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### Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)

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**Time and Date**

10.00 am on Wednesday, 26th March, 2025

**Place**

Diamond Room 2 - Council House

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**Public Business**

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 10)
  - (a) To agree the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 February 2025
  - (b) Matters Arising
4. **#CovConnects Update** (Pages 11 - 16)

Briefing Note
5. **Council Office Accommodation** (Pages 17 - 18)

Briefing Note
6. **Review Home-to-school Transport Task & Finish Group** (Pages 19 - 26)

Briefing Note
7. **Agency Staff and Staff Sickness Task and Finish Group** (Pages 27 - 54)

Briefing Note
8. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues** (Pages 55 - 58)

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
9. **Any other items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

**Private Business**

Nil

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Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Carolyn Sinclair [carolyn.sinclair@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.sinclair@coventry.gov.uk)

Membership: Councillors J Blundell, R Brown (By Invitation), P Hetheron (By Invitation), J Innes, A Jobbar (Chair), R Lakha, G Lewis, P Male, J McNicholas, D Toulson and A Tucker

By invitation Councillors

**Public Access**

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**Carolyn Sinclair**  
**[carolyn.sinclair@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.sinclair@coventry.gov.uk)**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held**  
**at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 12 February 2025**

Present:

Members:                                   Councillor A Jobbar (Chair)  
  Councillor J Blundell  
  Councillor J Blundell  
  Councillor R Lakha  
  Councillor G Lewis  
  Councillor P Male  
  Councillor J McNicholas  
  Councillor D Toulson  
  Councillor A Tucker

Other Members:                       Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

Employees (by Service area):

Finance and Resources               B Hastie (Director of Finance and Resources), P Helm

Law and Governance                 R Amor, E Jones, C Taylor

People Services                       S Chilton

Apologies:                             Councillor J Innes

## **Public Business**

### **31.     Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **32.     Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record subject to a small amendment.

### **33.     Commercial Investments and Income Generation**

The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) received a briefing note of the Director of Finance and Resources that provided the Board with information on Council's approach to making commercial investment decisions, the statutory framework that the Council works within and how decisions were made, including the policy basis.

The One Coventry Plan provides the broad policy basis for Council's service delivery including its approach to investment activity. The Council's medium term

financial position forecasts revenue funding gaps. The 2024/25 Budget Report (February 2024) identified gaps of £14m and £15m for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and the most recent monitoring report to Cabinet (December 2024) highlighted further budgetary pressure.

Whilst it was difficult to benchmark, it was likely that the Council was broadly 'within the pack' regarding income it generated from charging for discretionary and traded services. Coventry held a large commercial property portfolio and the council had been active in providing external loan finance with similar authorities.

Long term assets held by the council (mainly land, buildings and infrastructure) formed the majority of council's operational assets and the total asset value was circa £1.68bn. Total Return on Investment had risen from 4.9% in 2021/22 to 5.7% in 2023/24.

The council's investment property represented the largest share of commercial assets of £302m. Values were subject to revaluation each year. The total value of the council's external loans 2023/24 was £55.0m. These loans were constructed to deliver commercial returns and a return of 1.7m in 2023/24 was seen however, this was low compared to the Council's budget. Company shares were valued at circa £116m as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 based on company financial activity and performance. The Council's acquisition or establishment of each company was aligned to its policy and service objectives. The Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Ltd (CSWDC), Tom White Waste Ltd (TWW) and Sherbourne Recycling Ltd (SRL), provide strong synergies with the Council's waste collection, management and recycling responsibilities, and protected the Council from some of the volatility in waste markets, provided the opportunity to rationalise some of the costs of waste management and enabled the production of a local source of green energy from waste. Some of the companies had lost value compared with the resources initially invested and Council's shareholdings should be viewed as long-term assets. The current balance sheet valuations were not deemed to be a significant factor in terms of the Council's day-to-day financial position.

Cllr Brown introduced the item referring to the One Coventry values that the local authority followed in order to make investments whilst taking account of local and strategic values. The council's investment portfolio in 2023/24 returned an overall investment of 5.7%.

In considering the briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed matters as summarised below:

- The Council had invested £10m in the Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Ltd in the 1970's and over time, the investment had been paid back, now showing as a balance sheet value of £68m.
- The Council owned  $\frac{2}{3}$ <sup>rds</sup> of the Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Ltd, and Solihull Council owned  $\frac{1}{3}$ <sup>rd</sup>.
- Auditors had raised concerns regarding the 2020 accounts however, these accounts were now reliable and had been signed off. Since then, 3 sets of accounts had been signed off but not audited. The 2023/24 accounts was currently being audited.

- The Council had made good progress in relation to the valuation process for its assets in recent years eg Tom White Waste Ltd, Coombe Abbey Park Ltd and Friargate Joint Venture Project Ltd.
- Tom White Waste Ltd and Coombe Abbey Park Ltd had made a profit in past years however, they were not currently performing as the Council would wish and valuations of these companies had declined due to poor performance.
- Business plans were in place to aid recovery for Tom White Waste Ltd and Coombe Abbey Park Ltd.
- Friargate Joint Venture Project Ltd was not a trading company; it had been bought to facilitate a regeneration scheme in Friargate Business District, which the Council had taken ownership of to influence direction of travel.
- Not all of the companies referred to in the Company Shareholding Values table were part of the Coventry Municipal Holdings umbrella as the council was not the sole shareholder of them. Overheads in those companies were relatively lean.
- Property purchases by the council were long term, strategic investments, bought with the intention of providing a financial return and providing benefits to the city. The return varied from year to year and was currently low due to values being depressed.
- A draft statement of accounts for the current financial year would be produced by the end of June 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Resources and Finance welcomed Members scrutiny and focus on Tom White Waste Ltd and Coombe Abbey Park Ltd, advising every effort was being made to improve their performance and adding that investments were about strategic value as well as the return.

The Board requested the following:

- Assessment of Coventry's debt to income ratio.
- Income figures provided in future reports relating to companies owned by the Council.

**RESOLVED that the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1):**

- 1) Notes the contents of the Briefing Note, Presentation and Appendix.**
- 2) Include this item on the Work Programme for 2025/2026.**

#### 34. **Procurement Process**

The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) received a Briefing Note of the Director of Finance and Resources which provided the Board with information on Council's processes for undertaking procurement activity, the corporate controls in place and information on the forthcoming Procurement Act 2023 and the changes being implemented.

Scrutiny Board 1 had requested further understanding on the procurement processes that the Council was subject to and updates regarding the Procurement

Act 2023 including changes to the Contract Procedure Rule (“CPRs”). The CPRs which formed part of the Council’s Constitution were the framework that governed the Council for making and entering into contracts on behalf of the Council. The CPRs set clear rules for the procurement of goods, services and works and ensured a system of openness, fairness, transparency and accountability. The Council was subject to multiple Regulations in relation to procurement activity. The Regulations set out the various procedures to be followed when undertaking procurement activity that was deemed ‘above threshold’.

Council’s main objective when undertaking procurement activity was to achieve Value for Money and the preferred option must provide full, fair, transparent and open competition and be identified as the most advantageous tender. The Council also sought to ensure bidders/tenderers were of sufficient technical and financial competency to undertake the requirement of the contract.

The Procurement Act 2023 (PA2023), was a new set of rules governing the procurement of goods and services and/or works in the public sector and was due to come into force on 24 February 2025. The PA2023 replaced the existing procurement rules although transitional arrangements confirmed that any contracts entered into, or tenders commenced prior to the go live date of 28 October 2024, would be subject to the requirements of the current legislation and the local authority would be managing contracts under two sets of legislation for a number of years.

In considering the briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed matters as summarised below:

- Light touch services were defined by common procurement vocabulary codes – previously relating to health care and education eg home to school taxi support/provision of music tutors and tended to be those services delivered by smaller organisations.
- Changes to procurement rules would help to reduce the risk of investment in companies such as ISG, which went into liquidation however, in this case, due diligence was undertaken and as it was a Tier 1 contract, monthly reviews were undertaken.
- The proportion of contracts awarded to SME’s would be published on the council website in April 2025.
- Social value was considered in every procurement process and companies were asked for a commitment. Work was being undertaken relating to priorities in terms of delivering social value.
- SME’s may pass on the cost of the social value portal to the council, which was prohibitive for them.

The Board requested the following:

- Once published on the Council website, data on the proportion of contracts this financial year (and previous financial years) being awarded to SME’s to be circulated to the Board.
- Procurement Governance documents to be circulated.

- Member involvement at each stage of value to be included in the Procurement Procedures chart.

**RESOLVED that the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1):**

- 1) Notes the procurement processes that the Council is subject to in line with public sector procurement legislation and internal Contract Procedure Rules as outlined in Paragraph 3 of the report.**
- 2) Notes the corporate approach utilised by the Council to deliver value for money and quality assurance through commissioning and procurement.**
- 3) Notes the forthcoming changes with the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 as outlined in Paragraph 4 of the report and appended presentation.**
- 4) The Procurement Refresh Strategy to be brought to the Board.**

**35. Recruitment and Retention**

The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) received a Briefing Note of the Director of People, providing the Board with oversight of current employment levels with a focus on diversity and under-represented groups and an insight into the related metrics of the current workforce analytics in relation to starters, leavers and apprenticeships.

Current Council employee numbers were 5210, equating to 4210fte, with turnover at 14.38%. In comparison, in June 2024, turnover was 13.91%. Changes in recruitment patterns over the past year were partly due to the introduction of the recruitment panel in September 2023, a number of organisational change programmes and greater consideration being given to filling posts in the light of the financial pressures.

In 2020, there were 3 groups of employees who were under-represented at leadership level across the workforce; employees with a disability and who were neuro diverse, employees from visible minority ethnic backgrounds and employees who identify as LGBT+. Since then, the focus had been on the 3 specific areas to increase numbers employed. Support in the workforce, recruiting and retaining was a priority.

Also in 2020, anonymised recruitment was introduced with the introduction of the new recruitment system. The system did not provide recruiting managers with any personal details until shortlisting was completed and candidates selected for interview. This process operated for all appointments including Chief Officer level.

Recruiting for Workforce Diversity Training had been in place for some time and the recruitment webpages had been revised and updated, along with a review of advertising which took place to ensure they were best placed and value for money. A new job description format was being introduced to remove bias in terms and language to ensure inclusivity. Work had also taken place to ensure better and greater access for candidates with disabilities. There were still a number of employees who had not provided their protected characteristics data, significant in

several areas such as disability, with 12% of employees not making a declaration, 9.8% for ethnicity and 23.59% for sexual orientation. These numbers remained an area of concern despite a number of campaigns to improve.

The Apprenticeship and Early Careers Team actively sought to engage with a variety of under-represented groups to promote social mobility and increase the diversity of apprentices. Engagement was prioritised with schools that had the highest percentage of students on free school meals and took the form of school insight days, work experience, careers fairs and school assemblies, targeted advertising, care leavers, general support, young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and general engagement.

Employee benefits, including the pension scheme, 28 days annual leave and flexible working were subject to regular reviews and financial well-being was an area that had increased over the past year. The Welfare Loan Scheme and Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC's) via salary sacrifice, were new along with a reduced travel card offer in conjunction with WMCA.

In considering the briefing note, the Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed matters as summarised below:

- Inclusive panels were not in place to distinguish candidates, but to ensure the successful candidate had a good value set.
- Anonymised recruitment provided confidence to applicants and was undertaken throughout the council however, it was important to ensure the application process was appropriate for the type of role. Managers were being encouraged to use work-based exercises.
- Work was being undertaken with AI in relation to recruitment.
- The council was committed to flexible working and there would be a push on job sharing. The requirement for most employees was to be office based for a minimum of 2 days per week
- Recruitment panels enabled members of the panel to think wider, with more diversity, obtaining a better outcome and a more positive working environment.
- There were recruitment challenges in particular areas eg. social workers, building control.
- The welfare loan scheme was open to all employees.

The Board requested the following:

- General engagement – measurable outcomes to be provided when available.
- An update on apprenticeships.
- The number and breakdown by area of Council vacancies.

**RESOLVED that the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1):**

- 1) Notes the content of the report and related analytics.**



- 2) **Acknowledges the work being carried out in these areas and the ongoing organisational aim to have a sustained and growing representative workforce.**

36. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues**

The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) received a report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator that detailed issues on the Work Programme for meetings of the Board for 2024/25.

**RESOLVED that the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1):**

- 1) **Notes the issues on the Board's Work Programme for 2024/25.**
- 2) **Agrees to the addition of the following items to the Work Programme:**
  - i) **'Spending, Saving and Council Tax proposals – a report to review the outcomes and impacts after 12-months of implementation'.**
  - ii) **Council office accommodation.**
  - iii) **Commercial Investments and Income Generation.**

37. **Any other items of Public Business**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.00 pm)

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## Briefing note

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**To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)**

**Date: 26 March 2025**

**Subject: #CovConnects Update**

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### 1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide an update on the #CovConnects programme, highlighting the progress made in developing the #CovConnects Device Bank moving towards a digital reuse and repair model and social impact measurement.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1):
  - a) Note the details relating to the broader #CovConnects programme.
  - b) Make any relevant recommendations to the Cabinet Member.

### 3 Background and Information

- 3.1 #CovConnects is Coventry City Council's digital inclusion programme, which launched in October 2022. #CovConnects is a social inclusion programme tackling the digital inequalities experienced by our residents and communities.
- 3.2 Its core aim is to ensure that all Coventry residents should have equal opportunities to access digital skills, tools, technologies, and services. From this approach #CovConnects works in partnership, across sectors to ensure that meaningful, person-centred and holistic digital inclusion initiatives are co-created and embedded to meet our diverse communities needs.
- 3.3 #CovConnects has six key programme principles which shape the #CovConnects digital inclusion ecosystem;
  - **Outcome based** - We prioritise around social inclusion not tech
  - **Partnership led** - We don't set the agenda we respond to it
  - **Research focus** - We gather the evidence to understand and adapt
  - **Efficiency driven** - We create interest and excitement to find funding
  - **Unique solutions** - We recognise community differences and tailor a response
  - **Scalable core offer** - We create a sustainable tech, skills and data offer

3.4 In addition to the 'core offer,' an ecosystem of activity across local authority, NHS partners, voluntary and community sector and University partners has created sustainable, innovative and partner-led activity.

3.5 Within the core offer, key developments and deliverable since March 24 include;

3.5.1 **#CovConnects Device Bank**- full update below

3.5.2 **Community Connectivity**

- #CovConnects continues to partner with Good Things Foundation to distribute free sim cards via the National Databank to digitally excluded Coventry residents. In March 2024 7000 National Databank sim cards had been distributed across 42 National Databank Hubs within Coventry. Our most recent update has seen over 15,000 sim cards now distributed to 63 National Databank Hubs.
- The 'Jangala Get Box Pilot' which has seen 200 SIM-enabled connectivity devices provided to vulnerable residents in temporary accommodations through 12 partner organisations. An accompanying report will be published this spring to evaluate the impact of providing both unlimited and 'capped' data to residents within temporary accommodation, further framing digital exclusion as a wider determinant of health.
- #CovConnects recently secured 1250 MiFi dongles with two years of unlimited data through £340,000 UKSPF funding in partnership with CCC Skills Service. Devices will be distributed via the #CovConnects Device Bank to VCSE organizations and Council services, to further tackle digital connectivity challenges within our communities.

3.5.3 **Community Skills and Support**

- #CovConnects continues to develop and deliver bespoke Embedded Digital Champion training for organisations across the city. Offering 'Train-the-trainer' sessions to embed digital inclusion knowledge and best practices within services and organisations, with over 140 Embedded Digital Champions onboarded to date.
- #CovConnects has developed three bespoke community focused Digital Inclusion Networks across, Older Adults, Homelessness and ESOL. Networks have representation across sectors, meeting regularly to pursue partnership opportunities, share best practice and drive community focused digital inclusion initiatives.
- The #CovConnects Map was launched last year on the #CovConnects website, to provide an interactive resource for residents, practitioners and frontline workers to find bespoke community led digital inclusion initiatives across the city. There are currently 50+ venues included, ensuring services provided, contact details and wider organisational details are easily accessible.

#### 4 #CovConnects Device Bank Developments and the Digital Re-use and Repair Proof of Concept

- 4.1 The #CovConnects Device Bank was launched in October 2023 based upon circular economy principles of re-using end-of-life corporate stock to enable meaningful community led digital inclusion activity. An additional boost of funding at approximately £635k worth of devices, was received via the WMCA Connected Services Programme in July 2023.
- 4.2 The #CovConnects Device Bank was created following an end-to-end re-design and build within our organisational customer relationship management platform, to create an online application process. ensuring consistency, efficiency, governance and reporting. Devices can be accessed via VCSE organisations, internal Coventry City Council services and NHS Coventry services.
- 4.3 The #CovConnects team provide wraparound support to each Device Bank applicant, ensuring a holistic package across skills, connectivity and support, in addition to access to digital kit.
- 4.4 To date, #CovConnects has distributed over 4000 devices across Coventry, including;

Device Type	Quantity	New vs reuse/repair
Laptops/desktops	1526	New
	1220	Reuse/repair
Tablet devices	91	Reuse/repair
Smart phones	358	Reuse/repair
Connectivity devices		
Mi-fi Units	684	New
Jangala Get-Box	270	

- 4.5 Since conception, longer term sustainability of the scheme has been explored via the Circular Economy Pathway of the Coventry Independent Climate Change Board, exploring opportunities to tackle digital waste and exclusion in tandem
- 4.6 Autumn 2023, saw the creation of the #CovConnects Digital Reuse and Repair Proof of Concept working group with key stakeholders across the council, University of Warwick, NHS ICB Coventry and Warwickshire, and the voluntary sector work together to explore opportunities to continue to build on the initial pilot.
- 4.7 Early 2024, #CovConnects was successful securing an initial £80,000 investment from the Virgin Media O2 Hubbub Time after Time Fund to kickstart the pilot, reusing and repairing end of corporate life digital kit from the NHS ICB Coventry and Warwickshire, and redistributing via the #CovConnects Device Bank
- 4.8 The year long pilot will enable #CovConnects to evaluate the city-wide approach, looking to measure impact across three key areas;

- Social impact- working with the Coventry Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) and partner Universities to capture the impact of the #CovConnects programme in improving residents and communities' quality of life with digital as an enabler, using qualitative and quantitative techniques
- Environmental impact- utilising a 'carbon calculator' developed by Warwick Manufacturing Group as part of the proof of concept- tracking digital devices donated across reuse, repair and recycle; quantifying e-waste reduction and embodied carbon emission savings.
- Economic impact- exploring both the return on investment for social impact activity, and the financial sustainability of the programme longer term.

4.9 Next steps for the #CovConnects Device Bank impact measurement include dashboard development across a range of standardised and accredited values to ensure the wider outcomes and outputs of the programme are more accurately captured.

## **5 Digital Inclusion as a wider determinant of health - health inequalities**

- 5.1 #CovConnects was successful in securing NHS ICB Coventry and Warwickshire Health Inequalities funding in 2023, enabling the development of the #CovConnects community-based approach for digital inclusion and health participation, based upon the 100% Digital Leeds model.
- 5.2 Digital inclusion can impact health directly- whereby digitally excluded residents are unable to access health services and information available online or digitally. Equally, digital exclusion can impact health indirectly- whereby digital inclusion enablers better opportunities across education, employment, housing and service access, therefore can be viewed as a wider determinant of health.
- 5.3 #CovConnects works collaboratively with the Marmot Partnership, VCSE organisations, Public Health and NHS Trusts, to work collectively to reduce health inequalities associated with digital exclusion. Additionally, #CovConnects has worked closely with HDRC since its launch, positioning digital inclusion as one of the 'building blocks for health.'
- 5.4 #CovConnects has benefitted from additional research skills development and capacity to support programme evaluation and impact measurement, including;
- a) HDRC council colleagues providing expertise on developing individual #CovConnects projects/initiatives evaluation
  - b) Identifying, supporting and collaborating on research funding opportunities, with currently ten projects at different stages
  - c) Two team members accessing paid Research Associate roles via the HDRC, in addition to their substantive posts, further enabling capacity and skill development to drive digital inclusion research and creating meaningful partnerships with our Universities, UHCW and voluntary sector.
  - d) HDRC facilitated workshops and events with a digital inclusion focus, enabling increased networking, relationship building and identification of shared priority research areas

- e) Upcoming University researcher secondment within the #CovConnects programme to explore 'bridging the gap' by reducing loneliness and isolation via intergenerational digital inclusion activity for older adults.

Laura Waller  
Digital Service and Inclusion Lead  
Coventry City Council

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Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Subject: Council Office Accommodation**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 Post pandemic as employees returned to work from offices, it created opportunity for the council to review the way in which we currently occupy our property portfolio, including office accommodation, to that end this paper provides an update to Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) and outlines key findings and recommendations following an occupancy study of Broadgate House, One Friargate and the Council House.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) is recommended to:
1. Consider the contents of the briefing note and details presented by officers.
  2. Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member (Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change)

### **3 Background and Information**

- 3.1 In January 2025, following an occupancy study of Broadgate House, One Friargate and the Council House, Leadership Board in consultation with Members decided on the closure of Broadgate House to deliver an on-going financial saving to the organisation and to further reinforce our One Coventry approach by consolidating staff into Friargate. These findings have led to the following actions:
- Move Children's Services, Education and Housing & Homelessness Team into Friargate and the Council House (House Project and Horizon/Youth Justice Teams).
  - Move MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) into Friargate.
  - Move the Customer Service Centre and Meet and Greet Team and Children's Conferencing Suite into Central Library, all other Customer Services teams will relocate to Friargate.
- 3.2 A comprehensive occupancy audit programme and findings informed a decision to explore potential rationalisation opportunities and/or a more efficient use of operational properties to achieve financial savings.
- 3.3 Continued monitoring of occupancy further presented an opportunity to:

- **Phase 1** - 2023/24 Reduce CCC occupancy in Friargate from 6 floors to 4, vacant floors offered up for commercial let, potentially generating additional income.
- **Phase 2** - 2025 Bring staff together, moving Children's, Education & Housing & Homelessness teams from Broadgate House to Friargate.
- **Phase 3** - Disposal of BGH once savings realised, to enable re-positioning of this building as a redevelopment opportunity noting and respecting its listed status

#### **4 Health Inequalities Impact**

- 4.1 The Council's Customer Service Centre (CSC) supports services for our most vulnerable people and those facing particularly challenging situations, services such as: homelessness, community care grants and children's services, there will be no change to current accessibility or operating hours in relation to relocating the CSC from Broadgate to Central Library. The Heads of Service and senior managers from Customer Services and the moves team have worked closely in relation to layout, requirements of the new CSC at Central Library.
- 4.2 Partners from organisations across Coventry came together to create the city's first-ever Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which opened in September 2014, it has workers from key partners responsible for safeguarding children in Coventry co-located in one building, currently BGH.
- 4.3 EDT (Emergency Duty Team) provide an out-of-hours emergency service between 5pm and 8.30am throughout the week, including weekends, will also be based within MASH at Friargate. The team responds to safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people, their families, and adults. They also provide an out of hours housing service.
- 4.4 The Moves Team are working closely with all Partners, and they have been fully engaged in the process of relocating the hub into Friargate and will ensure that there is no break operational service delivery and to ensure that the Hub remains secure with restricted access to ensure confidentiality.
- 4.5 Accommodating reasonable adjustments and providing a welcoming environment are key considerations, the moves team have commenced collating known reasonable adjustments and have agreed to attend drop-in sessions facilitated by the Disabled Employee Network Group.

Richard Moon  
 Director of Property Services & Development  
 Coventry City Council  
[Richard.Moon@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.Moon@coventry.gov.uk)



## Briefing note

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**To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Subject: Review Home-to-school Transport Task & Finish Group**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) of the recommendations from the Review Home-to-school Transport Task & Finish Group.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) are recommended to:
- 1) Receive a progress report on the Home to School Travel arrangements in the municipal year 2025-26 to review the changes and lessons learned ahead of the new procurement round prior to the next academic year.
  - 2) Share the Coventry transport model with the LGA and request information on what other councils are doing to manage transport costs.
- 2.2 Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) recommend that Cabinet Members for Strategic Finance and Resources, Education and Skills and City Services:
- 3) Replicate the model of working in other areas of the Council business, emphasising the value of bringing in people who don't directly work in the service to support those who do.
  - 4) Continue exploring ways to increase the number of children being moved by the Council's own transport rather than outside bodies and keep the procurement process under review.
  - 5) Investigate the possibility of creating a formula to incentivise parents to transport their children themselves, ensuring fairness and consistency.

### **3 Information and Background**

- 3.1 At their meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) considered a briefing note outlining the corporate controls in place to secure value for money when providing support to vulnerable residents. The briefing note provided details of the corporate controls in place to secure best value in securing support for vulnerable residents and highlighted the issues faced across different services, to include Home to school Travel Assistance.

- 3.2 In respect of the home to school travel assistance package funding, concerns were raised regarding costs and providers' contractual obligations, for instance, the costs incurred when a child is absent from school and the service not used. It was noted that a review was currently underway on this funding and the Board requested that a further report on this matter be brought back to the Board at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.3 At their meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024, Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) The Board considered a briefing note which provided a background on the establishment and use of the home to school taxi service and an update on its review.
- 3.4 The Board questioned officers and the Cabinet Member on several points arising from the presentation including the following:
- The use of taxi service fares rather than a flat fee
  - Concerns that the current process did not provide best value for money
  - The percentage of parents who transport their child to school, in response, Officers agreed to provide that information to Members
- 3.5 Following discussion, the Board agreed that, in order to further explore the issues raised, a Task and Finish Group be established to ensure that best value was being achieved.
- 3.6 Membership of the task and finish group was:
- Cllr L Kelly (Chair)
  - Cllr J Blundell
  - Cllr R Lakha
  - Cllr J McNicholas
- 3.7 Task and finish group members were invited to be involved in co-production with officers to develop the work with a focus specifically on the procurement and value for money of the transport service.

#### **4 Meetings of the Task and Finish Group**

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group met three times. The first meeting was to agree the scope of the Task and Finish Group, as well as to provide some background on context to the work being planned. The scoping document can be found at **Appendix A**.

#### **5 Meeting 1**

- 5.1 Officers provided a verbal presentation to members of the Task and Finish group, which gave an overview of the procurement process relating to the Home to School Transport Service and identified areas of improvement and areas to work on in future.
- 5.2 Members questioned officers and received response from officers regarding the following:
- That there is no consistency between Local Authorities nationally in awarding contracts

- The difficulty in determining whether a taxi is the most cost-effective mode of transporting children with SEN due to other factors including Safeguarding, DBS Checks and risk assessments
- That an interim review had been conducted to explore use of assets to reduce overall cost to the Council – incorporating Adult Social Care
- That route setting is part of the tendering process, and best routes are determined in terms of mileage
- That risk assessments are determined on each eligible child the outcome of which may limit safe travel options
- Taxis as a mode of transport is increasingly relied upon to manage volume demand and new routes as a consequence of children being placed in out of city schools
- That increasing the post 16 financial contribution for travel assistance had not provided an impactful incentive for families to move from a door-to-door travel assistance offer and instead make their own arrangements
- The development of a tracker is ongoing to help officers review children’s transport needs year on year
- The current mileage rate is 45p per mile (in line with HMRC rates) and that offering a variable rate to families as an incentive to increase take up was problematic because of the requirement to be fair and transparent to all. That escorts are charged as a separate hourly rate, and were in addition to the contracted mileage rate

5.3 It was agreed that the task and finish group would support the work by:

- Continuing to monitor, challenge and provide oversight.
- Provide additional support during the establishment of the new framework
- Ensuring we deliver best value and focus on the whole of our transport network. Wider review, focus on changed procurement framework and evidence that it's achieving best value over time.

## **6 Meeting 2**

- 6.1 The second meeting discussed the progress and challenges of the home to school transport service, focusing on system improvements, cost savings, and recruitment issues.
- 6.2 Officers provided a verbal presentation on the progress from September to December 2024, highlighting the creation of an integrated tracker to improve data recording and decision-making.
- 6.3 Officers discussed the limitations and failures of the current passenger transport system, which had not been reviewed for over 10 years, and the need for a comprehensive review to improve services
- 6.4 Efforts to reduce transport costs include moving children from taxis to minibuses, which could save significant amounts annually, and working with schools to use their own transport provisions.
- 6.5 Recruitment of drivers and escorts presented challenges due to the part-time nature of the job and managing children's behavioural issues, this systemically led to high staff turnover.

## 6.6 Procurement and contracting issues:

- There is a need to revisit contracts to address issues with mileage rates and escort costs. Significant variances in charges were found, and the need to set upper limits for mileage rates was emphasised
- Promoting competition among providers is essential. Currently, contracts are spread across eight operators, despite the fact that the dynamic purchasing system had over 40 operators registered that could bid for work
- Lessons learned from the previous procurement round include the need for better cost transparency and setting upper limits for mileage rates to avoid inflated costs

## 7 Meeting 3

7.1 Meeting three enabled members of the Task and Finish Group to understand further information shared with officers in more detail as well as identify next steps and recommendations to the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1).

7.2 Members discussed the following:

- a) Model of working: Members suggested that the working model used in the report should be replicated in other areas of the Council business. This model involves bringing in external people to support internal staff, allowing for a comprehensive review of processes.
- b) Transport Management: Members discussed the importance of using Council vehicles before outsourcing to taxis. It was recognised that some children need individual transport due to their specific needs, but efforts should be made to use Council resources first.
- c) Procurement Process: Members highlighted the need to keep the procurement process under review. Regular review has generated an increase in the number of transport providers, which helps keep costs down.
- d) Parent Incentives: Members raised the issue of the disparity between payments to parents and taxi companies for transporting children, suggesting that enhanced payments to parents could be a cost-saving measure.
- e) National Perspective: Members emphasised the importance of considering the national perspective and suggested looking into what other Councils are doing to address similar issues. Members proposed sharing findings with the LGA to gather insights from other Councils.
- f) Members of the group identified recommendations based on the discussion and requested that a progress report come back to Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) in 6 months' time ahead of the new academic year.

## Appendix A: Scoping Document

Elan Jones  
Scrutiny Co-ordinator  
Law and Governance

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# Scrutiny Task and Finish Scoping Document

<b>Focus of Review</b>	
The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to review delivering the best value for the home-to-school taxi service.	
<b>Background and Context</b>	
<p>The Board considered a briefing note on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 which provided a background on the establishment and use of the home-to-school taxi service and an update on its review. Following discussion, the Board agreed to further explore the issues raised and establish a Task and Finish Group to ensure that the best value was being achieved for the home-to-school travel package.</p> <p>This task and finish group will not be considering the eligibility criteria or assessment process for receiving the service – the focus will be on the procurement and value for money of the taxi service.</p>	
<b>Key Questions</b>	
<p>Key Questions raised by members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the value for money test when awarding contracts?</li> <li>• Flat fees vs taxi fees – how to move away from this?</li> <li>• How are other Local Authorities nationally awarding contracts? Beyond the West Midlands region</li> <li>• Are taxis the most cost-effective way of transporting children with SEN – Consider other options: such as buses, council-owned taxi service etc</li> <li>• Direct parent payments – how to encourage more to take up on this offer?</li> <li>• Does the Dynamic Purchasing System encourage providers to work together to maintain high price rates?</li> </ul> <p>Note: This group will be limited to reviewing the home-to-school transport service and no other areas of Special Educational Needs</p>	
<b>Spotlight Review Involvement</b>	
Lead Scrutiny Member	Cllr L Kelly
Scrutiny Membership	Agreed at the 17 <sup>th</sup> of July meeting as: Cllr L Kelly (Chair) Cllr J Blundell Cllr R Lakha Cllr J McNicholas
Cabinet Member (s)	Cllr Brown and Cllr Sandhu
Responsible Director	Julie Newman (for Procurement)
Lead Officer(s)	Rob Amor, Jeanette Essex, Sarah Elliott, Adrian Coles, Mark Bolton
Scrutiny Co-ordinator	Elan Jones
<b>Methodology</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers developing the work in co-production with Members</li> <li>• The use of Comparison indicators from statistical neighbours</li> </ul>	
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	
Does the review have any potential implications for Equality and Diversity?	Public Sector Equality Duty, as required by the Equality Act 2010, to ensure policies and decisions do not impact negatively on people with protected characteristics, to include disability
<b>The Green Agenda</b>	

Does the review have implications for the green agenda?	N/A
<b>Timescales</b>	
Date Task & Finish approved by Board	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
Reporting date to Board	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2025



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**To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)**

**Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

**Subject: Agency Staff and Staff Sickness Task and Finish Group**

---

### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) of the recommendations from the Agency Staff and Staff Sickness Task and Finish Group

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) are recommended to consider regular performance reports on staff sickness and agency use.
- 2.2 The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resource is recommended to consider a more formal oversight and monitoring of Staff Sickness and agency use.

### **3 Information and Background**

- 3.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) considered a briefing note on the 11th September 2024 which provided the current workforce analytics, the data within it included the numbers employed, turnover, starters, leavers, sickness absence, agency workers, and, where possible historical data had been included for comparative purposes.
- 3.2 The report enabled a comprehensive overview and explanation of the workforce and related metrics. As a result of this item, it was resolved that the Board establish a Task and Finish group to look at issues around the use of agency staff, which was agreed by the Board at their meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 3.3 Membership of the task and finish group was:
- Cllr Blundell
  - Cllr Innes
  - Cllr Lewis
  - Cllr Toulson (Chair)

### **4 Meetings of the Task and Finish Group**

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group met twice. The first meeting was to agree the scope of the Task and Finish Group (Appendix A), as well as to provide the current position on sickness absence and use of agency staff (Appendix B). Members of the Task and Finish group questioned officers on the content of the presentation.

4.2 Members discussed the following:

- Service areas with high absences
- Short- and long-term sickness and the impact on services
- The work of occupational health services.
- The reasons behind high spending areas for agency staff
- Recruitment challenges
- Retention payments and market supplements

4.3 Members requested updated absence information and comparison data for other local authorities for consideration at the next meeting.

4.4 The next meeting enabled members of the task and finish group to receive the most up to date data on sickness levels, as well as the benchmarking details requested. Coventry rates were higher than those in other similar authorities.

4.5 Members asked questions about targeted interventions to address high levels of sickness.

4.6 Targeted approaches for different hotspot services areas being used were additional work to reduce muscular-skeletal absence in Adult Services. This targeted approach was having some impact on absence.

4.7 Another example given was the introduction of a 9-day fortnight in Children's Services which had also had a positive effect on absence.

4.8 The impact of working from home was also discussed with Members highlighting the areas where absence was highest, such as City Services and Adult Services, were areas where home working wasn't prevalent due to the nature of the work. There was also discussion about whether home working reduced short-term absence due to minor illness, as staff could work from home, for example with a cold, whereas, they may be absent if required to go into the office.

4.9 The rise in neurodiversity was also discussed with reasonable adjustments such as quiet areas, dedicated mental health specialists on the occupational health team, as well as support and training for managers.

4.10 The main lesson from other local authorities was effective management was key in lowering absence rates.

4.11 Members of the group recognised the steps being taken by the organisation to address staff sickness levels and supported officers in the interventions already being delivered. They identified the recommendations at paragraph 2 for the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) and the Cabinet Member to continue to monitor the effectiveness of these interventions.

Appendix A: Scoping Document

Appendix B: Presentation Meeting 1

Appendix C: Absence Data Q3 Oct-Dec 2024

Appendix D: Comparison Data

Gennie Holmes

Scrutiny Co-ordinator

Law and Governance

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## Scrutiny Task and Finish Scoping Document

<p><b>Focus of Review</b></p> <p>The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to review issues around the use of agency staff and staff sickness.</p>
<p><b>Background and Context</b></p> <p>The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) considered a briefing note on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 which provided the current workforce analytics, the data within it included the numbers employed, turnover, starters, leavers, sickness absence, agency workers, and, where possible historical data had been included for comparative purposes. The report enabled a comprehensive overview and explanation of the workforce and related metrics. As a result of this item it was resolved that the Board establish and T&amp;F group to look at issues around the use of agency staff</p> <p>Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee also considered a report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing regarding the One Coventry Bi-Annual Performance Report 2023 – March 2024 on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</p> <p>The Committee considered the report and asked questions, sought assurances and made comments on a number of issues to include the work undertaken to investigate staff sickness rates and spend on agency staff with a view to it being more tightly managed.</p> <p>Following discussion, the Board agreed for Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) to further explore the issues raised and establish a Task and Finish Group to review issues around the use of agency staff and staff sickness.</p>
<p><b>Key Questions</b></p> <p>Key Questions – staff sickness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further understanding on what lies behind sickness in each department.</li> <li>• Explore further into the category ‘Stress, Depression &amp; Anxiety’ – Longer term sickness absence, what remedies do we have in place? What does that person go through? Support available in those instances.</li> <li>• For long term sickness absence, what is mandatory for the employee to do? And what steps they have to take before further repercussions.</li> <li>• What mental health support is available?</li> <li>• Absence figures and its financial implications. Does management decision-making play a part in this? What are we doing to address that?</li> <li>• Council staff sickness referred in the OCP Bi-Annual Report. Data only available for one previous year and does not give a picture of trends over previous years.</li> </ul> <p>Key Questions - agency spending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of agency staff is significant - why we are where we are in increasing use of agency staff?</li> <li>• Reasons behind increase of vacancy rates?</li> <li>• Retaining social workers - where are we now?</li> <li>• Identified in the OCP Bi-annual Report - £2.5m overspend on Agency staff.</li> <li>• What is the split between agency spend to cover long term sickness and agency spend to cover vacancies?</li> </ul>

<b>Spotlight Review Involvement</b>	
Lead Scrutiny Member	
Scrutiny Membership	Lewis, Blundell, Toulson, Innes
Cabinet Member (s)	Cllr Brown
Responsible Director	Julie Newman (for Procurement) Susanna Chilton (HR)
Lead Officer(s)	Susanna Chilton
Scrutiny Co-ordinator	Elan Jones/ Gennie Holmes
<b>Methodology</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers developing the work in co-production with Members</li> </ul>	
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	
Does the review have any potential implications for Equality and Diversity?	The T&F Group will take into consideration any staff and agency workers with 'protected characteristics', as defined by The Equality Act 2010.
<b>The Green Agenda</b>	
Does the review have implications for the green agenda?	N/A
<b>Timescales</b>	
Date Task & Finish approved by Board	
Reporting date to Board	

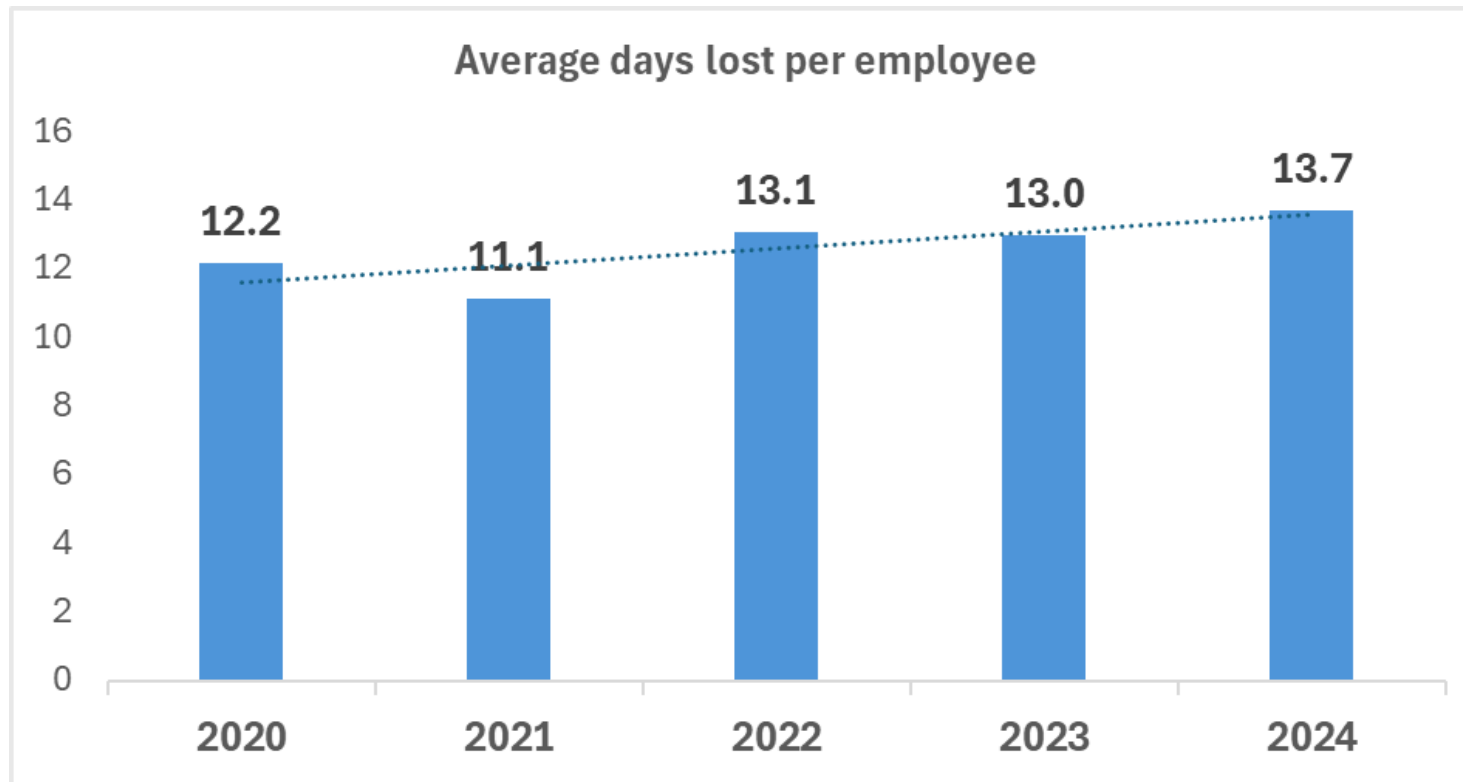
# HR Information Task and Finish Group December 2024



# Sickness Absence Rate 12 months to the end of September 2024 : 13.7 Days Lost Per Employee on average (FTE)

This compares to **13.0 Days** for the 12 months to the end of September 2023.

The table below average days lost in 12 months to the end of Q2 from 2020 to 2024, this shows an overall increase over the period.

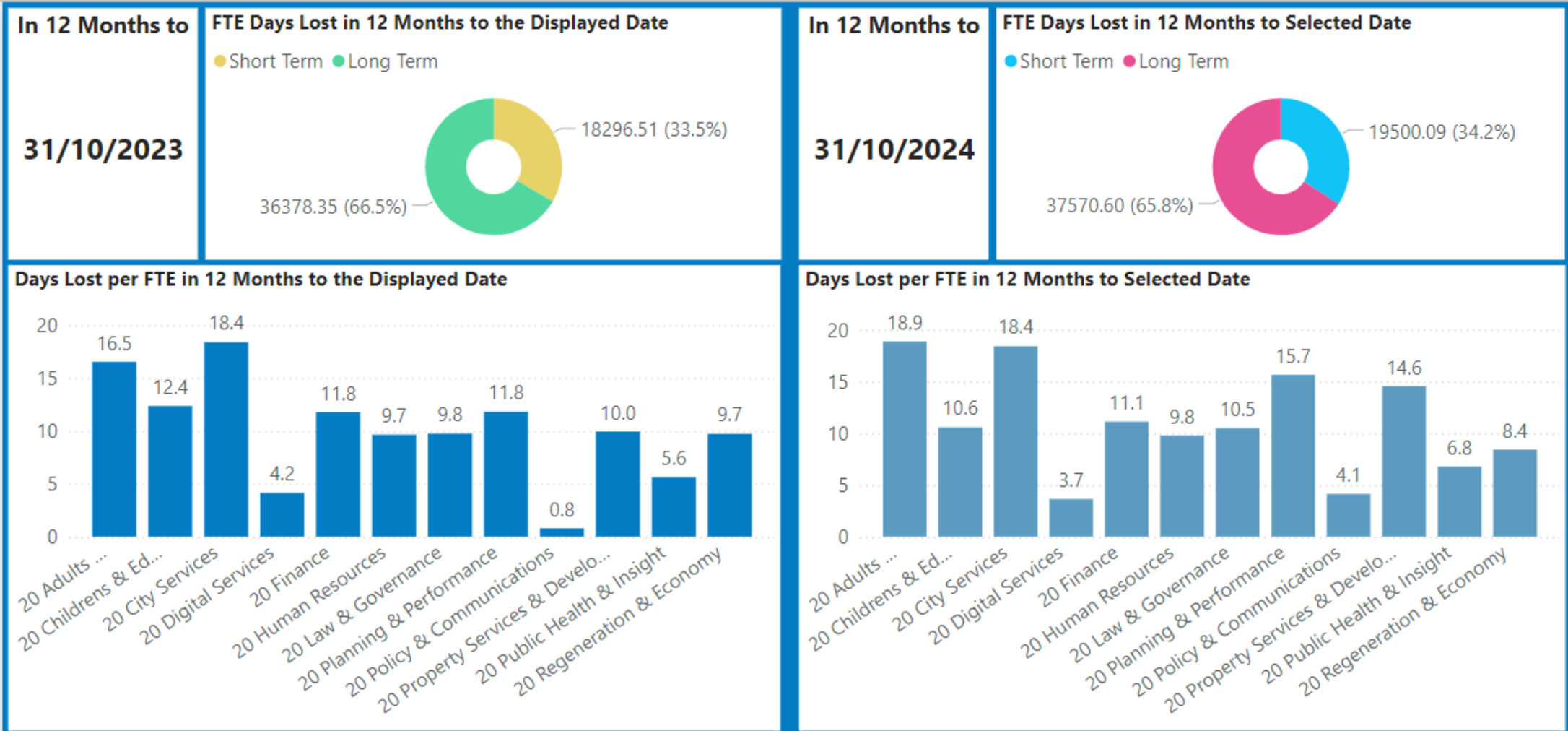


Source: Workforce Analytics PBI Dashboard October 2024.



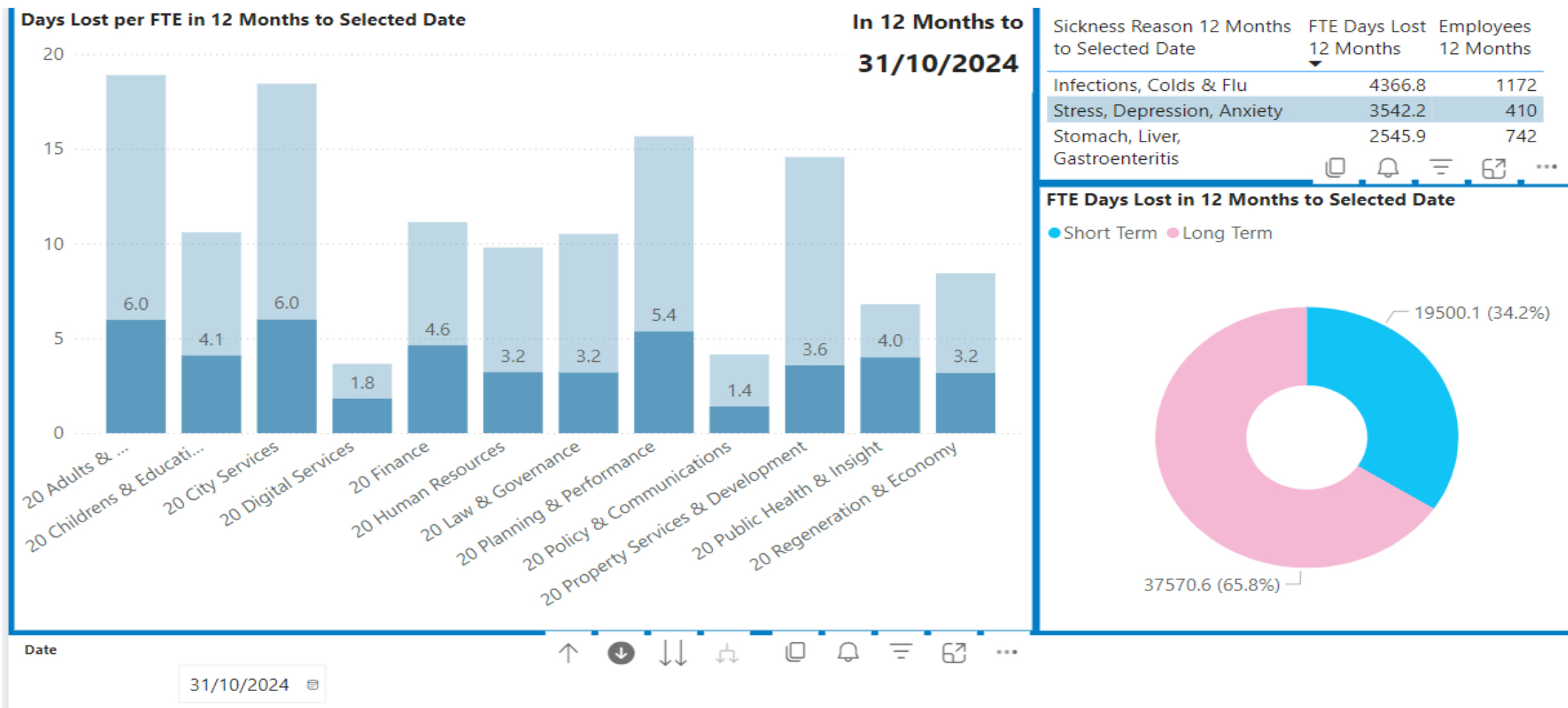
# October 2023/4

18.4 days per head , 67.5% LTS, and 32.5% short term. **Adults, Childrens, City Services,** but **Digital, HR, Planning and Performance, Property Services, Regen.**



Date

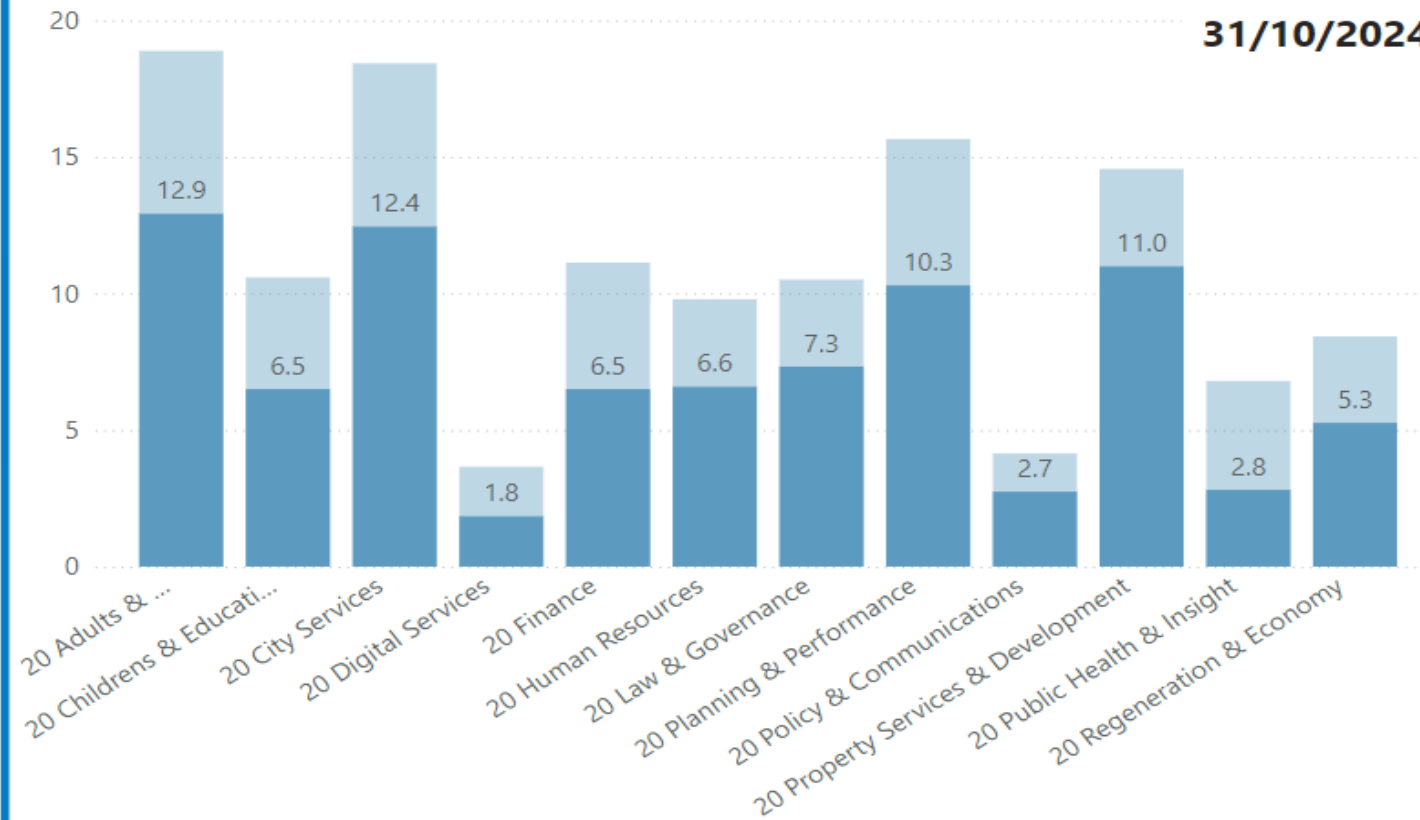
# Short Term Absence and Reason



# Long Term Absence by Days and Reason

Days Lost per FTE in 12 Months to Selected Date

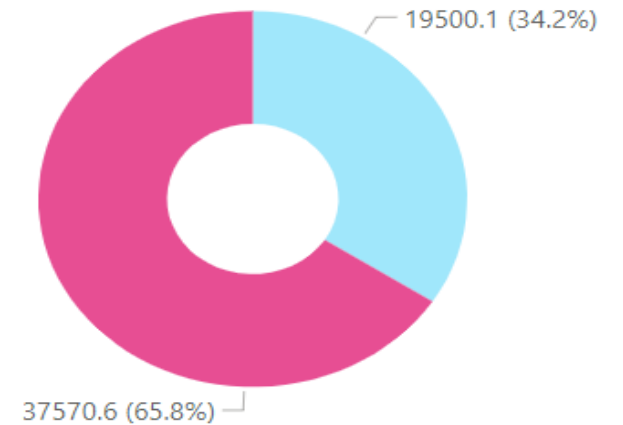
In 12 Months to  
31/10/2024



Sickness Reason 12 Months to Selected Date	FTE Days Lost 12 Months	Employees 12 Months
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	16991.5	355
Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems	6576.1	159
Back & Neck Problems		

FTE Days Lost in 12 Months to Selected Date

Short Term Long Term



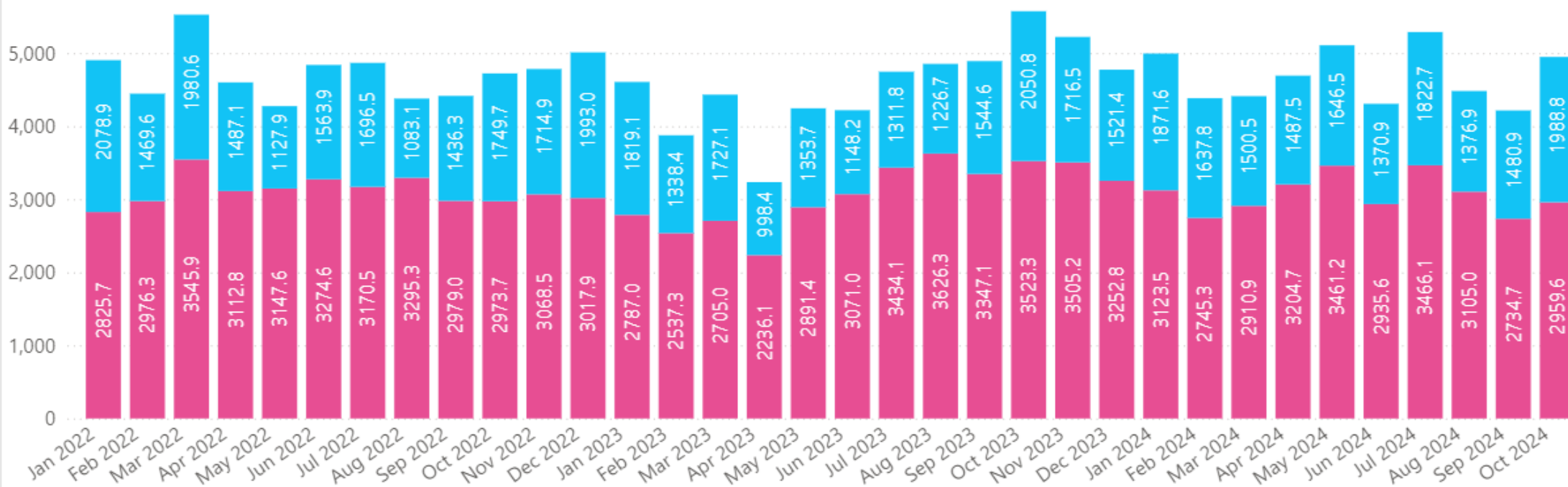
Date

31/10/2024

# Comparison Year on Year

Monthly FTE Days Lost

Sickness Absence Type ● Long Term ● Short Term



Date

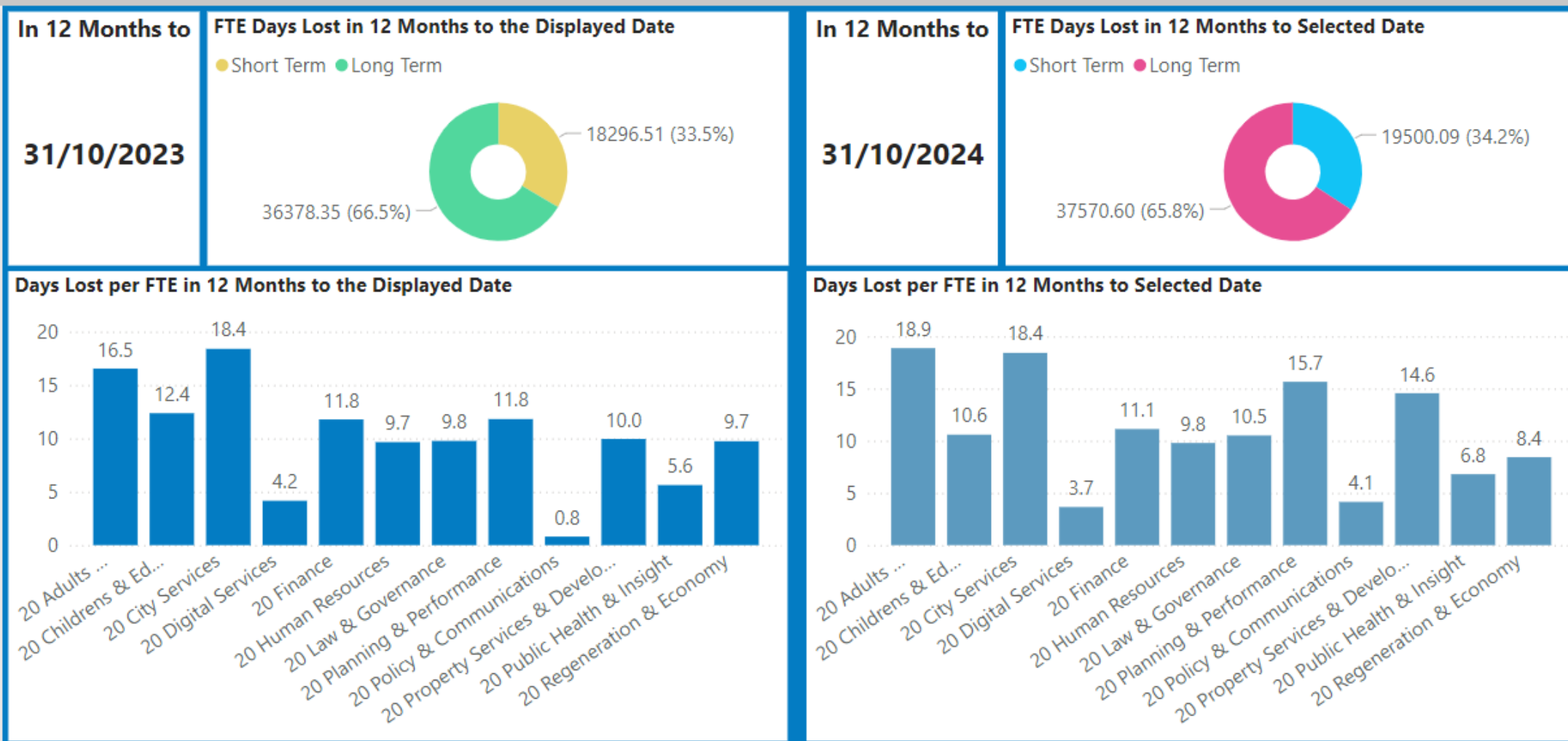
01/01/2021

31/10/2024



# October 2023/4

18.4 days per head , 67.5% LTS, and 32.5% short term. **Adults, Childrens, City Services,** but **Digital, HR, Planning and Performance, Property Services, Regen.**



Date

## Long Term Sickness Absence September 2024:

Below is a snapshot of employees with a current Long-Term absence at the end of the quarter.  
(a Long-Term absence is a single absence of more than 30 calendar days)

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<b>Employees on Long Term Sickness absence at 30/09/2024</b>		
<b>Length of absence range</b>	<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>Total Working Days Lost in absences to date</b>
<b>12 Months or More</b>	7	1926
<b>6 Months to 11 Months</b>	20	3415
<b>3 Months to 5 Months</b>	23	2023.5
<b>30 Calendar Days to 3 Months</b>	14	440
<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>7822.5</b>

<b>Reasons for Long Term Sickness absence current at 30/09/2024</b>		
<b>3 Reasons with most employees on long term absence</b>	<b>Number of employees</b>	<b>Total Working Days Lost in absences to date</b>
<b>Stress, Depression, Anxiety</b>	19	1595.5
<b>Stomach, Liver, Gastroenteritis</b>	10	2239
<b>Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems</b>	9	858
<b>Other Reasons</b>	26	3130
<b>Totals</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>7822.5</b>

## Occupational Health, Safety and Counselling

Activity	July - September 2024
Pre-Employment health assessments	286
Sickness absence health assessments	549
Health surveillance assessments (HAV, Audio,HGV,Spiro)	9
Musculoskeletal assessments	80
Healthy Lifestyle appointments (including Menopause Clinics)	71
Vaccinations	0
Counselling appointments	658
Mental Wellbeing Clinic appointments	168
First Aid Training	105

The above figures do not include advice and guidance, telephone enquiries, wellbeing activities, developing policies and guidance notes, quality standards etc.

Source: Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services

# Quarterly Hays agency spend

Page 40

This data only includes agency staff provided through the contract with Hays. Individual services also employ agency staff 'off contract' through specialist providers that are not included in these measures.

Hays Agency Spend by Quarter 2024-25 (From 1st April 2024)			
Services Group	Quarter 1 (01/04/2024 to 30/06/2024)	Quarter 2 (01/07/2024 to 30/09/2024)	Change between quarters
Adults & Housing	£470,414.50	£395,222.12	▼ -£75,192.38
Childrens & Education	£849,023.64	£707,116.24	▼ -£141,907.40
City Services	£205,587.67	£244,108.68	▲ +£38,521.01
Digital Services			► 0
Finance	£34,362.72	£35,765.28	▲ +£1,402.56
Human Resources			► 0
Innovation			► 0
Law & Governance	£194,985.76	£237,906.92	▲ +£42,921.16
Planning & Performance	£6,648.08	£2,755.96	▼ -£3,892.12
Policy & Communications		£2,135.40	▲ +£2,135.40
Property Services & Development	£157,729.19	£177,055.16	▲ +£19,325.97
Public Health & Insight	£2,093.84		▼ -£2,093.84
Regeneration & Economy			► 0
<b>CCC Total</b>	<b>£1,920,845.40</b>	<b>£1,802,065.76</b>	<b>▼ -£118,779.64</b>

Source: Hays Recruitment Agency October 2024



# Agency broken down by worker and area

Row Labels	Count of Division
<b>20 Adults &amp; Housing</b>	<b>34</b>
Ad-Hoc Support Worker - Adults	5
Occupational Therapist	2
Rough Sleeping Outreach Worker	1
Senior Administrator	2
Senior Social Worker - Adults	17
Social Worker	3
Social Worker - Adults	2
Support Assistant	2
<b>20 Children &amp; Education Service</b>	<b>43</b>
Deputy Manager	1
Independent Reviewing Officer - Childrens	1
Lawyer	1
Senior Practitioner - Childrens	3
Senior Social Worker - Children's Locality Services	11
Senior Social Worker - Childrens	21
Social Worker	1
Supervising Social Worker	1
Team Manager	2
Team Manager – Children's Locality Services	1

<b>20 City Services</b>	<b>11</b>
Administrative Officer - Grade 3	1
CAD Engineer	2
Installation Manager	1
Senior Project Engineer	3
Senior/Principal Officer Highways Development	2
Visuals Technician	1
Water Feature Monitoring	1
<b>20 Finance</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>20 Law &amp; Governance</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>20 Partnerships &amp; Performance</b>	<b>1</b>
Administrative Officer	1
<b>20 Policy &amp; Communications</b>	<b>1</b>
Communication / PR Lead – Grade 9 – 10	1
<b>20 Property Services &amp; Development</b>	<b>8</b>
Administrative Officer	1
Combustion Engineer	2
Senior Surveyor - Interim	1
Service Charge Accountant - Interim	1
Valuation Surveyor - Daily Rate	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>114</b>

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# HR Quarterly Performance Card

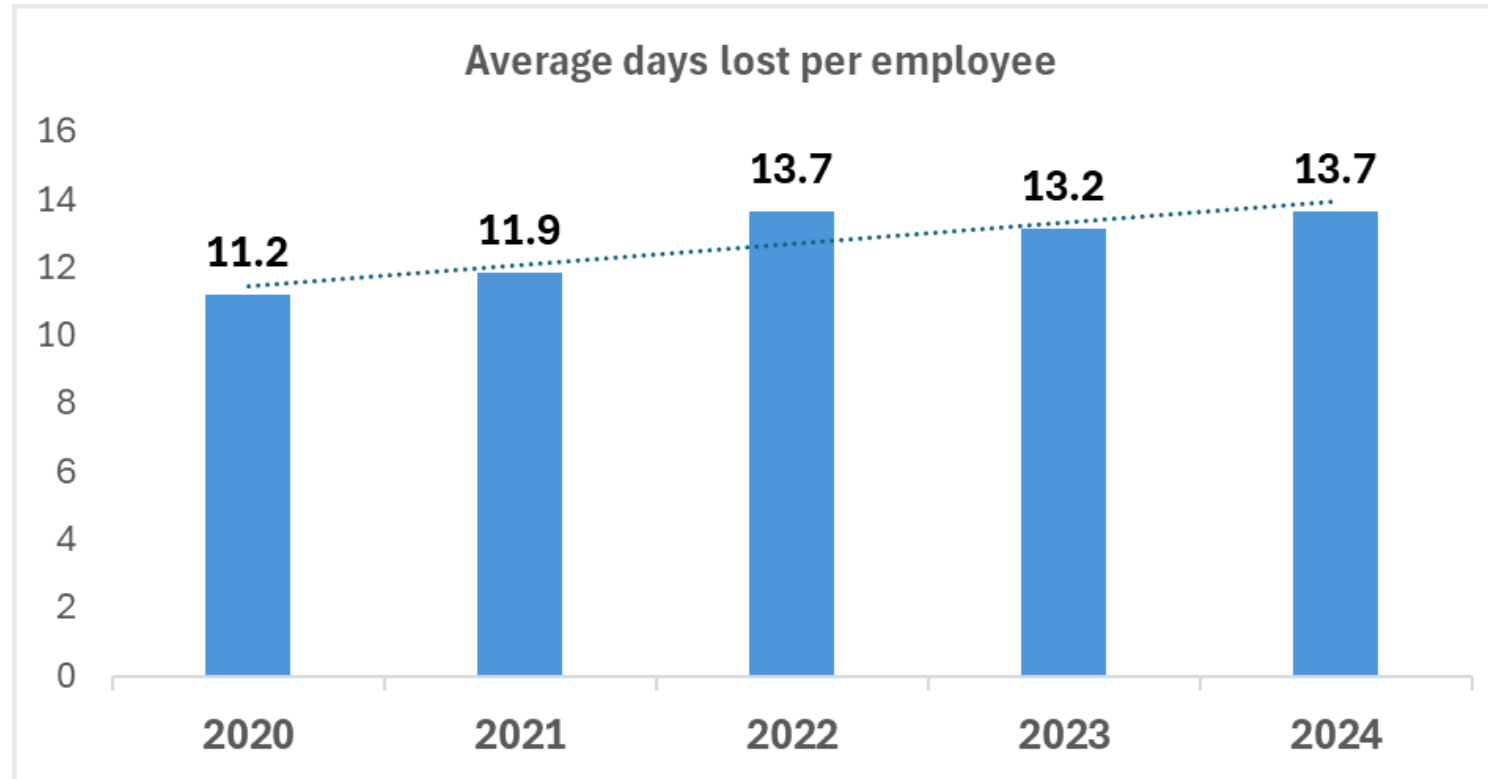
## Q3 October – December 2024



## Sickness Absence Rate 12 months to the end of December 2024 : 13.7 Days Lost Per Employee on average (FTE)

This compares to **13.0 Days** for the 12 months to the end of December 2023.

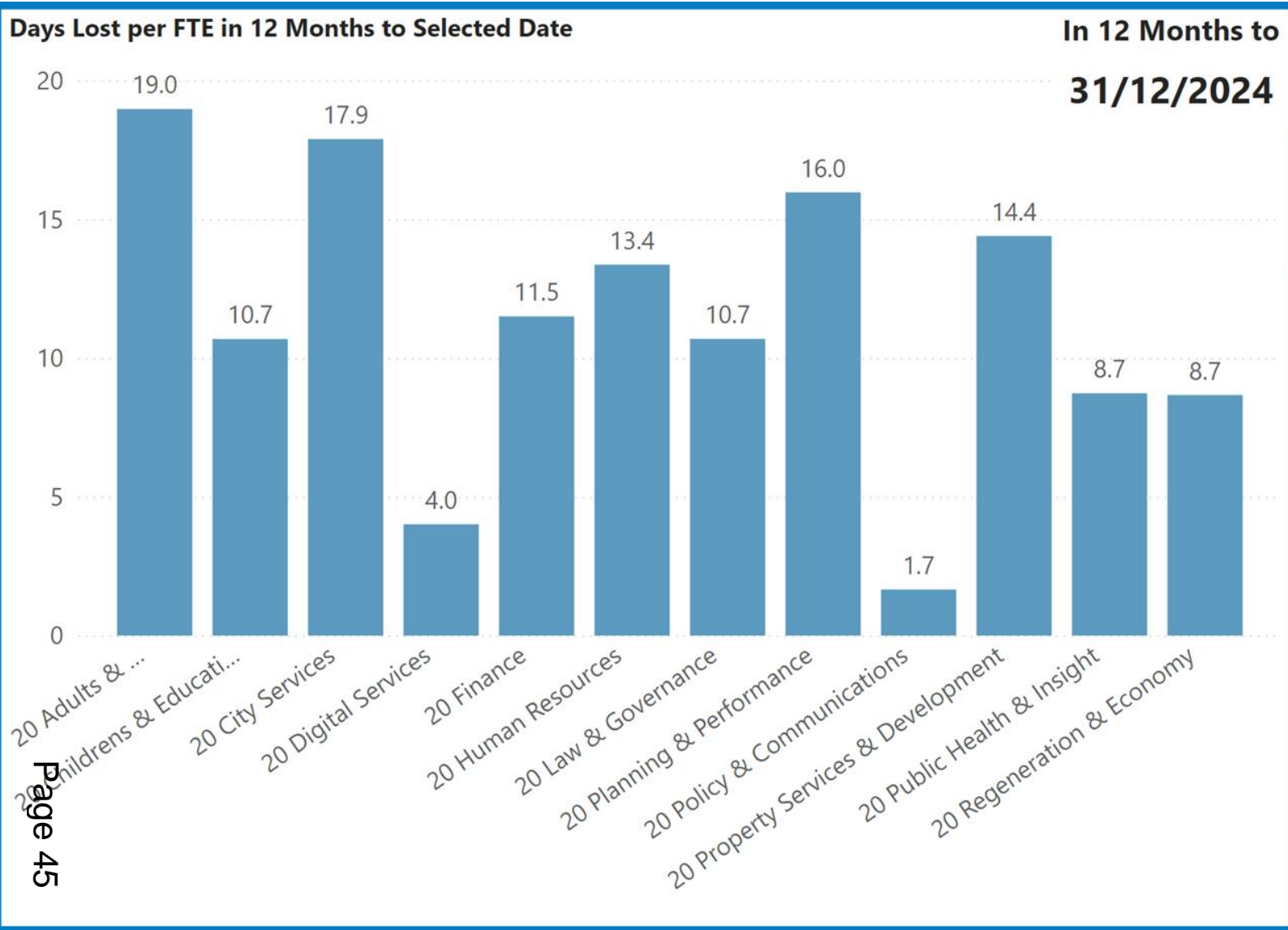
The table below average days lost in 12 months to the end of Q3 from 2020 to 2024, this shows an overall increase over the period.



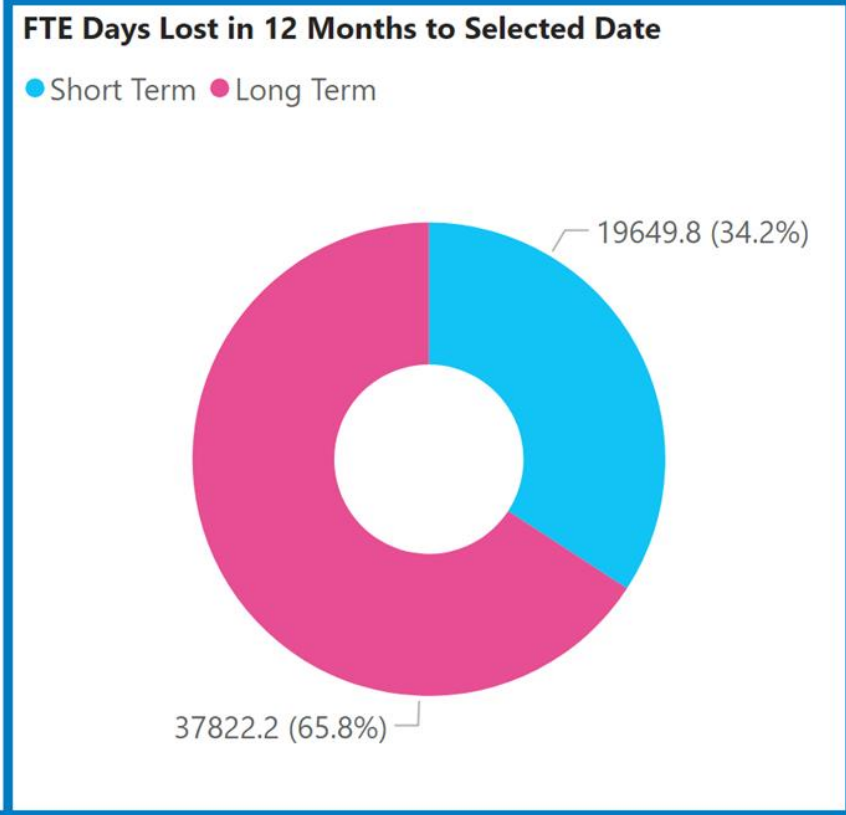
Source: Workforce Analytics PBI Dashboard January 2025.

# Sickness Absence Rate 12M to end December 2024: 13.7 Days Lost Per Employee (FTE)

The top 3 reasons for absence: Stress, Musculoskeletal and Infections, cold and flu, the same as 2023.



Sickness Reason 12 Months to Selected Date	FTE Days Lost 12 Months	Employees 12 Months
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	20424.3	679
Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems	8727.4	441
Infections, Colds & Flu	5551.9	1274

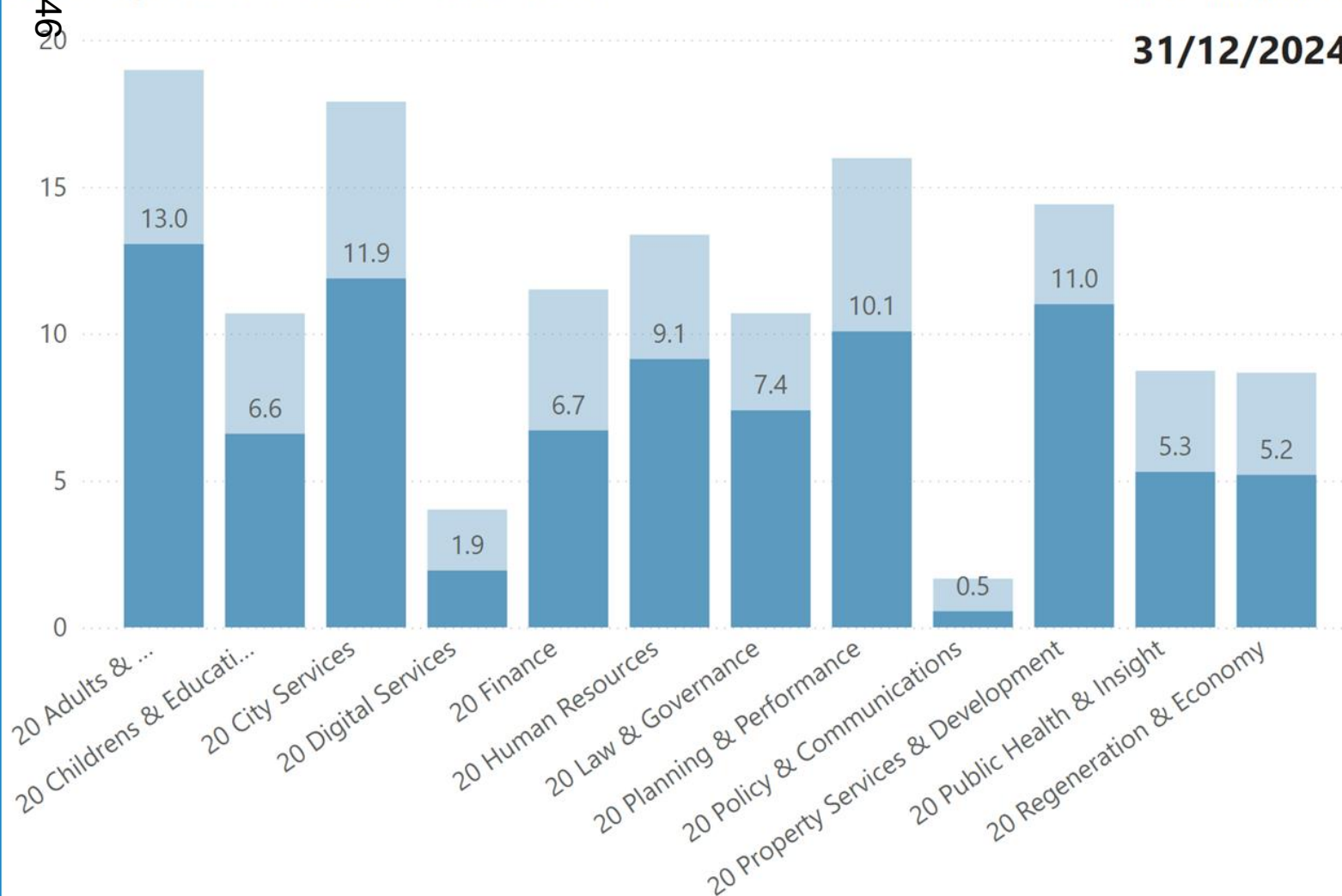


# Long Term Sickness Absence 12M to end December 2024:

Long-Term Absence accounted for 65.8% of absence based on FTE Days lost (compared to 67.50% in 2023) (a Long-Term absence is a single absence of more than 30 calendar days)

Days Lost per FTE in 12 Months to Selected Date

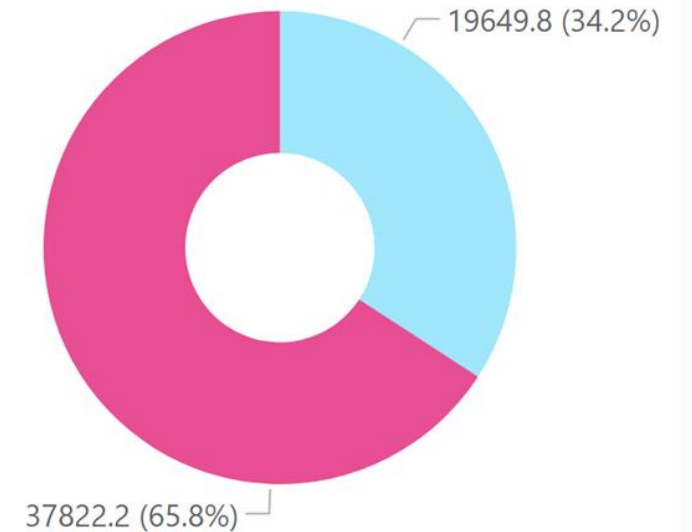
In 12 Months to  
**31/12/2024**



Sickness Reason 12 Months to Selected Date	FTE Days Lost 12 Months	Employees 12 Months
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	16957.4	352
Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems	6588.1	162
Stomach, Liver,	2159.0	59

FTE Days Lost in 12 Months to Selected Date

● Short Term ● Long Term



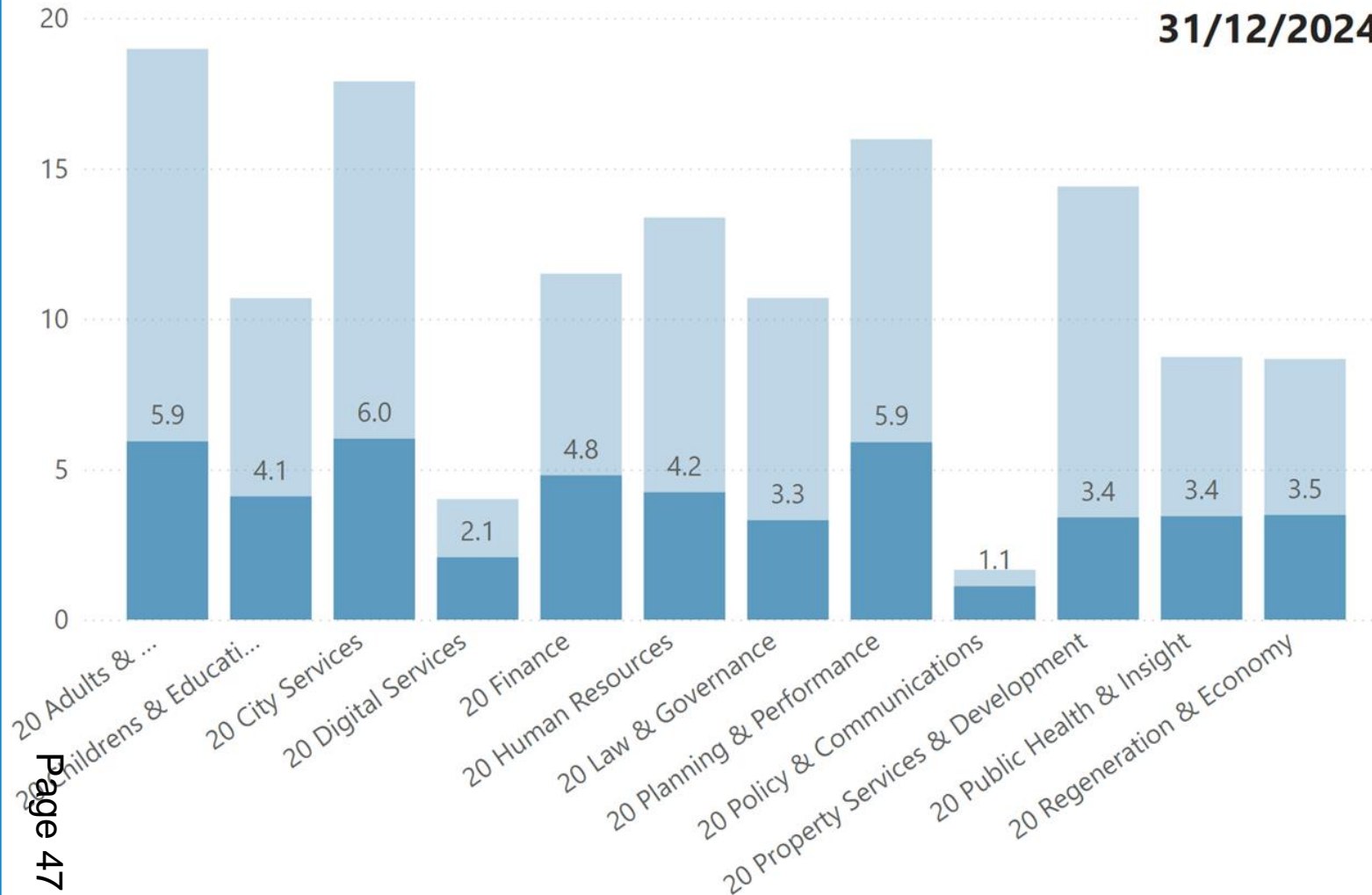
# Short Term Sickness Absence 12M to end December 2024:

Short-Term Absence accounted for 34.2% of absence based on FTE Days lost (compared to 32.50% in 2023) (a Short-Term absence is a single absence of Less than 30 calendar days)

Appendix C

Days Lost per FTE in 12 Months to Selected Date

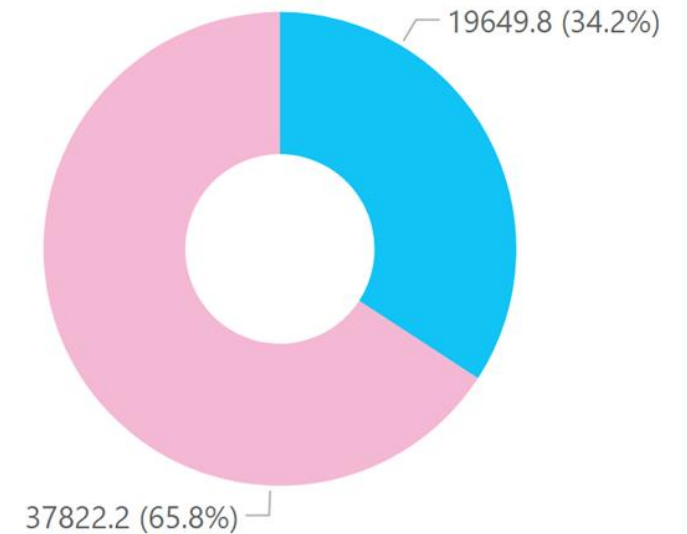
In 12 Months to  
**31/12/2024**



Sickness Reason 12 Months to Selected Date	FTE Days Lost 12 Months	Employees 12 Months
Infections, Colds & Flu	4708.4	1252
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	3466.9	401
Stomach, Liver, Gastroenteritis	2636.1	773

FTE Days Lost in 12 Months to Selected Date

● Short Term ● Long Term



### Long Term Sickness Absence January 2025:

Below is a snapshot of employees with a current Long-Term absence start of January 2025.  
 (a Long-Term absence is a single absence of more than 30 calendar days)

Employees on Current Long Term Sickness absence January 2025		
Length of absence range	Number of employees	Total Working Days Lost in absences to date
12 Months or More	5	2119
6 Months to 11 Months	20	3137.5
3 Months to 5 Months	19	1645.5
30 Calendar Days to 3 Months	16	630.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>7532.5</b>

Reasons for Long Term Sickness absence current January 2025		
Reasons with most employees on long term absence	Number of employees	Total Working Days Lost in absences to date
Stress, Depression, Anxiety	25	2167.5
Other Musculo-Skeletal Problems	7	573
Cancer related illness	5	906
Stomach, Liver, Gastroenteritis	5	1625
Other Reasons	18	2261
<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>7532.5</b>

Source: ResourceLink Reporting Services January 2025.



## Occupational Health, Safety and Counselling

Activity	October - December 2024
Pre-Employment health assessments	211
Sickness absence health assessments	581
Health surveillance assessments (HAV, Audio,HGV,Spiro)	29
Musculoskeletal assessments	143
Healthy Lifestyle appointments (including Menopause Clinics)	46
Vaccinations	204
Counselling appointments	409
Mental Wellbeing Clinic appointments	274
First Aid Training	135

The above figures do not include advice and guidance, telephone enquiries, wellbeing activities, developing policies and guidance notes, quality standards etc.

Source: Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services

# Quarterly Hays agency spend

Appendix C

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This data only includes agency staff provided through the contract with Hays. Individual services also employ agency staff 'off contract' through specialist providers that are not included in these measures.

Hays Agency Spend by Quarter 2024-25 (From 1st April 2024)				
Services Group	Quarter 1 (01/04/2024 to 30/06/2024)	Quarter 2 (01/07/2024 to 30/09/2024)	Quarter 3 (01/10/2024 to 31/12/2024)	Change between quarters 2 & 3
Adults & Housing	£470,414.50	£395,222.12	£377,423.24	▼ -£17,798.88
Childrens & Education	£849,023.64	£707,116.24	£778,353.14	▲ +£71,236.90
City Services	£205,587.67	£244,108.68	£196,437.33	▼ -£47,671.35
Digital Services				► 0
Finance	£34,362.72	£35,765.28	£38,420.75	▲ +£2,655.47
Human Resources				► 0
Innovation				► 0
Law & Governance	£194,985.76	£237,906.92	£216,126.85	▼ -£21,780.07
Planning & Performance	£6,648.08	£2,755.96	£9,087.42	▲ +£6,331.46
Policy & Communications		£2,135.40	£25,654.38	▲ +£23,518.98
Property Services & Development	£157,729.19	£177,055.16	£172,970.91	▼ -£4,084.25
Public Health & Insight	£2,093.84			► 0
Regeneration & Economy				► 0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£1,920,845.40</b>	<b>£1,802,065.76</b>	<b>£1,814,474.02</b>	<b>▲ +£12,408.26</b>

Source: Hays Recruitment Agency January 2025

Any Questions?

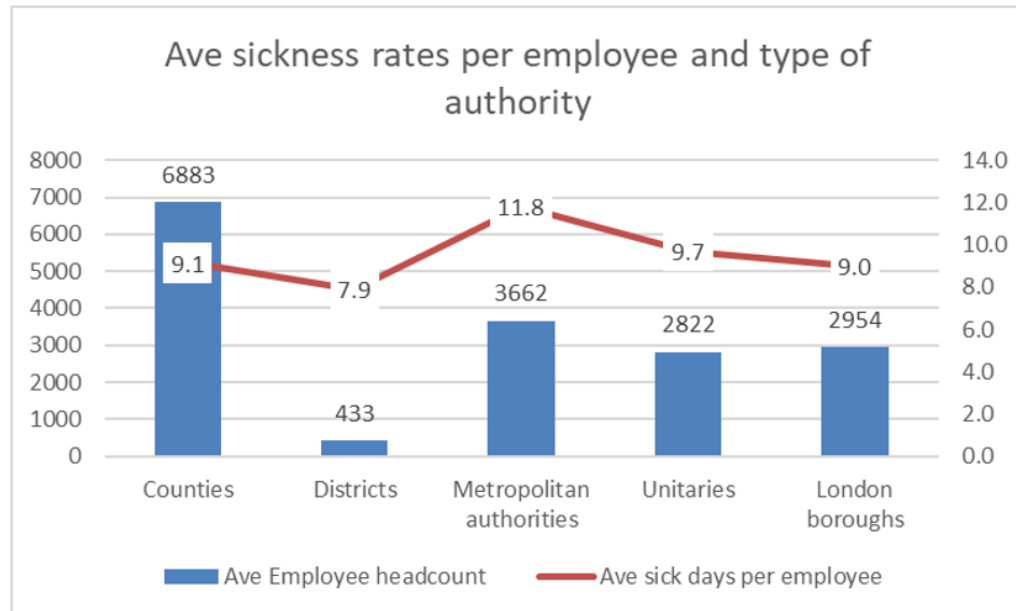
Thank you



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## Appendix D – Comparison Data

## Average sickness rates per employee



Coventry City Council is a Metropolitan authority. Currently the figures are 13.2 days per FTE

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# Agenda Item 8

SB1 Work Programme 2024/25

Last updated 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

<b>17<sup>th</sup> July 24</b>
Establish a Task & Finish Group – Home to School Travel (July) CIPFA Financial Management Code
<b>11<sup>th</sup> September 24</b>
Cabinet Member Priorities of the year Workforce Reports and HR Response to Staff Survey
<b>9<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
Budget Pre-Engagement
<b>6<sup>th</sup> November 24</b>
Reserves Position Council Tax Arrears and Collection Establish a Task & Finish Group – Review Agency Staff and Staff Sickness
<b>8<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>
Draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy Budget Consultation
<b>12<sup>th</sup> February 25</b>
Council Investment Portfolio Procurement Process Recruitment and Retention
<b>26<sup>th</sup> March 25</b>
#CovConnects Council Office Accommodation Task and Finish – Home to School Taxi (Final Report) Task and Finish - Review Agency Staff and Staff Sickness (Final Report)
<b>2024/25</b>
Artificial Intelligence Policy
<b>2025/26</b>
Outturn Performance for the Tax year 2024/25 Reserves Position Following Implementation of the Spending, Saving and Council Tax Proposals 25/26 Council Investment Portfolio Procurement Refreshed Strategy

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
17 <sup>th</sup> July 24	Establish a Task & Finish Group – Home to School Travel (July)	Agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to review the current DPS arrangement in order to ensure best value for the home to school taxi service	Jeanette Essex, Rob Amor, Ewan Dewar, Sarah Elliot
	CIPFA Financial Management Code	briefing note and appendix containing an assessment against a number of prescribed standards.	Phil Helm / Cllr Brown
11 <sup>th</sup> September 24	Cabinet Member Priorities of the year	Item to discuss the highlights of the year of the Cabinet Member where Scrutiny Board members can pick up on any areas that they'd like to take forward.	Cllr Brown
	Workforce Reports and HR Response to Staff Survey	Workforce Reports to include Work on Health and Wellbeing and update regarding the proposed HR response to the findings of the survey and progress of the emerging HR plan at a future meeting.	Susanna Chilton / Cllr Brown
9 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	Budget Pre-Engagement	Pre-cursor to the established budget setting process/consultation. Pre-consultation scoping	Cllr Brown, Barry Hastie, Tina Pinks, Phil Helm
6 <sup>th</sup> November 24	Reserves Position	Reserves position 23/24 statement	Barry Hastie / Cllr Brown
	Council Tax Arrears and Collection	To consider what steps the Council are taking to ensure good rates of Council Tax collection as well as national comparators To include – understanding the process of collecting arrears, how are individuals supported when in difficulty.	Barrie Strain Cllr Brown



SB1 Work Programme 2024/25

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Establish a Task & Finish Group – Review Agency Staff and Staff Sickness	To establish a Task and Finish Group to review issues around the use of agency staff and staff sickness.	Susanna Chilton
<b>8<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>	Draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy	To discuss the draft Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy prior to its development for approval at Cabinet and Council. To include information on distribution of Government funding which had been identified in the 2024 Autumn Budget if available	Cllr Brown /Barry Hastie/ Tina Pinks / Phil Helm
	Budget Consultation		Tina Pinks Cllr Brown
<b>12<sup>th</sup> February 25</b>	Council Investment Portfolio	Risks and returns	Barry Hastie / Cllr Brown
	Procurement Process	Procurement Strategy to include the procurement process and updates to the Council's framework in preparation for the implementation of the Procurement Act and associated regulations	Cllr Brown Rob Amor Remi Aremu
	Recruitment and Retention	Diversity within recruitment and retention (SB1)	Susanna Chilton Cllr Brown
<b>26<sup>th</sup> March 25</b>	#CovConnects	further report at a future meeting which would focus on partnerships and how they work in practice. To include progress around Digital Exclusion as identified in Scruco on the 25 <sup>th</sup> September.	Cllr Brown/Cllr Hetherton Adrienne Bellingeri, Laura Waller
	Council Office Accommodation	Review the usage of Council office space within the context of making savings.	Cllr O'Boyle Cllr Brown

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
			Richard Moon
	Task and Finish – Home to School Taxi (Final Report)		
	Task and Finish - Review Agency Staff and Staff Sickness (Final Report)		
<b>2024/25</b>	Artificial Intelligence Policy	A further item to consider how AI can be used strategically to save money and improve service delivery. Impact on Jobs and Skills. Include Digital Strategy with Paul Ward, Ethical side of AI referred to Scruco in March 2025.	Cllr Hetherton Paul Ward
<b>2025/26</b>	Outturn Performance for the Tax year 2024/25	Meeting to take place municipal Year 25/26	Barrie Strain / Cllr Brown
	Reserves Position	Reserves position 23/24 statement – During Q4 (July)	Barry Hastie / Cllr Brown
	Following Implementation of the Spending, Saving and Council Tax Proposals 25/26	Update report on the outcomes and impacts of implementation, be submitted to the Board in 12 months' time. (April 2026)	Barry Hastie / Barri Strain Cllr Brown
	Council Investment Portfolio	Update on risk and returns - Income figures to be provided in future reports relating to companies owned by the Council.	Barry Hastie / Phil Helm / Cllr Brown
	Procurement Refreshed Strategy	Yearly update from Procurement following on from the establishment of the new Procurement Act	Cllr Brown Rob Amor Remi Aremu