stage 2

7.2.3 The reviewed Attendance Management policy was agreed at full Council in October 2011 and the managers and supervisors were fully briefed on the changes in November 2011.

8 Human Resource Management Systems

8.1 The team is now working well and each of the team members are embedded into their role, working with minimum supervision. The whole team is working on putting all of the records into TRIM. This is a huge task, as it requires data cleansing, culling of personal files and scanning personal files onto the system. The objective being that employee files eventually become paperless.

- 8.2 The HR Manager and the HR Officer are involved in providing advice to Managers on policies, procedures, employment law and best practice.
- 8.3 A number of policies, both new and reviewed have been agreed at full Council. Managers and supervisors have been fully briefed on these.

9 **Organisational Development**

9.1 The Council retained its liP recognition following re-assessment in March 2009. The action plan produced following the assessment was monitored by the Improving the Way We Work employee group. The HR manager met with the liP assessor and arranged for him to attend management team to provide feedback on the completed actions and to discuss options for the future. The feedback from the assessor was positive and stated that:

- The key principles of the national standard are part of the culture within North Warwickshire Borough Council.
- There are also indications that a great number of the organisational strategies and practices would satisfy several criteria within the extended framework and potentially reach a level that would be recognised at silver or gold levels.
- There are also strong indications that the organisation would be successful in achieving the Health & Wellbeing Good Practice Award.

Given that much of the standard is embedded, a further assessment to retain the award and/or increase it to Gold and/or include Health and Wellbeing would not achieve value for money in the current climate. The decision was taken that the Council would not seek to retain the Investor in People award when it expires on the 31 March 2012 at the Resources Board on the 5 July 2011.

9.2 The HR Officer and the Assistant Director participate in the Improving the Way We Work employee group that the Chief Executive has set up in order to improve the way we work and to look at areas for development and improvement with the Council. This group has and will continue to monitor action plans.

10 **Employee Relations**

10.1 The HR team provides advice and support to managers on all HR issues. The HR Manager and the HR Officer provide support to managers and lead, where appropriate, on investigations, disciplinary, grievance, and capability relating to performance or attendance. There have been 8 investigations undertaken from April – December 2011.

10.2 The HR Manager and HR Officer also provide considerable support in the preparation for Hearings, Appeals and Employment Tribunals. Of the 8 investigations - 2 resulted in dismissal, 3 resulted in disciplinary action, 2 resulted in remedial action and there is 1 that is still in process.

10.3 The results of the 2011 staff survey have been reported to Management team and published to all employees via the Insider. Management Team will look at the overall corporate results to see if there are areas of good practice which can be shared and implemented across the Council. Each Assistant Director has received their Division's results and will identify 3 priority areas for action within their Division in order to improve upon the results.

11 Equality and Diversity

11.1 The Policy team are continuing to co-ordinate all staff and member training in awareness and understanding of their individual responsibility and that the Council's policies are equality impact assessed.

11.2 The Equality Act 2010 has a number of HR implications. The HR manager has trained all managers and supervisors in the changes. Following the training all HR policies have been reviewed to bring in line with the Act.

12 Report Implications

12.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

12.1.1 These will depend on whether additional resources are used 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.

12.2 Human Resources Implications

12.2.1 As detailed in the report.

12.3 Environment and Sustainability Implications

12.3.1 The work on numeracy, literacy and NVQs is bringing the employee skills up to a minimum standard will directly contribute towards the priorities of the North Warwickshire Sustainable Communities Strategy 2009 – 2026 of raising aspirations, education, attainment and skills.

12.4 Links to Council's Priorities

12.4.1 Improvement in sickness absence is one of the objectives within the Human Resources Strategy.

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

	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12
Division	FTE per Division	FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Assistant Chief Exec	33.98	33.54	59.31	108.95	1.75	3.25
Corporate Services	31.45	29.48	158.00	105.50	5.02	3.58
Streetscape	64.53	64.67	642.64	508.78	9.96	7.87
Leisure & Comm Dev	57.27	57.33	435.08	167.35	7.60	2.92
Community Services	41.43	42.29	253.94	118.50	6.13	2.80
Finance & HR	17.85	18.85	54.76	74.96	3.07	3.98
Housing	94.31	92.13	1078.84	708.12	11.44	7.69
Internal Audit	1.99	2.48	4.00	3.93	2.01	1.58
Chief Exec	5.00	5.00	16.00	6.00	3.20	1.20
Total	347.81	345.77	2,702.57	1802.09	7.77	5.21

SHORT TERM SICKNESS

	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12
Division	FTE per Division	FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Assistant Chief Exec	33.98	33.54	19.31	81.95	0.57	2.44
Corporate Services	31.45	29.48	127.00	105.50	4.04	3.58
Streetscape	64.53	64.67	275.56	361.28	4.27	5.59
Leisure & Comm Dev	57.27	57.33	250.59	167.35	4.38	2.92
Community Services	41.43	42.29	153.94	118.50	3.72	2.80
Finance & HR	17.85	18.85	19.76	14.96	1.11	0.79
Housing	94.31	92.13	356.54	369.04	3.78	4.01
Internal Audit	1.99	2.48	4.00	3.93	2.01	1.58
Chief Exec	5.00	5.00	16.00	6.00	3.20	1.20
Total	347.81	345.77	1222.70	1228.51	3.52	3.55

LONG TERM SICKNESS

	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12	2010/11	2011/12
Division	FTE per Division	FTE per Division	Days Lost by FTE	Days Lost by FTE	Sickness per FTE	Sickness per FTE
Assistant Chief Exec	33.98	33.54	40.00	27.00	1.18	0.81
Corporate Services	31.45	29.48	31.00	0.00	0.99	0.00
Streetscape	64.53	64.67	367.08	147.50	5.69	2.28
Leisure & Comm Dev	57.27	57.33	184.49	0.00	3.22	0.00
Community Services	41.43	42.29	100.00	0.00	2.41	0.00
Finance & HR	17.85	18.85	35.00	60.00	1.96	3.18
Housing	94.31	92.13	722.30	339.08	7.66	3.68
Internal Audit	1.99	2.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Chief Exec	5.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Total	347.81	345.77	1,479.87	573.58	4.25	1.66
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Reasons for Sickness**APPENDIX B**

Sickness Code	Description	Days Lost per FTE
Anxiety/ Depression	Anxiety, Depression	31.81
Back	Back & Neck problems	200.34
Cancer	Cancer related	17.00
Chest	Chest & Respiratory: to include Chest infections	113.51
Cold	Cold symptoms	76.24
ENT/Eye	Eye, Ear, Nose & Mouth/Dental : to include sinusitis	71.08
Flu	Flu symptoms	84.06
Genito-Urinary	Genito Urinary: to include menstrual problems	26.92
Heart	Heart Blood pressure& circulation	39.00
Hypertension	High Blood Pressure	0
Muscular	Other musculoskeletal problems	275.78
Neurological	Neurological; to include headaches and migraine	61.50
Operation & Post Op	Operation, Post Op	335.97
Pregnancy	Pregnancy related	72.14
Stomach	Stomach, Liver, Kidney & Digestion; to include gastro-enteritis	183.96
Stress	Stress, Mental health & fatigue	212.79
Unknown	No reason known for absence	0
		1,802.10

Agenda Item No 5

Special Sub-Group

23 February 2012

**Report of the Assistant Director
(Finance & Human Resources)**

Human Resources Strategy

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents a revised Human Resources Strategy for Members to consider for adoption.

Recommendation to the Sub-Group

- a That the five year Human Resources Strategy be approved:
and**
- b That the Strategy is reviewed in 2016.**

2 Report

- 2.1 The Council's most valuable resource is its employees, who are key to the Council's success in achieving its vision through the achievement of objectives and targets. Although there are many policies and procedures in place for dealing with particular issues, the Human Resources (HR) Strategy provides an overarching strategy that deals with the direction of and the maximisation of the Council's human resources.

- 2.2 Without a skilled, motivated, committed and well-managed workforce, the Council will not achieve its aims and objectives. The proposed strategy attached at Appendix A seeks to identify the key issues that the Council will need to address over the next few years in order to maximise the contributions of all its employees. These issues have been identified in a number of ways: through the Corporate Plan, the Divisional Plans, new legislation, employee and public expectations, and changing HR practice.

...

- 2.3 The key aims, objectives and plans to support the strategy has been split into a number of sections, each covering different areas, such as Recruitment and Retention and Health and Safety. These are for 2011/12 and much of these have been achieved. Progress is at different stages in each area, and these are reviewed and updated annually to meet the business needs identified in the Divisional Plans. Progress on these will be reported to the Special Sub Group twice per year.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Environment and Sustainability Implications

3.1.1 Good human resource management will assist the Council in the continued provision of its services.

3.2 Links to Council's Priorities

3.2.1 The strategy supports the Council to meet the challenge of constant change and improvement needed to deliver its services

The Contact Officer for this report is Janis McCulloch (719236).

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

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

June 2011 – June 2016

Human Resources Strategy

The Human Resources (HR) Strategy sets out North Warwickshire Borough Council's (NWBC) plans to ensure the recruitment, development and retention of the best quality staff across the Council, in order to fulfil the Council's mission and meet its strategic aims and objectives.

The HR Strategy covers the period 2011 – 2016 and is a summary of the actions required to continually improve the human resources management (HRM) at NWBC and contribute to the success of the Council.

The HR Strategy has been shaped taking into consideration the following:

- The Council's Vision and priorities
- The Corporate Plan
- UK and European employment legislation
- Best practice in human resources
- The national Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service
- Local collective agreements reached with trade unions recognised by the Council
- The rules of the Council
- Agreements made under the Local Single Status Negotiating Group – these include pay and grading
- Guidance from West Midlands Council

Over the next five years NWBC aims to meet the objectives set out in this strategy. Arrangements for the implementation of the strategy are outlined in the action plan. If the Council is to meet the challenge of constant change and improvement, the implementation programme must be owned at all levels in the organisation and will require the commitment of motivated employees. This strategy identifies the actions the Council must take to manage that change and be successful. The plan provides details of objectives and actions and deadlines for achievement. The plan will be reviewed annually and will be adapted to changing factors within the Council, emerging employment trends, local, national and EU legislation and best practice in HR.

Members and Managers will be responsible for ensuring that people management is incorporated into all aspects of the Council's business. Extended Management Team is responsible for the delivery of this strategy. The Assistant Director (Finance and HR) is responsible for delivery and annual review of the action plan reporting to the Special Sub Group. Progress during the year will also be reported to the Special Sub Group.

The Council's most valuable resource is its employees and they are key to the Council's success in achieving its vision of:

"Being recognised for providing high quality services to our communities through listening, learning and leading with openness".

We recognise the delivery of these services is dependent upon the performance of our staff and the management of the organisation as a whole. To achieve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, we will endeavour to create an environment in

which our staff are highly trained, motivated and equipped with skills required to deliver the Council's aims and objectives. We also wish to create an environment where employment activities are equally accessible to all and free from prejudices and discrimination. This strategy is based upon modern concepts, which include mutual respect, clear communication networks, flexible working practices, trust and empowerment. Managers are expected to lead by example and demonstrate the benefits of team working within a performance-orientated framework, which enables everyone to contribute to the organisation's priorities and key objectives.

Human Resources Objectives

Our (HR) aims and objectives are:

- ❖ To provide a framework to support the development of staff to improve services to the community and achieve the Council's aims and objectives
- ❖ To create an environment where staff are valued and their contribution is recognised
- ❖ To communicate standards of conduct to employees
- ❖ To maintain a comprehensive, professional and ethical HR service
- ❖ To have good employee relationships with staff and trade unions
- ❖ To recognise that change is necessary and develop strategies to assist with the implementation of change
- ❖ To promote the Council as a good employer and develop policies to improve terms and conditions of employment
- ❖ To promote a healthy, safe and effective workforce through appropriate policies and working environment
- ❖ To exploit technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service
- ❖ To maintain relationships necessary to promote a motivated workforce by dealing with staff welfare issues, such as employment benefits, counselling, advice and sickness monitoring

Introduction

The Corporate Plan identifies both the longer-term goals of the Authority and a number of short-term targets. These help to deliver the Council's aims and objectives, relating to both its own services and its work with other partners. It is recognised that securing improvements to services is dependent on the commitment of all staff and proposes a framework in which employees are able to use their knowledge and expertise to the full.

The purpose of this strategy is to identify the key issues which need to be addressed over the next five years to maximise the contributions of all our employees, recognising that the Council will only achieve its aims and objectives if it has a skilled, motivated, committed and well-managed workforce.

Developing the Strategy

There are a number of changes impacting on Local Government and this review of the 2005 – 2010 strategy gives details of how we will meet current and future developments and challenges at national, regional and local level. Actions needed have been identified from both internal and external sources.

In compiling the strategy, it is essential that the issues raised in the Council's Corporate Plan are addressed. These range from service capacity issues to dealing with changing public expectations, as well as development needed, either corporately or divisionally through making the best use of resources through achieving a balanced budget.

The Corporate Plan aims to look for further efficiencies in line with those expected nationally. This is also set against a background of rising public expectations for more choice in the way services are provided and higher quality of service. These expectations can only be met if our structures, working practices and procedures promote flexibility and a clear understanding about corporate requirements and priorities.

Consultation has taken place with the Council's recognised trade unions through the Joint Negotiating Forum. The Council's Extended Management Team has also been consulted and its suggestions for improvement have been incorporated.

Financial Implications

Where the Council can draw down/bid for funding for HR related initiatives these will be actively pursued. Where external resources can be accessed through partnerships at an economical rate these will also be used.

Background and Context

Key Influences and Challenges

The future climate of Local Government is one of change. The key influences and challenges for North Warwickshire include:

External Factors

- ❖ **Reduction in Government Grants to Local Authorities-** This is already having a major impact on the way we work and deliver services, eg The drive for continuous improvement, partnership working, and financial pressures, including the need to control the pay bill by freezing posts; all have an impact on the capacity of the organisation. Changes in the national requirements for services will also have an impact on the way we work. eg The Localism Bill and the Big Society, the essence of which is to shift the power away from central government and towards local people.
- ❖ **The impact of new legislation on service delivery and our workforce -** Existing and future employment legislation and case law will regulate our actions and as such will continue to influence the overall structure, delivery and management of services. HR has a key role in assessing the impact of employment legislation and ensuring that staff are trained and informed about new, existing and developing legislation.

- ❖ **The impact of the labour market with rising unemployment and redundancies across local government** - A constant challenge within this environment of uncertainty is to recruit and retain a capable, talented and committed workforce to meet the Council's vision for North Warwickshire so that we are the employer of choice within our community.
- ❖ **E-government** - Expectations from the public, together with ever increasing advances in technology, do and will continue to significantly change local government and the way our services are provided over the next few years. There is a continuing emphasis from Central Government on the efficiencies of sharing data, which is filtering down to Local Authorities.
- ❖ **Equality of opportunity and diversity in employment** – The Equality Act 2010 is the most recent piece of legislation to impact on the HR role within the organisation. We are actively working with Members and Officers to ensure that our policies and procedures are in line with the Act and that equality issues are mainstreamed into all our activities. Equalities training is provided for all members and staff.
- ❖ **National bargaining and the financial context** – In these times of diminishing budgets there is an ever increasing pressure, both nationally and locally for affordable pay awards. We operate a mixture of both local and national terms and conditions of service and we need to ensure that these and future terms and conditions continue to improve the services that we deliver. We are committed to providing training and development so that all staff have transferable skills that enable our people to deliver consistent and effective services and achieve their own potential so that best value is achieved in support of the Council's vision. We are also committed to harmonisation of terms and conditions of service through the national 'Single Status' Agreement, with particular emphasis on job evaluation.

Internal Factors

- ❖ **Work-life balance issues** - We are committed to the principles of work life balance and recognise that it makes good business sense to provide opportunities for our staff to achieve a better work life balance, with a pay back of increased morale, better effectiveness and productivity, and the ability to embrace change. We already have a number of flexible working practices, which are delivered through our flexible working policy and will continue to review flexible working arrangements.
- ❖ **Change management** - We recognise that effective planning; the setting of clear and consistent goals, leadership, good communications and staff development are key success factors for implementing successful change. We will continue to work closely with the Trade Unions, involve staff throughout the change process, and provide training and development so that staff can acquire new skills to meet the aspirations of the community.
- ❖ **Performance management** - Managers are responsible for the performance of their sections and issues of non-performance are in the first instance dealt with through the informal stage of the Improved Performance Support Policy. If the informal stage is unsuccessful, the manager, together with HR, will implement the formal procedure. All staff will receive an annual appraisal with a six monthly review and will be involved in setting and monitoring key

objectives and targets within their job. Where poor performance is the direct result of the employee not co-operating, then this is dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Managers continue to participate in a three yearly 360 degree assessment process which is designed to help them prioritise their personal management development needs.

- ❖ **Sickness absence/welfare** - High levels of attendance at work are vital to the smooth delivery and economic effectiveness of service delivery. We have established procedures for reporting, monitoring and managing absences based upon the principles of fairness and support, whilst maximising efficiency. The Council is committed to employees health by focusing on prevention instead of cure and recognises that achieving high standards of occupational health and safety makes good business sense. HR will continue to exercise a high profile in this area.

- ❖ **Investors in people** - We recognise that the Council's objectives can only be successfully achieved if they are translated into actions by well trained and well motivated staff working to a common cause. We will continue to work to the Investor in People standards and deliver an annual training plan from the appraisal process to meet the needs of the individual, the team and the organisation.

- ❖ **Employee relations** - It is vital that we develop a culture which accepts new ideas and accepts that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. We expect staff to behave responsibly and treat each other with respect and dignity in the workplace. Whilst we encourage creativity within a risk assessment framework, the risk should be measured and taken with appropriate professional precaution. Where difficulties arise, we will support staff and provide fair mechanisms for dealing with these. We will continue to work closely with staff and trade unions on all major staffing issues.

Current Profile of the Council

Currently the Council employs 434 people (346 FTEs). The number directly employed by the Authority has fallen over the last five years (373 FTEs in 2005). The workforce is supplemented by a bank of casual employees and a small number of agency workers.

The Council, in common with other employers, has an ageing workforce. Although this has increased in the last 5 years it has slowed down. In December 2011 65% were over the age of 40, compared to April 2005 when it was 61% and in April 2003 it was 50%. The removal of the default retirement age together with the slowing down of recruitment may add to this. However, in some Divisions with employees undertaking manual work, to date no employees have requested to remain beyond 65 years but have chosen to retire at 65 or earlier.

A level of staff turnover in an organisation is considered healthy in order to ensure fresh ideas, ways of working and motivation. However, a degree of stability is also necessary so that organisational knowledge, skills, and continuity are maintained. NWBC has for some years had less than the average turnover for District Councils. However, in 2010/11 the turnover was 12.6%, which is slightly over the average for District Councils of 12.3%.

We have set realistic targets to reduce sickness absence. The target for 2010/11 was exceeded. There has been a significant reduction in long-term absence, which is believed to be as a result of the operation of the case management section of the Attendance Management Policy and the introduction of the 'fit note'. Short-term absence remains about the same and it is intended to tighten up the process to address this.

An assessment of the gender split over the different grades paid by the Authority has shown that 43% of full time employees in 2011 are women. In 2005 this was 45%. Although there is not a significant imbalance in the grade of male and female employees for full time employees generally, the proportion of women at Assistant Director level or above does have an imbalance. However, this has improved from 15% in 2005 to 33% in 2011. There is a difference for part time employees that are men from 18% in 2005 to 25% in 2011.

National studies have shown that there are increasing expectations that employers will help provide greater equality of opportunity and a more 'balanced' lifestyle, with opportunities to meet the requirements of work and family and leisure. We have identified the skills and competencies needed to perform each job effectively and provide training and development opportunities for everyone. Our flexible working policy supports individual choices about work, care and parenting, whilst balancing them with the needs of the organisation. This approach does assist with recruitment and selection.

The HR team have successfully taken the service from a traditional personnel service to a progressive Human Resource function. The team is proactive in dealing with areas such as employment legislation, policy, employee relations, sickness absence and recruitment matters. Human Resources has moved forward within the Authority, by giving managers the tools and information to manage, rather than HR carrying out part of the management function. Through policy and training, roles for HR and managers have been more clearly defined.

Human Resource Management (HRM) has a more strategic, business orientated role than the traditional personnel function. As partners with line managers in the business, HRM provides advice and support to enable line managers to implement rules and legislation competently. This 'sea change' from personnel to progressive HRM has been essential to move the Authority forward in modernising the service.

Managers are provided with better information, advice and support to enable them to become better people managers. This joined up approach between HRM and line managers to improve people performance, output and outcomes in areas such as sickness absence, recruitment and retention, performance and dignity at work is now paying dividends in fewer cases to manage.

Some of the benefits from developing progressive Human Resource Management are:

- ◆ Managers' performance in relation to people management
- ◆ Strategic planning
- ◆ Organisational development
- ◆ HR management systems
- ◆ Health and absence management
- ◆ Developing and growing staff for the future
- ◆ Recognising and developing potential
- ◆ Managing performance
- ◆ Being flexible and open to new ways of doing things
- ◆ Encouraging innovation
- ◆ Developing commitment and retaining staff

This can be summarised from both an employee and an employer's point of view.

What employees can expect from the Authority

Employees

- ❖ To be appointed fairly
- ❖ To have a welcoming induction
- ❖ To be trained and developed appropriately
- ❖ To be well managed
- ❖ To be supported
- ❖ To enjoy work life balance
- ❖ To be listened to
- ❖ To have a healthy and safe environment
- ❖ To be treated with dignity and respect
- ❖ Career development

Managers

All of the above plus

- ❖ Management Development
- ❖ To be supported in your service development decisions
- ❖ To have a voice in your division's management

Assistant Directors

All of the above plus

- ❖ Authority to shape your service
- ❖ To be supported in your policy decisions
- ❖ To be accountable for your service
- ❖ The opportunity to manage and facilitate change

Management Team

All of the above plus

- ❖ To support elected members to shape the Council
- ❖ To guide the future agenda and vision of North Warwickshire
- ❖ To manage member interface

What the Authority can expect of employees

Employees

- ❖ To be capable of undertaking your job
- ❖ To attend work regularly
- ❖ To perform to the best of your abilities
- ❖ To be customer focused
- ❖ To be a team player
- ❖ To be loyal to NWBC
- ❖ To participate in improving services
- ❖ To raise any concerns early
- ❖ To treat people with dignity and respect
- ❖ To support service provision to meet the Council's vision and plans

Managers

All of the above plus

- ❖ To be an ambassador for NWBC's culture
- ❖ To enable, develop and motivate people in your team
- ❖ To contribute to strategic decisions
- ❖ Consistent and fair management
- ❖ To manage service provision to meet the Council's vision and plans

Assistant Directors

All of the above plus

- ❖ To lead people effectively
- ❖ To consult and inform members
- ❖ To uphold IIP standards
- ❖ To be innovative
- ❖ To direct service provision to meet the Council's vision and plans

Management Team

All of the above plus

- ❖ A leadership style which empowers
- ❖ To lead and encourage organisational development
- ❖ To safeguard and develop NWBC's culture

These principles have been used by staff to develop a Staff Charter, which details what employees can expect, their responsibilities and how this will be achieved. A copy of this is at appendix 1 of this strategy.

STAFF CHARTER

I have an expectation that I will

- ❖ Be trained and developed appropriately
- ❖ Be valued
- ❖ Be supported
- ❖ Enjoy work life balance
- ❖ Be able to contribute to the running of my team
- ❖ Have a healthy and safe working environment
- ❖ Be treated with dignity and respect
- ❖ Be consulted on change

I have a responsibility to

- ❖ Develop the skills to carry out my job
- ❖ Perform to the best of my abilities
- ❖ Be customer focused
- ❖ Be a team player
- ❖ Promote NWBC
- ❖ Participate in improving services
- ❖ Raise any concerns early
- ❖ Treat people with dignity and respect
- ❖ To support service provision to meet the Council's vision and plans
- ❖ Uphold the Council's policies and procedures

We will do this by

- ❖ Having appraisals (including half yearly review)
- ❖ Performance management
- ❖ Having training plans
- ❖ The Investors in People award
- ❖ Having access to flexible working arrangements where possible
- ❖ Having proper resources to do the job
- ❖ Having enough time to do the job
- ❖ Being supported
- ❖ Learning from mistakes
- ❖ Having a healthy work-life balance
- ❖ Listening to staff suggestions

Key Aims, Objectives and Action Plans 2011/12

Recruitment, Selection and Retention

Seek to recruit and retain high quality people to meet the Council's present and future service needs.

Current Position

The Council approved a reviewed Recruitment and Selection Policy in June 2007 and provided training for all of its managers who were expected to be involved in the process of the policy. This was reviewed in 2009 to reflect changes in law. A Flexible Working Policy was adopted in November 2009 and is now being reviewed to see if it can be improved on. The Council does ask all employees leaving the organisation to complete an exit questionnaire but these have not always been completed.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	Ensure the consistent application of the Recruitment and Selection Policy with particular emphasis on clarity, fairness and equality of opportunity	Require all divisions to submit selection criteria for vacant posts and evaluation of all candidates	Divisions	Assessment by HR Section	Monthly
2	Promote NWBC as an employer of choice	Market Benefits More Effectively in Recruitment Advertising	Divisions & HR	Candidates have information on eg pension, leave entitlement, flexible working, relocation and staff travel	Monthly
3	Develop and agree policies which encourage a flexible approach to structures, working practices and procedures	Review the Flexible Working Policy	AD (F&HR) HR Manager	Feedback received Report to Special Sub Group	30 June 2011 Feb 2012
4	To increase the use of information technology in recruitment	Continue to use the WMJobs Portal and other online advertising as a first choice	HR Manager	Reduction in advertising spend	Monthly

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
5	To complete the recruitment and selection process by giving new employees the information needed to perform effectively	To ensure inductions are carried out for all new employees	Assistant Directors HR Manager	The completion of inductions are monitored by the HR Section	Monthly
6	Ensure Corporate induction sessions are run at least every 6 months	Run 2 Corporate Inductions each year	HR Manager	Induction attendance monitored by HR Section	May and November every year
7	Listen to our Staff	Coordinate the staff survey and analyse the results Summarise the results of exit interviews 2010/11 Re-launch the exit questionnaire with a view to increasing response rate	HR Section HR Manager	Results of the staff survey Report to MT & EMT Report to MT Capture all Leavers and Feedback to EMT annually	December 11 Annually 30 June 2012 Annually end of June

Pay and Benefits

Ensure that the Council is paying fair wages for performance, whilst recognising that salary is only one motivating factor in the reward for achievement.

Current Position

The Council concluded and implemented an authority wide job evaluation exercise in 2003. This included the consolidation of performance related payments, such as bonus. However, a few minor irregular allowances still needed to be resolved. Most have been dealt with some through reviews of terms and conditions and others as they have been identified by employees.

As part of planning for the right skills for the future the Council has introduced in selected areas training and development linked to pay. Eg multiskilling craft workers. This has enabled the Council to retain its staff. This will be ongoing and would be considered in any area where the requirements are changing or where there are hard to fill posts.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	To have pay and reward structures that attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce while achieving value for money in service delivery	Carry out an Equal Pay Audit Produce a pay Policy Review/assess contracts of employment as business needs change	HR Manager HR Manager HR Manager	Report audit conclusions to MT Report to Exec Board Publish Policy All contracts completed	January 2012 January 2012 April 2012 Ongoing
2	Monitor developments in remuneration strategies and in particular non-monetary reward techniques	Ongoing research through benchmarking groups, WMJobs, professional organisations, local surveys and exchange of information through HR Officer groups	HR Section	Different remuneration strategies and non-monetary reward options identified and considered	Ongoing
3	Maintain the grading structures to ensure equal pay for equal work	Assess the continued use of the Job Evaluation system	Assistant Director of Finance & HR and the Assistant Director of Corporate Services	Report to MT	31 March 2012
4	Use reward schemes to attract and retain employees to meet service objectives, acknowledging market forces where appropriate	Investigate and identify recruitment and retention issues and agree actions for resolving problems	Assistant Directors/ HR Section	People appointed to difficult to fill posts, and reduced turnover in those sections.	Ongoing
5	Continue to operate within national and local agreements, and to seek to influence the making of these agreements to ensure that they take account of the Council's aims	Continue to participate in pay negotiations and bench marking exercises related to pay and reward systems	HR Manager	Attendance at regional pay briefings	Ongoing

Learning, Training and Development

To develop people so that they have the necessary skills to carry out their current work, and to develop their skills and abilities to meet the changing needs of the Council.

Current Position

The Council has an established system for identifying training and development, putting together an annual training strategy and training plan, and monitoring and evaluating progress on delivering the plan. However, there is an ongoing need to ensure that all staff understands their role in meeting the Authority's objectives. The management competencies were reviewed in 2009 and the 360-appraisal scheme continues with all managers/supervisors receiving a 360 degree appraisal on a three year rolling programme.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	Ensure the performance appraisal system in place, is well understood and working effectively.	Review the quality of appraisals and reviews from all Divisions	HR Section	Clear trail from individual tasks to corporate and divisional targets	Sept/Oct (annually)
2	Ensure that all identified training is considered and discussed with managers before completing the in-house training programme and agreement of divisional training budgets	To produce an annual in-house training Programme Deliver the annual training plan and update the central training log	HR Officer Assistant Directors	Training Plan within budget HR Reports to MT	30 June 2012 30 June 2012
3	Ensure identified Corporate training needs are met	Organise Corporate Training	HR Section	Evaluation of training delivered	Ongoing
4	To provide Councillors with the skills and support to carry out their work effectively	To assess the training and development needs of Councillors	Assistant Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council and Assistant Director Finance & HR	To provide training to meet identified needs	March 2012

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
5	Ensure that the appraisal form is fit for purpose	Review the appraisal form	HR Officer	New Form being used effectively	Dec 2011 ready for 2012 appraisals
6	Ensure 360 degree appraisals are carried out	Manage the process and feedback to officers	HR Manager & HR Officer	All supervisors at Principal Officer level and above have a 360 appraisal every 3 years	Ongoing
7	Assist in assessments for EMT	Coordinate the assessments and feedback for participants	HR Manager & HR Officer	CE and Deputy CE able to determine allocation of work to team members based on their strengths	Completed by 24 June 2011
8	To develop partnerships for the delivery of training	<p>Explore partnerships with other Authorities to obtain more cost effective training.</p> <p>Working with the Warks Learning & Development Consortium to input into developing a Learning & Development Academy for Warks & others</p> <p>Working with Staffordshire Plus group</p>	HR Manager and other Officers as appropriate	<p>Additional funding/ cheaper options available for development activities</p> <p>Increase in development activities such as coaching</p> <p>Better use of resources through Joint working on cost effective training eg E Learning and report to MT</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2011 and Ongoing</p>

Safety Management

Ensure the health, safety and well-being of employees and the provision of a safe and healthy working environment which meets or exceeds the minimum legal standards and contributes to the business objectives of all divisions.

Current Position

A Health and Safety strategy is currently in place, with risk assessments undertaken both within Divisions and corporately where that is more appropriate. A Health and Safety Working Party meets quarterly, with members representing all divisions. As part of the revitalising Health and Safety agenda, a system of safety audits has been developed. The Council has purchased, with funding from Zurich, an electronic system, HARRIET, which will be rolled out to all divisions.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	To manage health and safety risks across the authority	Risks identified and controls put in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level	Assistant Directors	Number of accidents reported	Ongoing
2	Continue with the planned approach to the development and monitoring of procedures and safe systems of work.	Carry out a corporate safety audit	HR Section	Review by the HR Section	31 December 2011
		Review Divisional safety audits	Assistant Directors	Audits done on time	31 July 2011
		Ensure risk assessments are taking place as expected in divisions	HR Officer	Review by the HR Section	31 July 2011
		Implement HARRIET across all divisions	HR Officer	All Divisions using HARRIET	31 December 2011
3	Ensure that staff at all levels receive appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to competently perform their H&S and safety duties	Training programme developed according to the job demands and employee competence	Assistant Directors/ HR Section	Evaluation of training Number and severity of accidents	Ongoing

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
4	Promote a positive safety culture and encourage ownership of health and safety responsibilities at all levels	Managers at all levels IOSH trained and to lead by example. Health and safety discussed regularly at staff team meetings Staff encouraged to contribute to safe working practices and procedures	All Managers	Managers have a better understanding of their role and responsibilities measured through management competencies	Ongoing
5	To manage stress In an effective way	To investigate the use of the HSE management of stress standards to enable a stress audit across the Authority	HR Manager	Standards/Audit implemented	June 2012

Health and Absence Management

The creation of a healthier and productive workforce with reduced sickness absence; few ill health retirements and improved work/life balance.

Current Position

Although there have been few ill health retirements for a number of years, sickness is a continuing issue. The Council adopted a revised policy in June 2007. This was reviewed in 2009 to reflect changes in law. All managers were briefed on the changes. Managers use the Attendance Management Policy with support from the HR Section. The 2010/11 the actual performance was better than the target set. With the freezing of posts and the cuts that the Council is having to manage, attendance at work has become even more critical to the success of the Council.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	Ensure the cost effectiveness of prompt occupational health interventions	Keep under review	HR Officer & HR Manager	Effective use of Occupational Health resulting in minimum absence	Ongoing
2	Ensure processes are effective in managing absence	Review Attendance Management Policy & Procedure and Brief Managers on changes	HR Manager	Policy to Resources Board Managers briefed Reduction in days absent per FTE	September 2011 31 October 2011 31 March 2012

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
3	Set realistic targets for sickness absence and reduction, with regular reviews	Benchmark sickness absence processes with other 'improving' authorities	HR Section	Reduction in number of days absence per FTE	Ongoing
		Develop and promote initiatives to minimise sickness absence	HR Section		Ongoing
4	To work on health in the workplace	Produce a Health & Wellbeing Policy	HR Manager	Report to Resources Board	September 2011
		Brief Managers		All Managers briefed	Nov 2011

Human Resource Management Systems

The operation of effective and well-informed people management practices, leading to measurable improvements in workforce performance. The collection, analysis and dissemination of employee and workforce data required to support this.

Current Position

The Authority has a small HR section that must focus on policy and strategy development in support of corporate objectives, whilst supporting managers to manage, develop and enhance staff performance. The payroll has been outsourced to Warwickshire County Council since April 2009. This is processed on Oracle software and has attached to it a Human Resource Management System, which we have access to. We are now able to pull down reports that we can use for management information such as sickness absence.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	To ensure that the Council has a suitable HR information system	Review the HR system and assess any possible further options to use	HR Officer	Able to run all reports needed if available on the system	31 October 2011

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measures	Milestones Dates
2	To clarify management roles relating to human resource issues	A clear definition of the responsibilities of HR and the responsibilities of line managers to be included in policy briefings Continue to devolve first contact and routine HR issues to line managers	HR Manager HR Section/ Divisions	Standards adhered to Divisions handling routine HR issues.	Ongoing Ongoing
3	Support managers to manage, develop and enhance staff performance	Provide training and support to Divisions as required HR issues dealt with according to the agreed standards.	HR Section Divisions/HR section	Divisional requests for assistance monitored Achievement of standards monitored	Monthly Monthly
4	Use Trim to manage employee information	Once the task is understood and the HR team have been trained have a project plan to complete. Scan personnel files into Trim	HR Section	All personnel files in trim	July 2013

Organisational Development

To ensure that the people with the right skills, are in the right jobs at the right time to deliver services for our communities in the most efficient and effective way. The Authority will seek to operate in a "single organisation" culture, which also recognises the value of diversity where a different approach is justified. Staffing structures must deliver the organisation's aims and objectives set out in Community, Corporate and Divisional Service Plans.

Current Position

A lot of work has already been carried out in this area, such as agreeing a vision for the organisation, setting goals through the Corporate Plan and Divisional Plans, refining the performance management system and improving communication systems. However, action is needed to ensure the Authority's systems evolve as necessary, and regular monitoring will take place to ensure there are no gaps or inconsistent application of arrangements. Divisional plans now have a workforce plan attached to them. HR pulls together all of these into an Authority workforce plan(WFP). This is reviewed annually to take account of changes to the business.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	Develop annual service plans that clearly state priorities, workforce development needs, with corporate, service and team objectives	Extend the use of Service Plans	Assistant Directors HR Manager	All Divisions to have agreed annual Service Plans which highlight workforce development Updated Divisional WFPs Authority WFP	April (annually) 31 October 2011 March 2012
2	Define the normal performance expectations of employees through the use of competencies, policies and procedures	Assess senior staff against the competencies required for their post. Ensure expected performance standards are clear when HR policies are reviewed.	Line Managers AD (F&HR) HR Section	360 appraisal carried out Audit of policies/ procedures shows compliance with standards	Ongoing 3 year rolling programme Timetable agreed for policy review
3	To continue with the organisational development group (IWWWG) as and when required	Call meetings as appropriate	CE	Undertake projects to improve how the Council works	Ongoing
4	To provide support to service managers on different methods of service provision	Attend meetings with partner organisations	HR Manager	Solutions to meet service needs	Ongoing
5	To monitor progress of HR Plan	Meetings with CE & DCE Report to Special Sub Group	AD (F&HR) & HR Manager	2 Monthly 6 Monthly	Ongoing July & Dec

Employee Relations

Build on and improve fair employee relations' strategies and communicate them to all staff. Ensure that the Authority meets its legislative requirements and meets the reasonable expectations of the recognised trade unions, their members and other staff.

Current Position

The Authority has worked constructively with the trade unions for a number of years, including throughout the difficult Single Status Job Evaluation exercise completed in 2003. Union and management representatives meet monthly in a Joint Negotiating Forum. Through this forum the unions have signed a Consultation Agreement with the Council. However, a number of other methods of communication with employees are also undertaken. For example, senior Management Team gives staff presentations and annual staff surveys are carried out. Focus groups have been held to obtain feedback on particular issues, different working groups are used for specific topics, and some general cross-divisional groups are used to look at corporate working. Use is also made of the 'Insider' publication, notice boards, team meetings, key messages, email and the intranet.

Where there are issues with employees there are policies in place to enable these to be resolved informally. In the event that the issue is taken into the formal process the Authority has a number of trained investigators to independently look into the issues. This number had reduced with turnover and the Authority needed to bring this back to a full quota. We have now been at full quota since 2010.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	Maintain good communications with recognised trade unions and develop appropriate policies to meet current and future working practices	Continue to consult the Trade Unions on policy development through the Joint Negotiating Forum	AD (F&HR) HR Manager	Policies and procedures promote a fair employment agenda and support the authority's needs	Ongoing
2	Monitor and review changing legislation and make sure that the implications of such changes are communicated to Members and staff with recommendations for appropriate action	Distribution of guidance notes to staff via the Intranet and through team meetings	AD (F&HR) HR Manager	Greater awareness of legislative changes and up to date policies and procedures	Ongoing

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
3	Improve communications with staff aimed at resolving employee relations issues at the earliest opportunity	Encourage Managers to resolve potential areas of conflict before they escalate. Review relevant policies to emphasise this	Assistant Directors and HR Section HR Manager	Reduction in the number of issues raised with the HR Section Results of the staff survey Reviewed policies in place Managers briefed	Ongoing Annual September 2011 November 2011

Equality and Diversity

The creation of a workforce, which reflects the diversity of our local communities and makes equality of opportunity for all employees and potential employees a reality by being embedded into all people management and development practices.

Current Position

Some employee-related equalities data is collected regularly as part of the recruitment monitoring. All staff have had training on equalities. All Managers have had training on the HR Implications of the Equality Act 2010.

	Objective	Action	Action By	Performance Measure	Milestone Dates
1	Ensure all staff are aware of and have an understanding of their individual responsibility and the Council's policies aimed at the elimination of discrimination	Train staff on equality and diversity issues	Policy Section	Training sessions are arranged as part of the training plan	Ongoing
2	Embed the principles of equalities legislation into all HR policies	Review policies for compliance and amend where necessary	HR Section	All policies go to Special Sub Group and are impact assessed by the HR Section	Ongoing

Agenda Item No 6

Special Sub-Group

23 February 2012

**Report of the
Chief Executive**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Recommendation to the Board

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.

Agenda Item No 7

Accommodation Project – Presentations and Appointment of Project Manager.

Paragraph 1 – by reason of the report referring to individual staffing matters

The Contact Officer for this report is David Harris (719222).