



Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

Time and Date

10.00 am on Thursday, 13 December, 2018

Place

Diamond Room 1, Council House, Coventry

Public Business

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 6)
 - a) To agree the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 September, 2018
 - b) Any matters arising
4. **Policy Contingency Funding Requests - Winter Night Shelter and Cyrenians Christmas Day Dinner** (Pages 7 - 12)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
5. **Policy Contingency Funding Request - Coventry Cathedral Donation in Memorial to Late Councillor Alison Gingell** (Pages 13 - 18)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
6. **Community Support Grant Expenditure** (Pages 19 - 24)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place)
7. **Agency Workers - Performance Management Report Q2: 1 July to 30 September, 2018** (Pages 25 - 40)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)
8. **Sickness Absence to Year Ending 30 September 2018** (Pages 41 - 52)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People)
9. **Outstanding Issues**

There are no outstanding issues

10. **Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

Private Business

Nil

Martin Yardley, Deputy Chief Executive (Place), Council House Coventry

Wednesday, 5 December 2018

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Suzanne Bennett Tel: 024 7683 3072

Membership: Councillor J Mutton (Cabinet Member)

By invitation Councillor K Taylor (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting
OR if you would like this information in another format or
language please contact us.

Suzanne Bennett

Tel: 024 7683 3072

Email: Suzanne.bennett@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 27 September 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor J Mutton (Cabinet Member)

Councillor K Taylor (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place S Bennett, R Parkes, M Rennie

People D Ashmore, J Gregg, P Johnson

Public Business

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July, 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

11. Coventry Loop Line Public Space Financing

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Place which indicated that, as part of the plans to develop the Heritage Park around the Charterhouse off London Road, the Historic Coventry Trust (HCT) aims to create a woodland walk into the City Centre. Integral to the project will be the transformation of part of the former Coventry freight railway loop line which was fully closed over 35 years ago. The planned two mile circular walking route will link Gosford Green, Charterhouse and the Sherbourne viaduct to the City Centre and provide the potential for developing cycle routes, providing an amenity of great social value in an area important for local wildlife.

In order for the project to proceed, HCT has to secure the site and provide the route for public access. To this end it has negotiated the purchase of land which is made up of three linked areas, located in between Gosford Green and the Lower Stoke area, about a mile to the south-east of the City Centre. The total area of the land extends to circa 8.4 acres, the majority of which is currently overgrown with mature woodland and vegetation. The HCT is striving to raise money to cover the cost of the purchase. It was therefore proposed that a loan of £150,000 is provided by the Council to the HCT, repayable over 5 years, on terms to be negotiated by

the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and approved under Financial Procedure Rules.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources:-

- (1) Approves the provision of a loan facility up to the sum of £150,000 to Historic Coventry Trust to meet the capital requirement of acquiring the Coventry freight railway loop line site and the provision of the route for public access.**
- (2) Delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, to:-**
 - a) Negotiate the detailed terms of the loan arrangement and appropriate security, ensuring state aid compliance; and**
 - b) Make such amendments and variations to the loan agreements as is deemed necessary over the lifetime of the loan subject to the overall capital amount not exceeding the sum of £150,000.**

12. Agency Workers and Interim Managers - Performance Management Q1 - 1st April to 30 June, 2018 (to 24 June for Master Vendor Supply)

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive, People, which provided performance information on the use of agency workers procured for the Quarter (Q)1 period and Interim Manager and other agency worker spends for the same period.

The report indicated that during this quarter, the supply contract with Pertemps ended on 24 June, 2018 with the new supplier, Reed, starting on Monday 25 June, 2018. As the new supplier has only supplied for one week during this quarter, the report related only to the agency worker spend with Pertemps during the period up to 24 June. Reported spend with other suppliers is for the full quarter. The Q2 report of spend within the agency worker contract will therefore include an additional week of spend, commencing 25 June, 2018.

A table in the report shows comparative expenditure in Q1 2018/19 and Q4 2017/18 and indicated an overall decrease in total spend although this did include the reduction in one week in the period. The Master Vendor Contract covers all agency workers required by the core Council as the Pertemps contract does not cover agency workers in schools.

The report provided detailed information on the following service areas:-

Children's Services:- John Gregg, Director of Children's Services, attended the meeting and provided the Cabinet Member with a comprehensive update on work currently being undertaken to minimise agency spend on social workers, including recruitment and retention work and the establishment of a Social Worker Academy. The Cabinet Member recognised the challenges relating to the recruitment of social workers,

which was a national issue, and indicated that he would be monitoring this issue to see the impact of the work done in this regard.

Adults Services – The number of agency social workers in adults is unchanged and are required to cover vacancies to ensure statutory duties are met and to meet the increased demand during the winter period in order to minimise the need for hospital admissions and to facilitate hospital discharge.

Streetscene and Regulatory Services – Waste Services use of agency staff has significantly reduced and Streetpride spend is expected to reduce as the service has been actively and successfully recruiting to a number of vacancies.

Finance and Corporate Services – Cover was required for maternity and long-term sickness absence.

Planning – Due to a significant increase in workload, a business case has been approved for 2 additional planning officers so agency officers are required to fill the gap until recruitment.

The report also provided a comparison of expenditure outside of the Pertemps contracts Q1 2018/19 with Q4 2017/18 and highlighted the following areas:-

Children's Services
Education
Customer Services

The report highlighted work undertaken to find alternative solutions to agency staff, particularly in relation to specialist recruitment in Highways, Traffic and Transport.

In response to concerns raised by the Cabinet Member at a previous meeting regarding the need for managers to ensure that the process of filling vacancies was undertaken at the earliest opportunity, the report confirmed that this message had been communicated to senior management teams and that this had been reflected in the process to be used for the new contract, together with the requirement that all engagement of agency staff be approved by senior management. In response to questions at the meeting, officers provided information in relation work undertaken to target recruitment and to encourage people to work for the City Council.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources:-

(1) Notes the agency/interim spend for Q1 and the corresponding numbers of agency workers

(2) Notes the work done on providing in-house solutions as an alternative to agency and interim workers

13. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

14. **Any Other Items of Urgent Public Business**

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 10.45pm)



Public report
Cabinet Member

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

13th December 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor J Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Policy Contingency Funding Requests – Winter Night Shelter & Cyrenians Christmas Day Dinner

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is responsible for a Policy Contingency budget which is set aside to cover any ad-hoc one-off requests for funding that are deemed to be in line with Council's policy priorities. The Policy Contingency was reduced to £75,000 as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process. This report deals with two requests for funding from this budget.

The first request is from the HOPE Coventry charity. The HOPE Coventry charity supports initiatives that connects churches together and projects that meet the needs of the vulnerable. The Coventry Winter Night Shelter is one such project which supports the vulnerable in the City. It provides rough sleepers with support, a hot meal, a safe and warm bed for the night and breakfast for the next day. Last year they supported 24/43 of their guests to move off the streets. The Cabinet Member has already agreed informally to provide a £5,000 donation to the HOPE charity as a contribution towards replacing their 5 year old beds and sleeping bags for the Winter Night Shelter; this report recommends retrospective approval of this decision.

The other request is Coventry Cyrenians to help to provide Christmas Day meals to the homeless and vulnerable in the City at the Methodist Central Hall. The Cabinet Member has already agreed informally to provide a £2,500 donation to Coventry Cyrenians for this project.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is requested to:

- (1) Approve, retrospectively, a decision to provide one-off grant funding of £5,000 to support the Hope Coventry charity's Winter Night Shelter project.
- (2) Approve, retrospectively, a decision to provide one-off grant funding of £2,500 to support the Coventry Cyrenians Christmas day dinner project.

List of Appendices included:

None.

Background papers:

Coventry Winter Night Shelter
<https://hopecoventry.org.uk/projects/cwns/>

Coventry Cyrenians
<http://www.coventrycyrenians.co.uk/>

Other useful documents:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Policy Contingency Funding Requests – Coventry HOPE Winter Night Shelter and Cyrenians Christmas Day Dinner

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is responsible for a Policy Contingency budget which is set aside to cover any ad-hoc one-off requests for funding that are deemed to be in line with the Council's policy priorities. The Policy Contingency was reduced to £75,000 as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process. This report deals with a requests for one- off funding from this budget for the Coventry HOPE Winter Night shelter project, and the Coventry Cyrenians Christmas dinner project.
- 1.2 Coventry Winter Night Shelter (CWNS) is a project run by Coventry Churches around the city which provides rough sleepers with support, a hot meal, and a safe and warm bed for the night and breakfast the next day. The project runs from 1st December – 31st March every year. In previous years, they have received one-off grant funding from Coventry City Council, They have requested assistance this year to help to replace sleeping bags and 5 year old beds.
- 1.3 CWNS collaborates with churches spread around the city to host the shelters, Each venue is different, but they all offer a hot meal, a place to socialise, toilets, a sleeping area, and a shower room in some venues.
- 1.4 The Hope Coventry Charity have approached the Council for support to fund the initiative. The Cabinet Member has already agreed informally to provide a £5,000 contribution to the Hope Coventry Charity and this report recommends retrospective approval of this decision.
- 1.5 Coventry Cyrenians have provided thousands of Christmas day dinners to the homeless, vulnerable and lonely of Coventry for over 30 years.
- 1.6 On Christmas Day, Coventry Cyrenians will be welcoming people to the Methodist Central Hall in Coventry for a Christmas Day meal. Many of the people who attend are homeless, vulnerable, or are alone and would like to enjoy their Christmas meal in the company of others. Last year the guests enjoyed a traditional 3 course Christmas meal and were entertained by volunteers. Guests receive gifts which are generously donated by the local community, including schools, faith groups, trade unions, local charities and voluntary groups, local companies, and the people of Coventry and Warwickshire. The Cabinet Member has already agreed informally to provide a £2,500 contribution to the Coventry Cyrenians and this report recommends retrospective approval of this decision.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Coventry Winter Night shelter

- 2.1 Option 1 – Do Nothing
This option is not recommended. As with many Cities across the country, Coventry has a number of homeless living in the City. The night shelter provides essential services to the homeless at the time of year when they are most needed.

Option 2 – Meet the funding request

This is the recommended option. Providing one-off funding will enable the Night Shelter to continue to offer shelter to the homeless over the winter period and fulfil an intention this year to replace old beds and sleeping bags.

Coventry Cyrenians Christmas day dinner

2.2 Option 1 – Do Nothing

This option is not recommended. As with many Cities across the country, Coventry has a number of homeless living in the City. Without the Cyrenians providing a Christmas day dinner, the homeless and vulnerable of the city could be without food, shelter and companionship on Christmas day.

Option 2 – Meet the Funding Request

This is the recommended option and will help the Cyrenians provide a Christmas day dinner for the homeless and vulnerable. The Cyrenians receive support from local businesses and the citizens of Coventry and Warwickshire and the Council has been asked for a small contribution. It is felt that it is appropriate for the Council to provide support.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 Due to informal approval being granted, these grants have been paid to the organisations.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

Coventry Night shelter

The Council has provided financial support for the Night Shelter over a number of years and continues to recognise the effectiveness of the work done by the annual project. Hope Coventry has been paid £235,000 from Coventry City Council since April 2016, primarily for the Good Neighbours project – funded by the Better Care fund Grant. as well as specific contributions to the night Shelter of £20,000 in both 2017/18 and 2016/17.

This decision would involve a one-off grant of £5,000. The ongoing financial challenges facing the Council and the need to balance policy priorities mean that the Council cannot commit to funding in future financial years.

Coventry Cyrenians Christmas dinner project

This decision would involve a one-off grant of £2,500. Coventry Cyrenians provides services to Coventry City Council for supported accommodation placements and has been paid £12,187 since April 2016 for these services.

The ongoing financial challenges facing the Council and the need to balance policy priorities mean that the Council cannot commit to funding in future financial years.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications resulting from the report.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

The proposed contribution to the Night Shelter and the Christmas day dinner project, will help to reduce the impact of poverty, improve health and wellbeing for the most vulnerable in the City.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

There are no specific risks resulting from the report.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Coventry Night shelter

Hope charity Coventry would receive additional funding to go directly towards the costs of running the night shelter over the winter months.

Christmas day dinner

Funding for the Christmas day dinner project will enable Coventry Cyrenians to continue to provide this service to the vulnerable citizens of Coventry.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

No specific equalities implications.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The funding for both organisations will help to provide key support to the homeless and vulnerable of Coventry.

Report author(s):

Name and job title:

Louise Hughes, Accountant (Corporate Finance)
Paul Jennings, Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)

Directorate:

Place Directorate

Tel and email contact:

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Place	12/11/18	14/11/18
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Paul Jennings	Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)	Place	11/11/18	12/11/18
Legal: Carol Bradford	Legal Services		12/11/18	13/11/18
Director: Barry Hastie	Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Place	11/11/18	12/11/18
Members: Councillor J Mutton	Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources		22/11/18	22/11/18

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Public report
Cabinet Member

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

13 December 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor J Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Policy Contingency Funding Requests – Coventry Cathedral Donation in Memorial to late Councillor Alison Gingell

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is responsible for a Policy Contingency budget which is set aside to cover any ad-hoc one-off requests for funding that are deemed to be in line with Council's policy priorities. This report deals with a request for a donation to be made from this budget to Coventry Cathedral for the late Councillor Alison Gingell to be added to the millennium screen in tribute.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is requested to approve retrospectively a one-off donation of £2,500 to Coventry Cathedral

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Policy Contingency Funding Requests – Coventry Cathedral Donation in Memorial to Late Councillor Alison Gingell

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is responsible for a Policy Contingency budget which is set aside to cover any ad-hoc one-off requests for funding that are deemed to be in line with the Council’s policy priorities. This report deals with a request for a donation to be made from this to Coventry Cathedral for a memorial tribute to the late Councillor Alison Gingell to be added to the millennium screen.
- 1.2. The late city councillor Alison Gingell was at the forefront of health and social care in Coventry and Warwickshire for more than 40 years and campaigned tirelessly on issues that promoted the rights and health of women and children. Cllr Gingell served as the Council’s Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services from 2013 until shortly before her death, and led the authority’s campaign against female genital mutilation. She died of motor neurone disease in April 2016, aged 65.
- 1.3. The Cabinet Member has already indicated his support for this proposal as a fitting tribute to Alison Gingell’s services to the city.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is recommend to retrospectively approve the donation to Coventry Cathedral of £2,500 for a memorial to be added to the millennium screen at Coventry Cathedral as a tribute to the late Councillor Alison Gingell.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. Retrospective approval

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1. Financial implications

The Policy contingency budget is £75,000 and there have been no calls previously this year.

5.2. Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications resulting from the report.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

NA

6.2. How is risk being managed?

NA

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4. Equalities / EIA

None

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s):

Name and job title:

Lindsey Hughes, Accountant (Corporate Finance)
Paul Jennings, Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)

Directorate:

Place Directorate

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Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Place	09/11/2018	14/11/18
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Paul Jennings	Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)	Place	09/11/2018	10/11/2018
Legal: Carol Bradford	Corporate Governance Lawyer	Place	09/11/2018	13/11/18
Director: Barry Hastie	Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Place	09/11/2018	10/11/2018
Members: Councillor J Mutton	Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources		29/11/2018	29/11/2018

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Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources -

13 December 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor J Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Community Support Grant Expenditure

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

It is requested that additional funding is provided to enable the council's Community Support Grant Scheme to continue supporting vulnerable residents to the end of the financial year. An increase in the demand for support will exhaust the current budget of £375,000 by mid December 2018.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is recommended to approve additional funding of £153,000.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Community Support Grant Expenditure

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The council introduced its Community Support Grant Scheme (CSG) in April 2013, when the responsibility for local welfare provision was transferred from the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP).
- 1.2 Initially DWP funded the scheme through ring fenced funding. However, from 2015/16 the DWP withdrew the separately identifiable funding, and informed councils that they would continue to provide support for Local Welfare Provision through 'general funds'. At this point the Council approved core funding for the CSG scheme and since 2015, the annual budget allocated to the Benefits Service for awards under the CSG scheme has been £375,000.
- 1.3 The scheme provides assistance for the most vulnerable residents of Coventry. There are two types of award:
 - Crisis awards – usually a same day award to provide help for food and utilities where there is a risk to their health and safety. Vouchers / spend cards are issued for these awards.
 - Support awards – which comprise of white goods, furniture and essential household items to enable those leaving temporary accommodation, care, prison etc to enable them to resettle into the community. Items are ordered directly from the suppliers.
- 1.4 The number of applications has increased year on year. In the first 6 months of current financial year the number of successful applications and awards for support grants have increased from 229 (in 2017/2018) to 309 (2018/2019). Further analysis shows an increase in awards for those leaving temporary accommodation.
- 1.5 In financial terms the expenditure for the same period (first 6 months) has increased from £207,738 to £264,842, an increase of just over £57,000
- 1.6 If the demand continues at the current rate, the budget of £375,000 will be spent by mid December 2018.
- 1.7 In response to the budget pressure a benchmarking exercise has been carried out across a range of suppliers to identify the most cost effective way of providing goods. Following recent agreement with procurement and input from internal audit the service will be piloting a revised purchasing process.
- 1.8 Customers who apply for a crisis award for food will be issued with a foodbank voucher where appropriate.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Option 1

- 2.1 Whilst there is an option to stop awards under the scheme once the current budget is spent (as detailed in the CSG Policy point 2.1: once the fund has been exhausted for the respective financial year, there will be no further awards) the implications of not continuing the scheme will affect the most vulnerable of our citizens. People moving out of temporary accommodation will not be helped with essential furniture and white goods and people in a crisis situation will not have access to help with food or utilities.

Option 2

- 2.2 Approval of additional budget of around £16,800 which would enable the crisis element of the scheme to continue. This figure is based on current average weekly award levels of £1,120 x 15 weeks. However, by part funding the scheme the support element of the scheme would cease, leaving those resettling back into the community without help.

Option 3 - Recommended

- 2.3 The recommended proposal is approval of additional funding of £153,000 to enable the CSG scheme to continue until the end of the financial year. This figure is based on current average weekly award levels of £10,200 x 15 weeks. This will enable the council to continue supporting their vulnerable residents.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

Not applicable

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

As soon as approval is granted, the service will continue with the CSG scheme.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

The recommended option is estimated to cost £153,000 although this will be subject to service demand through the remainder of the year and could exceed this figure. Officers will continue to monitor this closely. It is possible that the figure may be reduced by the alternative purchasing options outlined.

The Council's overall budgetary position at quarter 2 is an overspend of £0.5m with an expectation that this will move towards a balanced position or better by the year-end. If this is achieved, including the anticipated financial consequences of this report, there will be no specific financial action required. If however, the overall bottom line is overspent it is proposed that the CSG overspend will be funded from corporate reserve balances.

Going forward there will be a need to ensure alignment of the existing policy and the budgetary provision in this area of activity.

5.2 Legal implications

- 5.1 The December 2010 White Paper - 'Universal Credit: welfare that works', set out the Government's reform plans for the Social Fund. The changes resulted in the abolition of the previous system of discretionary payments. In their place from April 2013 there was a combination of a new locally based scheme which replaced crisis loans and community care grants, and a new nationally administered advance of benefit facility that replaced alignment crisis loans and budgeting loans.
- 5.2. The locally based Community Support Grant scheme was devolved to the Local Authority and came into effect from 1 April 2013. There was no requirement to replicate the previous crisis loan or community care grant schemes. Individual Local Authorities were given the funding and the flexibility to redesign the emergency provision for vulnerable groups according to local circumstances, in order to meet severe hardship in the most appropriate way.
- 5.3 Funding for 2013/14 and 2014/15, the Council received specific funding to administer a scheme. Since April 2015, funding for Local Welfare Provision is part of the Local Government Settlement and is subject to local decisions as part of Annual Budget Setting.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Continuing with the scheme will contribute to the Council's priority of improving the quality of life for Coventry's vulnerable people.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Expenditure, along with alternative purchasing arrangements will be monitored on a weekly basis to check that the scheme is in line with predicted spend.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Additional financial pressure to provide the Council's Community Support Grant Scheme.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

No impact

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

No impact

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

No impact

Report author(s):

Name and job title:

Glenda Cowley
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Directorate: Place

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Paul Jennings	Finance Manager	Place	20/11/2018	20/11/2018
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Co-Ordinator	Place	20/11/2018	20/11/2018
Gillian Carter	Solicitor, Legal Services	Place	20/11/2018	20/11/2018
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Paul Jennings	Finance Manager	Place	22/11/2018	22/11/2018
Legal: Julie Newman	City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	Place	26/11/2016	26/11/2016
Communications:	Communications Officer	Place		
Director: Barry Hastie	Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Place	22/11/2018	22/11/2018
Cllr J Mutton	Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources		29/11/18	29/11/18



Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

13 December, 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor J Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Agency Workers – Performance Management Report Q2: 1 July to 30 September 2018

Is this a key decision?

No.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Member with performance information on the use of agency workers procured for the Q2 period 2018.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is requested to note:

1. The agency / interim spend for Q2.
2. The work done on providing in-house solutions as an alternative to agency and interim workers.

List of Appendices included:

- Appendix 1 shows the total Directorate expenditure on agency workers for Q2 2018/19. This data includes spend with the previous and current Master Vendor supplier. It shows the trend line for the data shown; it does not predict spend in future quarters.
- Appendix 2 highlights the justification of new orders placed by Directorates for agency workers for Q2 2018/19 which resulted in spend with Reed.
- Appendix 3 shows equalities data for workers supplied through the Reeds contract.

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Agency Workers and Interim Managers – Performance Management Report Q2, 1 July to 30 September 2018.

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Coventry City Council has a Master Vendor Contract with Reed for the supply of agency workers. This came into effect on 25 June 2018. Through the contract, Reed would supply all suitable agency workers either through their own agency or via a 2nd tier arrangement with other agencies, using rates of pay based on an agreed pay policy and a negotiated mark-up rate with the Master Vendor. The information supplied by Reed gives detailed information on agency worker usage and expenditure. Spend is based on timesheets paid during the quarter and is in essence the same process reported from Pertemps previously.

Reed is not always able to supply the required agency workers and where this is the case, service areas will use other suppliers.

Due to the implementation of the new Reed contract during Q1, Pertemps spend covered 12 weeks (out of 13 weeks) up until and including 24th June 2018. Q2 report provides the full quarter data for Reed spend; 1 July to 30 September 2018.

2 Directorate Commentary on Agency Worker Spend for Q2 2018/19

Table 2.1 below shows comparative expenditure between Q1 2018/19 and Q2 2018/19 as well as Q2 2017/18 and Q2 2018/19. There has been an overall increase of £69,396 in spend between Q1 and Q2 2018/19 as well as a £294,330 increase compared with the same quarter last year. The Master Vendor Contract covers all agency workers required by the core Council, the Reed contract does not cover agency workers in schools.

Table 2.1

	Spend comparing Q1 2018/19 to Q2 2018/19	Spend Q1 2018/19	Spend Q2 2018/19	Increase / Decrease
PEOPLE	Adult Social Care	£182,644	£212,832	£30,188
	Children and Young People's Services	£751,398	£840,392	£88,994
	Customer Services & Transformation	£70,171	£58,576	-£11,595
	People Directorate Total	£1,004,213	£1,111,800	£107,587
PLACE	Finance & Corporate Services	£29,202	£28,524	-£678
	Project Management and Property Services	£7,830	£9,682	£1,852
	Streetscene & Regulatory Services	£163,480	£130,809	-£32,671
	Transportation & Highways	£5,108	£2,009	-£3,099
	City Centre & Major Projects Development	£4,505	£911	-£3,594
	Place Directorate Total	£210,125	£171,936	-£38,190
	Total	£1,214,340	£1,283,736	£69,396

	Spend comparing Q2 2017/18 to Q2 2018/19	Spend Q2 2017/18	Spend Q2 2018/19	Increase / Decrease
PEOPLE	Adult Social Care		£212,832	
	Children and Young People's Services		£840,392	
	Customer Services & Transformation		£58,576	
	People Directorate Total	£783,950	£1,111,800	£327,850
PLACE	Finance & Corporate Services		£28,524	
	Project Management and Property Services		£9,682	
	Streetscene & Regulatory Services		£130,809	
	Transportation & Highways		£2,009	
	City Centre & Major Projects Development		£911	
	Place Directorate Total	£205,456	£171,936	-£33,520
	Total	£989,406	£1,283,736	£294,330

2.2 People Directorate

The table below shows the main areas that contribute to the Children's and Adult spend in table 2.1 above:

	Q1 £'000	Q2 £'000
Children's Services: Social workers (incl Senior Social Workers)	699	729
Children's Services: Senior roles e.g.Social Work Team Managers, IR0's (G9+).	52	108
Adults' Services: Social workers (Incl AMHP)	161	190
Adults' Services: Support Workers & Drivers	21	13

2.2.1 Children's Services

Children Services continue to aim to reduce their agency spend and are currently:

- Actively meeting and encouraging current agency staff to convert to permanent. This has so far resulted in 9 permanent appointments.
- Ongoing recruitment to social work vacancies with regular assessment centres.
- Held an open evening during October 2018 which resulted in 7 offers being made.
- Regularly attend Jobs Fairs throughout the year to promote visibility and employer brand.

The cost of agency Children's Social Workers is controlled by the West Midlands regional agreement. This involves 14 local authorities and has the effect of capping the rates paid to all newly appointed agency social workers.

2.2.2 Adult Services

The number of Agency Social Workers in Adults is largely unchanged but there is a small increase for the period July - September 2018. The Q2 cost is £212.832 (Q1 = £182,644).

The reasons for employing agency social workers are:

- a) To cover vacancies and ensure that statutory duties are met in the Adults Disability, Mental Health and Older People Service areas. For all substantive vacancies recruitment is underway and in Adults Disability and Mental Health initial recruitment has not resulted in the filling of all vacancies.
- b) There a number of posts that are short term due to the nature of funding. Short term posts are very challenging to fill with directly employed staff and in order to make maximum use of available funding the speed of obtaining agency capacity is greater than the speed of direct recruitment.
- c) Is it preferable to employ agency social workers as opposed to carrying vacancies or not making best use of short term money as this would impact on our ability to meet statutory requirements and maintain appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

Adult Social Care also employ support workers on an agency basis in order to maintain minimum staffing levels in registered care provision. These arrangements tend to be required in order to cover vacancies where recruitment is underway and some occasions of sickness absence.

2.3 Place Directorate

The table below shows the main areas that contribute to the "Streetpride, Streetscene and Regulatory Services" in table 2.1 above:

	Q1 £'000	Q2 £'000
Waste Services	29	4
Street Pride	52	83
Planning & Regulation	15	41

2.3.1 Following on from Quarter 1, the use of agency staff in Waste Services has been minimised, and not required since April.

- 2.3.2 The Streetpride and Greenspace Agency spend for Quarter 2 of £83k reflects the high number of vacant posts within the service and the seasonal nature of the Grounds and Parks service. The number of Agency staff used by the service was reduced following the recruitment to 8 of the vacant posts in early September. Unfortunately the planned recruitment identified following a service review for late September was delayed and is due to commence early December with vacant posts filled in Quarter 4. This delay has affected our ability to further reduce Agency numbers and may see a slight increase until all posts are filled.
- 2.3.3 Within Planning Services, the Development Management team currently employs 3 agency officers. The workload within the planning team has been on the increase and as a result additional resources are required in order to meet the demands of service users. Two additional posts funded through pre-application charging were created and in order to meet the immediate demands agency staff have been appointed to fill the gap until staff can be recruited permanently. Following advertisement of the vacancies we have still been unable to recruit to the posts, as such there is a need to retain 2 of the 3 agency officers beyond the end of November. Agency spend in the team equates to approximately £52k until the end of October; spend in November will be in the region of £20k with a further £37k until the end of February.
- 2.3.4 A spend of £28,524 (Q2) (Q1 = £29,202) within Finance and Corporate Services reflected the need in Legal Services to cover vacancies pending recruitment and some maternity absence. The majority of posts being covered by agency staff have now been filled and expect the spend on agency staff to reduce significantly during Q3.

3 Spend outside of the Reed Contract

Table 3.1: Comparison of expenditure outside of the Reed contract

a) Q1 2018/19 and Q2 2018/19

Directorate	Total Spend Q1 2018/19	Total Spend Q2 2018/19	Increase / Decrease
People: Children's	£87,624	£57,900	-£29,724
People: Education	£27,765	£42,056	£14,291
People: Adults	£0	£0	£0
People: Cust. Serv.	£20,934	£63,690	£42,756
Place: Professional Services Contract	£70,323	£86,454	£16,131
Place: City Centre & Major Projects	£0	£37,156	£37,156
TOTAL	£206,646	£287,256	£80,610

b) Q2 2017/18 and
Q2 2018/19

Directorate	Total Spend Q2 2017/18	Total Spend Q2 2018/19	Increase / Decrease
People: Children's	£333,869	£57,900	-£275,969
People: Education	£99,870	£42,056	-£57,814
People: Adults	£0	£0	£0
People: Cust. Serv.	£21,211	£63,690	£42,479
Place: Professional Services Contract	£207,033	£86,454	-£120,579
Place: City Centre & Major Projects	£0	£37,156	£37,156
TOTAL	£661,983	£287,256	-£374,727

The table above reflects Q2 - 1 June 2018 – 30 September 2018. The spend includes workers contracted through other agencies outside of the Reed contract or individuals contracted directly.

3.2 People: Children's Services

During the quarter, there were two interim contractors secured directly by the Council who supported service delivery and improvement. Of these, one is filling a Team Manager post and the other is an Improvement Partner working closely with external bodies.

There was no other spend on agency social workers outside of the Reed contract in this quarter.

3.3 People: Education

Centrally employed teachers/teaching assistants:

Quarter 2 spend of £42k (Q1 = £27.7k)

There have been challenges in recruiting to teachers to the Coventry Extended Learning Centre (Pupil Referral Unit) and a shortage of teachers. Some of our most vulnerable learners are at the CELC and the service needed to utilise a number of agencies to secure the right staff. There are approximately 6-9 teachers at any one time on these contracts, this will continue until the new structure is implemented by September 2019.

3.4 People: Customer Services

Spend of £63.6k in Quarter 2. (Q1 = £21k)

Housing colleagues are working towards agreeing the future structure and associated funding for the service. Temporary workers are required at the moment to manage demand in the service, there is only one vacancy at the moment which is in the process of being recruited to but there is still a need for temporary resource beyond that, until such time as the longer term proposed structure is accepted. There are discussions at the moment about the structure that are also under

way with members about the broader picture and proposed amalgamation of operations and strategy.

3.5 Place – Professional Services Contract

The revenue spend in Q2 is £86,454.19 (Q1 £70,323).

The specialist recruitment campaign continues to be successful and we have been able to appoint a further member of staff to a vacant post from the beginning of December 2018. For posts that have proved difficult to recruit to, we continue to look at other options, such as career grading, career development opportunity and graduate placement. Where possible, we recharge relevant revenue costs to Capital projects and external funding to reduce the impact on core budgets

3.6 Place – City Centre & Major Projects

The £37k spend was in accordance with the development, property and tenancy work in relation to City Centre South and required a specialist in the industry. This assignment is now complete and the role has been filled on a permanent basis since September.

4. Alternative solutions to agency staff

4.1 To reduce the reliance on agency workers within Waste there is a bank of casual workers usually drawn from workers who have previously worked for the Council via an agency. The size of the pool is matched to the anticipated need to cover annual leave, sickness and peaks in demand so that we can offer work regularly. During the Christmas / New Year period the demand is much higher than can be met by the pool and it is judged that the use of agency workers during this period provides the most economical solution. At all other times of the year, use of agency workers is minimal.

4.2 Specialist Recruitment in Highways, Traffic & Transport

The specialist recruitment campaign continues to be successful and we have been able to appoint a further member of staff to a vacant post from the beginning of December 2018. For posts that have proved difficult to recruit to, we continue to look at other options, such as career grading, career development opportunity and graduate placement. Where possible, we recharge relevant revenue costs to Capital projects and external funding to reduce the impact on core budgets

5. Overall Management Comment

The Master Vendor contract is a planned strategy to work towards reducing the level of agency spends and to better understand where and how we use agency workers.

There will always be the need to use agency workers. However, it is acknowledged that current usage is higher than we would like because of the need to cover extra workload, vacancy and sickness absence, short-term cover whilst Fundamental Service Reviews are taking place and to

cope with sudden surges of demand. This will require the need for scarce skills and workers during these reviews; organisational restructures and sudden peaks in demand.

In terms of the cost of using agency workers, it is important to note that not all of the cost is in addition to normal staffing spend. Although agency cover associated with sickness absence in front line services is often an additional cost, in the case of agency cover for vacant posts the cost will be funded at least in part by the relevant staffing budget or increase in demand of services.

Where opportunities exist for bulk recruitment campaigns to front line essential services, the Human Resources Recruitment Team will continue to work with service managers to identify workers, who are available for casual, temporary or permanent work in order to reduce the use of agency workers. However, some roles continue to be hard to recruit. In the case of children's social workers we have had some success with the current campaign which has been evolved to make extensive use of social media. Nevertheless recruitment of experienced, high quality children's social workers continues to be difficult.

The new Master Vendor contract started on 25th June 2018 and is starting to be embedded. The new contract is joint with Solihull and again is a hybrid Master Vendor.

The need for managers to ensure that the process of filling vacancies is undertaken at the earlier opportunity has been communicated to senior management teams and this has been reflected in the processes to be used for the new contract.

The requirement that all engagement of agency staff be approved by senior management has been communicated to management teams. This requirement has been built into the set-up for the new contract. Combined with a consistent approach in the way data is recorded and collected should allow for governance and monitoring on the use of agency workers.

6. Results of consultation undertaken

- 6.1 The report sets out the steps the Council is taking to reduce expenditure on agency workers, particularly in those areas where they are used most intensively.
- 6.2 Officers will continue to bring the monitoring information to the Cabinet Member and steps will continue to be taken to endeavour to reduce the level of expenditure.
- 6.3 Management Information has given the opportunity for the Recruitment Team to target large areas with high usage of agency workers to try and reduce the need for agency workers. This work is ongoing.

7. Timetable for implementing this decision

Not applicable

8. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

8.1 Financial implications

Quarterly monitoring of expenditure on agency workers will continue throughout the contract.

Reed operate a live management accounts system which places the cost of agency workers in the period the work took place rather than the period of time in which the Council was billed for or paid the related invoices. The system shows the volume of agency activity/usage in a particular quarter irrespective of when invoices are paid.

Reeds system only incorporates timesheets authorised by managers and therefore the costs for a particular quarter will have a small tendency to increase throughout the year as more timesheets are authorised. We actively work with the master vendor to keep outstanding timesheets to a minimum.

Spend outside of the Reed contract, relates to the invoices paid during the relevant period. This expenditure relates to both temporary workers supplied by agencies other than Reed and to interim workers who operate under a PSC (Personal Service Company) with whom we contract directly.

8.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

9. Other implications

9.1 The Agency Worker Contract arrangement provides good value for money in relation to the procurement of agency workers. It also provides firmer controls on the use of agency workers and has in place sound management reporting to see where spend is taking place to target recruitment, maximise resources, and reduce spend on agency workers.

9.2 How is risk being managed?

There may be a risk to the Council where managers go outside of the Reed and contract directly with workers with the advent of changes to IR35 arrangements. There has been numerous communications across the Council to inform managers of changes and this will continue into the future.

9.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Through the rigorous monitoring of agency worker usage and alternative strategies for resourcing short-term work requirements, the dependency on agency workers should be reduced. The Council's Policy on the use of agency workers states that Agency Workers should only be used when:

- Proper recruitment processes have failed to secure an appointment and staff cover has become crucial to the delivery of services;
- Short-term temporary cover is required until proper recruitment processes have been completed and an appointment is made;
- Unplanned absences that require immediate cover to ensure continuity of services;
- Unplanned, short-term or peak workloads occur.

Human Resources are proactively supporting managers to reduce agency spend.

9.4 Equalities / EIA

The master vendor has made considerable efforts to ensure that the equalities monitoring form is completed. The graphs in appendix 3 show the main equalities data at corporate level for the agency workers who were on assignment with us in the month of June 2018.

No equality impact assessment has been carried out as the recommendations do not constitute a change in service or policy.

9.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

9.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s):**Name and job title:**

Andrea Miles, Organisational Development Lead – Resourcing, HR Recruitment Service

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People Directorate

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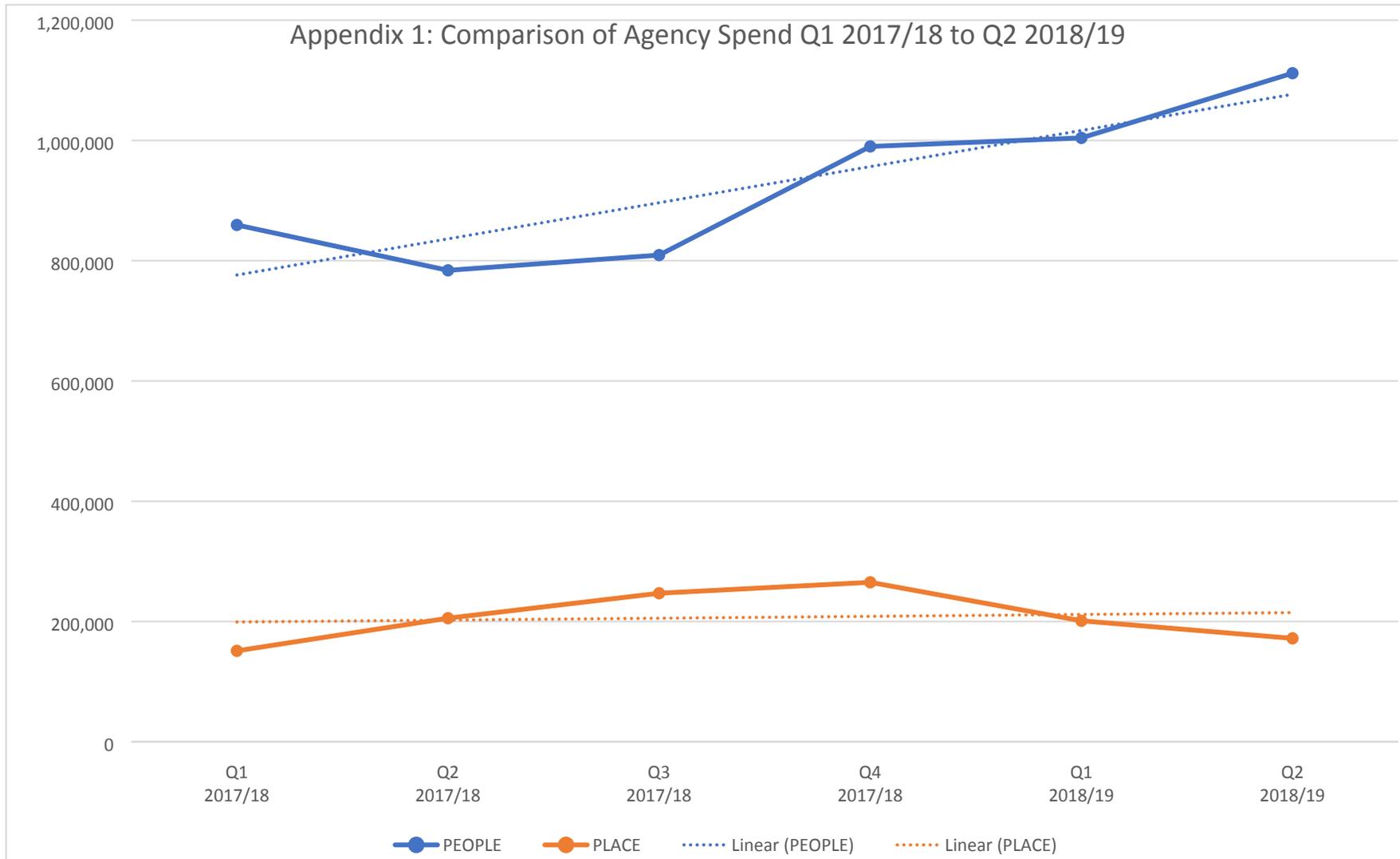
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Other members				
Names of approvers: (officers and members)				
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Amanda Durrant	Head of Payroll Pensions & Employment Benefits	People	19/11/18	29/11/18
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Julie Newman	Legal Services Manager, People	Place	19/11/18	21/11/18
Member: Councillor J Mutton	Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources		21/11/18	29/11/18

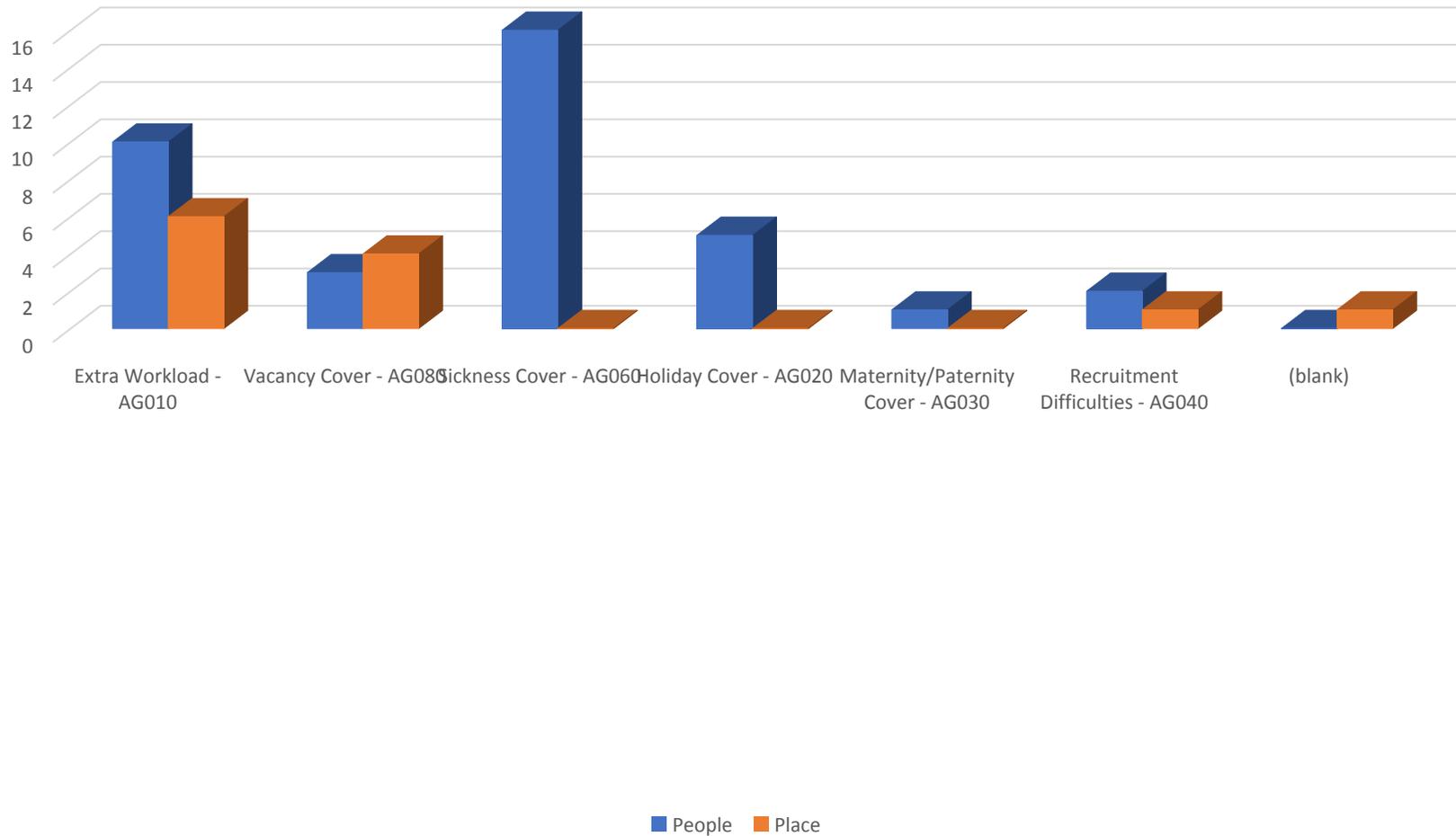
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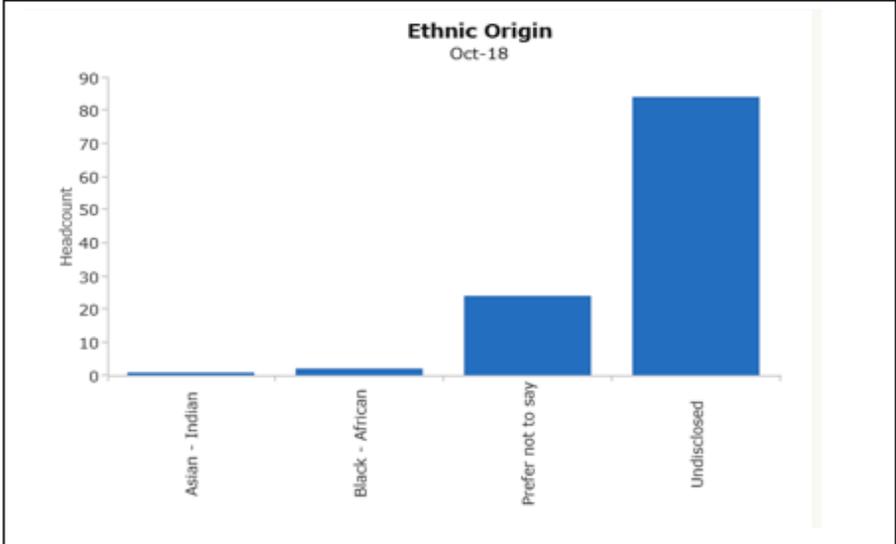
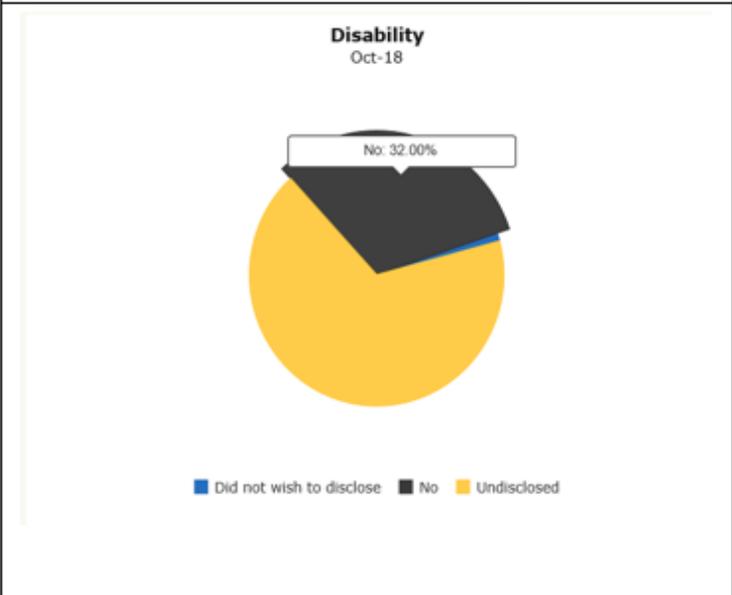
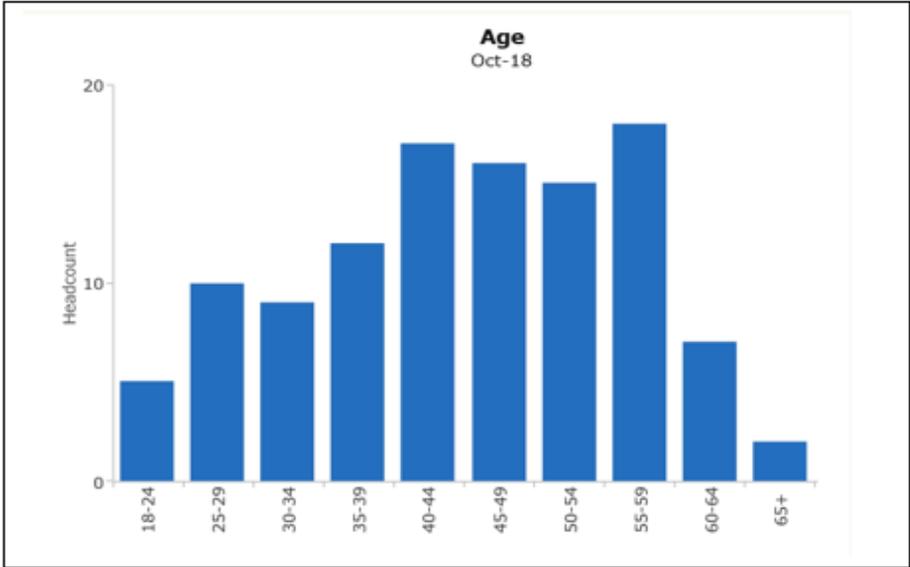
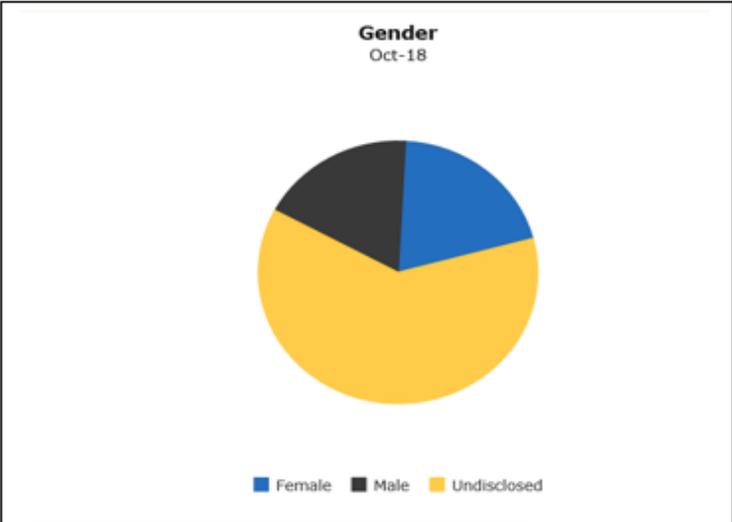


	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19
PEOPLE	£859,412	£783,950	£809,287	£990,008	£1,004,213	£1,111,800
PLACE	£151,196	£205,456	£246,935	£265,080	£201,125	£171,936

Appendix 2: Reason for orders placed via the Reed Contract within Q2 2018/19



Appendix 3: Equality Data for Agency Workers via the Reed Contract (Q2 2018/19)



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Cabinet Member for (Strategic Finance & Resources)

13th December 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor J Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive People

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Sickness Absence to Year Ending 30th September 2018

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

To enable the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources to monitor:

- Levels of sickness absence for the year ending 30th September 2018.
- The actions being taken to manage absence and promote health at work across the City Council.

Reporting methodology for 2018/19

This year in order to enable us to report more effectively and consistently, we have based the report on:

- A rolling 12-month period
- The removal of schools workforce data (schools data is inconsistent with the data of the workforce as a whole)
- Sickness absence as days lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee as the main measure.

Recommendations:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is asked to:

- 1) Receive this report providing sickness absence data for the year ending 30th September 2018 and endorse the actions taken to monitor and manage sickness.
- 2) Note the need to review our sickness and absence policies and procedures and invest in sickness absence management training in order to deliver a sustained reduction of absence levels.

Other useful background papers:

None.

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No.

Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No.

Report title: Sickness Absence to Year Ending 30th September 2018

1. Background

Performance

- 1.1 This report provides the sickness absence figures for the Council as days lost per employee (FTE) for the year ending 30th September 2018 and for the previous year.

Coventry City Council (excluding Schools)		
	Up to Sept 2018	Up to Sept 2017
People	12.42	10.87
Place	9.77	10.63
CCC	11.5	10.79

- 1.2 This information is based on full time employee equivalent (FTE) average days lost per person against the FTE average days per person available for work.

This is the method that was previously required by the Audit Commission for annual Best Value Performance Indicator reporting. The City Council continues to use this method to ensure consistency with figures published by other authorities.

- 1.2.1 The above figures are different to those previously reported in that data for school based employees is excluded. This is because school based employees have less working days in the year and therefore absence figures are not comparable.

As a result of this change the previous target of 8 days is under review.

1.4 Reasons for Absence

- 1.4.1 The top 3 reasons for absence (shown as a percentage of the days lost) for 2018 and 2017 are as follows:

Coventry City Council (excluding Schools)	End of Sept 2018	End of Sept 2017
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	30.30%	27.75%
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	20.27%	20.62%
Infections, Colds & Flu	9.60%	8.92%

People Directorate	End of Sept 2018	End of Sept 2017
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	32.42%	30.97%
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	18.53%	16.68%
Infections, Colds & Flu	9.71%	9.04%

Place Directorate	End of Sept 2018	End of Sept 2017
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	25.22%	21.42%
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	24.44%	28.37%
Stomach, Liver, Gastroenteritis	10.22%	8.12%

- The main reason for absence is Stress, Depression, and Anxiety. However, at present we do not have information on the extent to whether this is work related or for other reasons.
- The other main reasons for days lost is due to sickness absence were Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems, and Infections, Colds and Flu.

1.4.2 The following table compares reasons for absence in 2018 with those for 2017.

Coventry City Council (excluding Schools)			
Sickness Reason	End Sept 2018	End of Sept 2017	Total Percentage Difference of days lost
Stress	30.30%	27.75%	Increase 2.55%
Musculo-skeletal	20.27%	20.62%	Reduction 0.35%
Infections, Colds & Flu	9.60%	8.92%	Increase 0.68%
Stomach, Liver, Gastroenteritis	8.40%	8.61%	Reduction 0.21%
Back & Neck problems	6.61%	6.38%	Increase 0.22%

1.5 Short Term and Long Term Absence

The following table shows the breakdown between long term and short term absence for the year ending 30th September 2018, expressed as a percentage of total days lost.

Coventry City Council (excluding Schools)			
Directorate	Long Term (30 Calendar Days+) <i>(Number of employees)</i>	Short Term (below 30 Days) <i>(Number of employees)</i>	Total
People	70.23% (383)	29.77% (1546)	100%
Place	64.55% (162)	35.45% (730)	100%
CCC	68.56% (545)	31.44% (2273)	100%

Each column also includes the number of employees who have had a period of sickness in each category.

1.6 Sickness Absence Costs (excluding Agency costs)

Coventry City Council (excluding Schools)		
Directorate Totals	Total Cost of Absence (£000) (Includes Employers NI & Pension)	Days lost (FTE)
People	3,673	30626
Place	1,406	12788
CCC Totals:	5,079	43414

The sickness figures reported are not comparable to those reported previously because they exclude the data and costs for school based employees

1.7 Outcomes of the Promoting Health at Work Corporate Procedure

1.7.1 During 12 months to end of September **2018** there have been a total of **20** employees who left the Council in accordance with the Promoting Health at Work Corporate Procedure. **12** have been due to ill health retirement and **8** are due to the required standards of attendance not being met.

2. Activities during the current year

2.1 HR Support Team

The HR Teams aim to ensure a consistent approach to sickness absence management and to provide information on sickness absence to Management Teams/Senior Managers on a monthly basis. HR colleagues also support managers in the application of the Council's Promoting Health at Work procedure.

2.1.2 Management Teams review summary sickness absence reports on a monthly basis to monitor progress and determine actions needed to address any hotspots.

2.1.3 HR Teams undertake proactive strategies to support the managers in the reduction of sickness absence levels. This includes:

- Robust approach in the management of sickness absence casework with the application of a revised model, resulting in no more than 4 meetings having to take place before a decision is made about an employees continued employment.
- A monthly system to alert senior managers when employees trigger a sickness absence point and have not been seen as part of the Promoting Health at Work Procedure.

- Training is provided to managers to support dealing with both practical and procedural issues. An on-going programme of training is taking place across the Council as a whole. This includes receiving the absence phone call, conducting effective Return to Work Interviews, supporting employees with a disability, and understanding the rationale for making reasonable adjustments in the work place to facilitate an employee's return to work.
 - Training has enabled managers the opportunity to refresh their knowledge and understanding of the Promoting Health at Work procedure.
- 2.1.4 A number of service areas across Coventry City Council hold regular 'performance summits / clinics' on a monthly, quarterly or as needed basis. These incorporate both the management of sickness cases as well as areas of performance concerns, which in some cases have a direct link.
- 2.1.5 These serve as a useful mechanism to safeguard the general well-being of the organisation ensuring performance and attendance are well-managed for all parties. This guarantees absence levels remain a high priority with the aim to reduce these levels for the Council and to enable services to be cost-effectively delivered to the public.
- 2.1.6 The purpose of 'performance clinics', are to provide an opportunity for Management with the relevant Head of Service /Directors, to review sickness and performance patterns and cases within a given area. This is to ensure cases are being addressed in a timely manner and are being robustly, consistently, fairly and appropriately managed through the application of the Promoting Health at Work process and other relevant processes.
- 2.1.7 The clinics provide an opportunity for Managers to share good practice and experience in managing absence levels, as well as to gain further advice, support and updates from HR on changes to procedure and the full support that's available to its employees and managers.
- 2.1.8 One of the particular key benefits of performance clinics has been to identify hotspot areas, or key issues/reasons for absence within service areas. This enables the advice, support and resources to be tailored to ensure these issues are addressed and managed and that our employees are appropriately supported. This has proved to be very useful in making a positive impact in the working environments and on attendance levels.
- 2.1.9 In addition to the above a process mapping exercise is currently being undertaken as a preliminary measure to reviewing the Promoting Health at Work procedure.
- 2.1.10 There are no significant risks arising from sickness absence levels in any service area of the Council.

2.2 Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service

Activities from the Occupational Health Team

- **Managers Annual Health and Safety Self-Assessment Audit update.**
The Managers Annual Health and Safety Self-Audit has been completed. Health and Safety Plans have now been shared with Directors. The summary report was shared at the Health and Safety Strategy Group on 25th October 2018.
- **Wellbeing Events:**
A wellbeing event has been organised for Whitley Depot for 12th December. There will be healthy lifestyle, skin and MSK checks, podiatry, vision screening, mental wellbeing advice and therapies.
- **The Corporate Health and Safety Training Programme**
From the outcome of the Managers Annual Self Audit there appears to be gaps in the receipt of mandatory health and safety training. The Service will undertake a topic audit of health and safety training, reviewing uptake from 1st November 2017 to 31st October 2018 and making recommendations.

Director briefings

A series of health and safety briefings have been undertaken with Directors on health and safety responsibilities and the formal health and safety communication process.

- **Current Friargate Activities**

Due to the level of interest, the yoga sessions have continued at lunch times. On 19th June, Specsavers were on site and employees attended sessions on eye health and avoiding eye strain.

On 8th August a holistic therapist provided 15 minute foot/ankle, neck/shoulder or arm/wrist massages to employees in the wellbeing room

Alzheimer day took place on 21st September. Public Health and the OH&W Service organised for the Alzheimer Society to run one to one sessions for employees who may wish to discuss their concerns around dementia.

On 28th September and 12th October the Dementia Friends Society ran a group session on Alzheimer's and dementia for employees, at the Ellen Terry Suite.

Musculoskeletal

- The 75 (42% of referrals) incidents of musculoskeletal problems assessed as caused or made worse by work, were distributed across directorates and schools, no single area was represented as a hot spot. No single condition was significantly represented.
- The Fast Care Clinics at 3 City Arcade and Whitley Depot will continue to support high risk areas for musculoskeletal problems
- 172 cases were closed in Q1, having been provided with advice and self-help support

Mental Wellbeing

- The Mental Wellbeing Programme continues with one to one counselling, debriefings, mediation and resilience training.
- The Mandatory Mental Wellbeing Audit continues to be delivered, currently sickness absence statistics are being reviewed to identify appropriate interventions.
- 67 referrals were made to the Counselling Service in Quarter 1 and 59 cases were closed. Of the 59 closed cases, 41 had said they were experiencing work related stress

3. Results of consultation undertaken

Trade union colleagues are kept up to date on the latest absence figures and are actively involved in casework regarding sickness absence management.

Absence from work is also as part of the reported Health & Safety Governance arrangements.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

None.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

5.1 Financial Implications

The cost of sickness shown in section 1.6 is a calculation of the pay cost of individuals who have been absent from work due to sickness. The actual impact on the Council is the financial cost of replacement cover where this is required in specific service areas plus the notional cost of the effect of the absence on the Council's ability to deliver its services.

5.2 Legal implications

Employees are able to make a claim against the Council if they can demonstrate that the Council has failed in its duties as an employer when dealing with sickness absence.

6. Other implications

There are no other specific implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives/corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard)/organisational blueprint/LAA (or Coventry SCS)?

Sickness absence is one of the Council's corporate plan targets and performance is reported to Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance & Resources) twice a year at the end of Q2 and the end of Q4.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The Promoting Health at Work strategy will require further development to examine more intensively issues such as working conditions, accidents, work related ill health, and industrial injuries in addition to managing absence. This will involve liaison with colleagues in the areas of safety management and Occupational Health, and will also include analysis of sickness data to identify the relationship between specific causes of absence and occupational groups.

The CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel) findings suggest average days lost to be 6.6 days, which represents an increase in 2018 for the majority of organisations (as per the Health and Well-being at Work Survey Report May 2018)

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Human Resources

The HR/OD teams support absence management across the whole City Council. The teams support managers to deal with sickness promptly and consistently within all directorates.

Information and Communication Technology

Data warehouse: Throughout 2018/19 HR data including sickness absence will be stored on the Data warehouse enabling us to use the latest corporate reporting tools improving consistency, timeliness, analyses and presentation of statistics.

6.4 Equalities/EIA

The application of the sickness absence management processes are continually reviewed to ensure compliance with the Council's duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations

None

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