

A meeting of the **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in **MEETING ROOM 0.1A AND 0.1B, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER 2021** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve as correct records the Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 10th February and 19th May 2021.

Contact Officer: A Roberts - 388015

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary and other interests in relation to any Agenda Item.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - 388169

3. WORKFORCE REPORT QUARTER ONE 2021-22 (Pages 9 - 24)

To consider an update on HR matters impacting on the performance of the organisation.

Contact Officer: A Whatmore - Aileen.Whatmore@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

4. USE OF CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF (Pages 25 - 32)

To consider and comment on a report by the Chief Finance Officer on the use by the Council of consultants and hired and temporary staff in 2020/21 compared with the previous year.

Contact Officer: C Edwards / E Symons - 388822

5. EQUALITY POSITION (Pages 33 - 38)

To receive a report by the Managing Director on the Council's position in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Contact Officer: J Lancaster - joanne.lancaster@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

6. EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES

At the request of the Employee Representatives to consider a range of issues.

Contact Officer:

7 day of September 2021



Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non - Statutory Disclosable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

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Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with [guidelines](#) agreed by the Council.

Please contact Anthony Roberts ,Democratic Services, Tel: 01223 935946 / email Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held as a REMOTE MEETING on Wednesday, 10th February 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R J West – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs P A Jordan, D N Keane, J M Palmer, D Terry and D M Tysoe.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor C J Maslen.

9 COUNCILLOR MRS JILL TAVENER

The Committee observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the recent death of Councillor Mrs Jill Tavener.

10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

11 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

12 WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT (QUARTER 3)

The Committee received and noted a report on Human Resources matters impacting on the performance of the Council during the period 1st October to 31st December 2020. The report included the latest position and trends relating to employee numbers, salary costs and sickness absence. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

The Committee was informed that the total number of employees at the end of the last quarter was higher than at the end of the previous quarter and that the total spend on pay costs for employees in 2020/21 was forecast to be £1.4m less than the year's budget.

In response to a comment by Councillor Tysoe on the age profile of staff joining the workforce, it was agreed that analysis of joiners was valuable and would be incorporated into the new workforce strategy. Work also was being undertaken on turnover of employees by age band and by service area. This information would be compared with regional data should it become available. Members recognised the value of understanding trends by section.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that that Council was endeavouring to move away from using staffing agencies to other recruitment routes such as apprenticeships, redeployment and growing talent internally. Where agencies

were used, there was a requirement to involve HR staff, who could assist with negotiations. Recruitment would form part of the new workforce strategy.

The Strategic HR Lead reported that a recruitment system was being introduced. It would provide HR with data on which methods of recruitment were effective, including advertisements placed on the Council's website.

The Committee discussed sickness absence. The number of days lost was lower compared with the same period in previous year. The most frequently given reasons for sickness absence tended to be for longer term conditions. Working from home during the pandemic did not appear to be a contributory factor. Workstation equipment was available if required.

The report indicated that two employees had retired in the quarter. Members recognised the employees' achievements and conveyed their congratulations to them. However, one employee had died while in service. The Committee requested that their condolences be conveyed to the individual's family. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that the contents of the report be noted, and
- b) that the Council place on record its recognition of and gratitude for the excellent contributions made by the two employees who have recently retired from their employment in the local government service and convey its best wishes to them for long and happy retirements.

13 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

With the assistance of a report by the Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee considered the draft 2021/22 Pay Policy Statement. The Statement provided information about the Council's policies relating to the pay and reward of Chief Officers and other employees, as required by the Localism Act. In introducing the report, the Strategic HR Manager referred to forthcoming changes in legislation that might necessitate the submission of a mid-year up to the Committee, the Returning and Monitoring Officers and how pay supplements were treated. The Statement would be published on the Council's website together with data on Senior Officers' salaries as required by the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.

Members commented on the positive position reflected in the report, the value of the whole remuneration package and the method by which salaries were determined. Having received confirmation that the Statement adequately covered the latter before it was submitted to the Council, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22.

14 LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

The Committee considered a report by the HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended a revised Leave Arrangements Policy. The Policy had been amended following changes in legislation.

Members discussed the terms of the Policy in relation to parental bereavement, compassionate leave and return to work support. In response to a question on carrying over leave, it was confirmed that trends would be monitored and, where necessary, it would be actively managed. Having noted that the actions taken to manage leave during the pandemic had not been incorporated into the Policy because the circumstances were exceptional, it was

RESOLVED

that the Leave Arrangements Policy appended to the report now submitted be endorsed.

15 STAFF COUNCIL

Mr M Cann, Representing the Staff Council, commented that the reports elsewhere on the Agenda demonstrated that the Council operated in line with other sectors. He also referred to the fact that a significant number of comments had been made by members of the public about Council employees during the pandemic.

Chairman

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in the BURGESS HALL, WESTWOOD ROAD, ST IVES, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, PE27 6WU on Wednesday, 19th May 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs P A Jordan, D N Keane, J M Palmer, D Terry, D M Tysoe, D J Wells and R J West.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor C J Maslen.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor R J West be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor West in the Chair.

2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor D Wells be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Chairman

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Workforce Report

Quarter One 2021-22

This report looks at the workforce profile of Huntingdonshire District Council during the first Quarter of the financial year, **1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021**

The key findings from the workforce profile report are:

- The workforce had a headcount of **656** and an FTE (full-time equivalent) total of **594.1** as of 30 June 2021. The total number of employees is lower than at the end of the previous Quarter and there has also been a corresponding decrease in the FTE total from 604.6 on 31 March 2021.
- Forecasted spend on all pay costs for employees is currently estimated to be around £189,000 higher than budget.
- The annual average sickness figure has decreased to **4.9 days lost** per FTE from 5.1 days per FTE reported for the previous Quarter. Note: in line with all other relevant quarters previously reported the absences linked to Covid-19 – which includes staff unable to work from home, who isolated or shielded – are not counted. However, any sickness related to Covid-19 is counted.
- The total number of sickness absence days lost in Quarter one is lower than in the previous Quarter, with decrease in both short term and long-term absences compared to the previous Quarter.
- Just **14.6%** of the workforce (96 employees) had any sickness absence during Quarter One. We continue to see overall improved absence trends (though increase in working days lost due to short term absences).
- Q1 absences related to Stress dropped from our previous highest reported absence reason to 2nd highest for the first time. HDC have invested a lot in support & interventions to help with mental health (including our in-house team of Mental Health first aiders managing increasing number of calls with staff). However, external trend data suggests Mental Health/Stress continue to be an issue for most organisations and continued absences are predicted.
- **6** employees had long-term sickness (absences of 28 days or longer) in Quarter One. The last quarter saw an increase working days lost due to short term sickness absence.

- The HR caseload increased compared to Q4 by 36%. **54%** of the active cases managed in Q1 relate to either long-term or short-term sickness absences. 56% of all cases were managed informally, while 44% were dealt with under formal procedures and policies.

Authors: HR Advisor and Strategic HR Manager

Date: 6 September 2021

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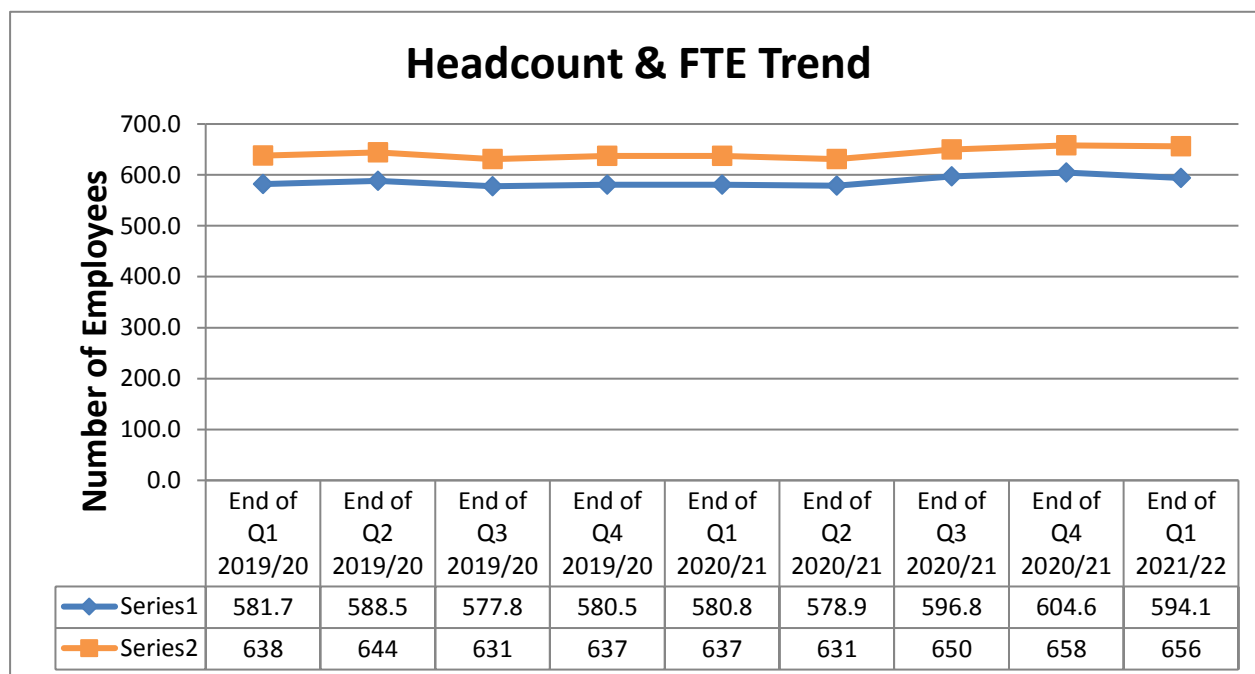
1.0 EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Definition: Headcount is the number of employees working within the Council, counting primary roles only.

A **full time equivalent** (referred to as FTE) is a measure of an employee's workload to make the position comparable across the workforce based on a 37-hour full-time working week. For example, an FTE of 0.5 indicates that the employee works half of a full-time working week (18.5 hours).

1.1 HEADCOUNT AND FTE

At the end of Quarter One (30 June 2021), the total number of employees employed by Huntingdonshire District Council was 656 (excluding those employed on a variable or casual hour basis) with the number of full-time equivalent posts at 594.1



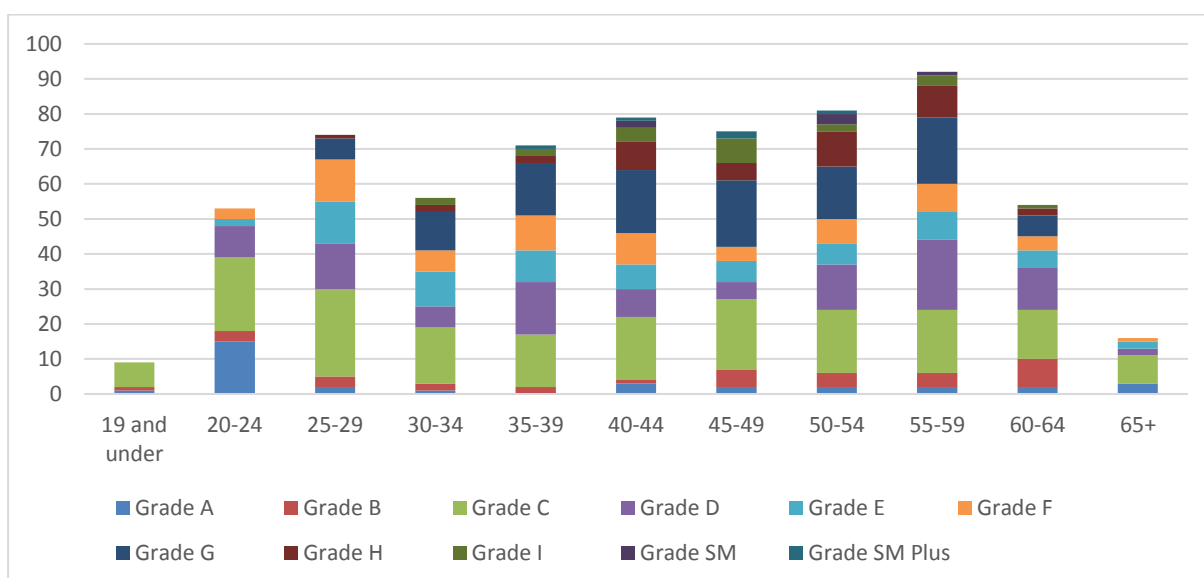
1.2 PAYBILL

- The following table shows the Council's budget, forecasted spend on pay costs (including National Insurance and pension contributions) for all employees but excluding hired staff (contractors and agency staff). Forecasted spend on pay costs for employees is estimated to be £189,000 higher than budget.

Year	Budget (£)	Actual (£)	Forecast (£)
2015/16	22,555,973	20,779,737	
2016/17	22,526,917	21,903,947	
2017/18	24,591,631	23,536,053	
2018/19	25,230,515	23,192,646	
2019/20	24,871,268	23,941,696	
2020/21	25,679,601	24,240,402	
2021/22	25,377,310		25,566,030

1.3 WORKFORCE BY AGE AND PAY GRADE

The number of employees by 5-year age band is depicted below by pay grade. Please note that where an employee has two jobs on different grades, they have been counted within their age band against both grades.



For the purposes of simplifying this graph, employees who have transferred into the Council on existing terms and conditions have been linked to Huntingdonshire District Council pay grades based on their current salary levels.

1.4 HIGH EARNERS

Definition: High earners are classified as employees who are paid at £50,000 or above. This information is already published annually in line with the Government's commitment to improve transparency across the public sector and the target hasn't changed since it was introduced.

At the end of Quarter One 32 employees were paid at FTE salaries of £50,000 or above. The total number of employees classed as high earners has increased from 31 at the end of the previous Quarter, however, still only represents 4.7% of the workforce. The definition of high earners is set by the governments transparency agenda and this is reported in line with those requirements.

1.5 GENDER PAY GAP

Employers with 250 or more employees must publish figures comparing average pay by gender across the organisation. This data is produced and published annually, in line with regulations and the most recent report was included in the previous Q4 workforce reporting (June 2021). An update will be provided when new data is available Q4 2021/22.

1.6 LEAVERS

During Quarter One, **45** full-time/part-time employees on permanent or fixed-term contracts left the organisation, which is **higher** than the total leaving in the previous Quarter (18) but includes some of the leavers from the Leisure Restructure. There were 22 voluntary resignations by employees on permanent contracts from April to June, compared to 10 in the previous Quarter. Various HR and management resources are reporting that retention and turnover experts predict voluntary job leaving will increase significantly in 2021 as employees resume job searches they put off for the past year, due to covid.

Leaving Reason	Permanent	Fixed Term	Total
Leaver - Dismissal - Misconduct	2	0	2
Leaver - Early Retirement	1	0	1
Leaver - Redundancy - Compulsory	1	0	1
Leaver - Redundancy - Voluntary	9	0	9
Leaver - Retirement	4	0	4
Leaver - Settlement Agreement	1	0	1
Leaver - Voluntary Resignation	22	5	27
Grand Total	40	5	45

The tables below show the above leavers by age band/service and whether they left voluntarily or not. Turnover was highest in age band up to 40 years.

Age Band	Involuntary	Voluntary	Total	Turnover
<40	1	17	18	2.74%
40-44	0	3	3	0.45%
45-49	1	3	4	0.61%

50-54	0	5	5	0.76%
55-59	1	6	7	1.06%
60-65	0	7	7	1.06%
66+	0	1	1	0.15%
Grand Total	3	42	45	6.85%

Service	Involuntary	Voluntary	Total	Turnover*
Chief Operating Officer	1	11	12	1.8%
CLT/Exec				0.3%
Support/Transformation	0	2	2	
Corporate Resources	0	2	2	0.3%
Digital & ICT Services	0	5	5	0.8%
Housing Strategy and Growth	0	1	1	0.2%
Leisure & Health	1	12	13	2%
Operations	1	9	10	1.5%
Grand Total	3	42	45	

In the last quarter, 13 completed Leaver questionnaires were received, representing a third of the overall leavers in that period (including involuntary leavers). The top rated response from leavers questionnaires about what they most liked about working for HDC (85% of the respondents to a free text question), was their colleagues that they worked with; with 7.5% positive about the pension and 7.5% positive about the Training and Development. In response to question about what they least liked about working for HDC, the responses can be grouped: Workload (5/13); Progression Opportunities and Pay (3/13); Communications (2/13).

1.7 TURNOVER

In the 12 months to 30 June 2021, 101 employees left the Council. As a proportion of the average number of permanent employees over this period, the overall annual turnover rate for employees is 15.6%, which is higher than previous quarter, but consistent with Q1 2020/21.

EELGA (East of England Local Government Association) has shared local benchmark data from other Local authorities across the region. Across the 19 Authorities (that participated) the average benchmark was 14.68%, however, when comparing the definition of Turnover and reducing the benchmark pool to those 8 authorities that take the same approach as HDC to calculating employee Turnover, the average across those 8 authorities is 15.02%.

Turnover rate includes fixed-term employees and all leavers (voluntary and involuntary).

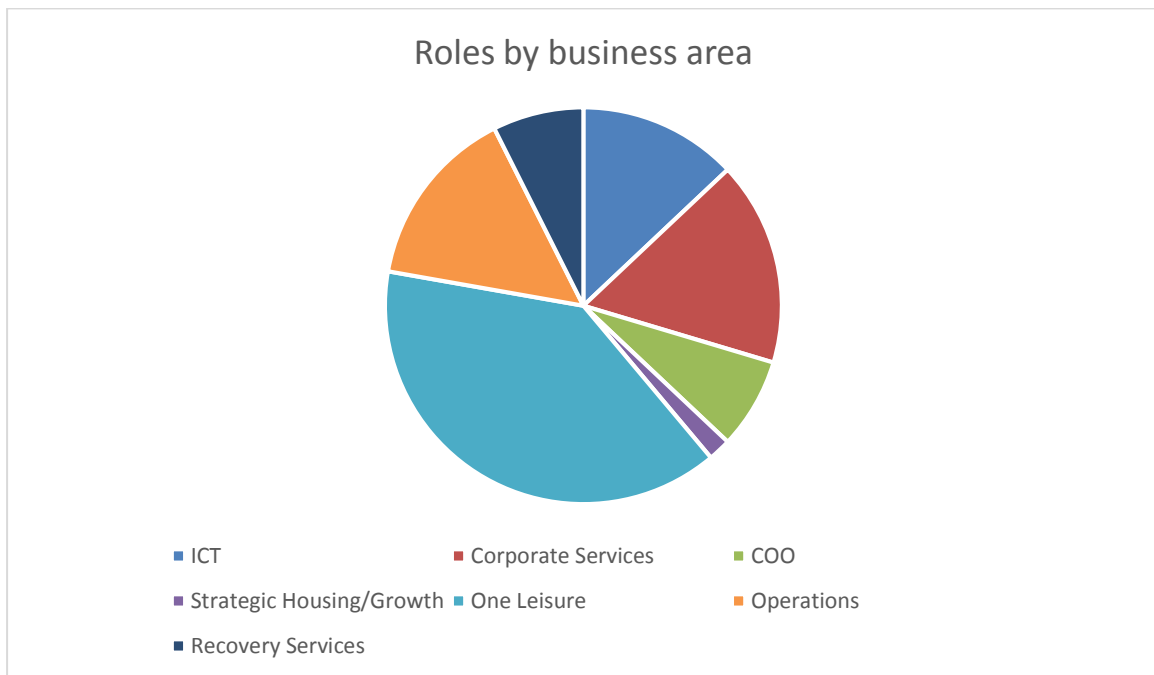
1.8 RECRUITMENT METRICS

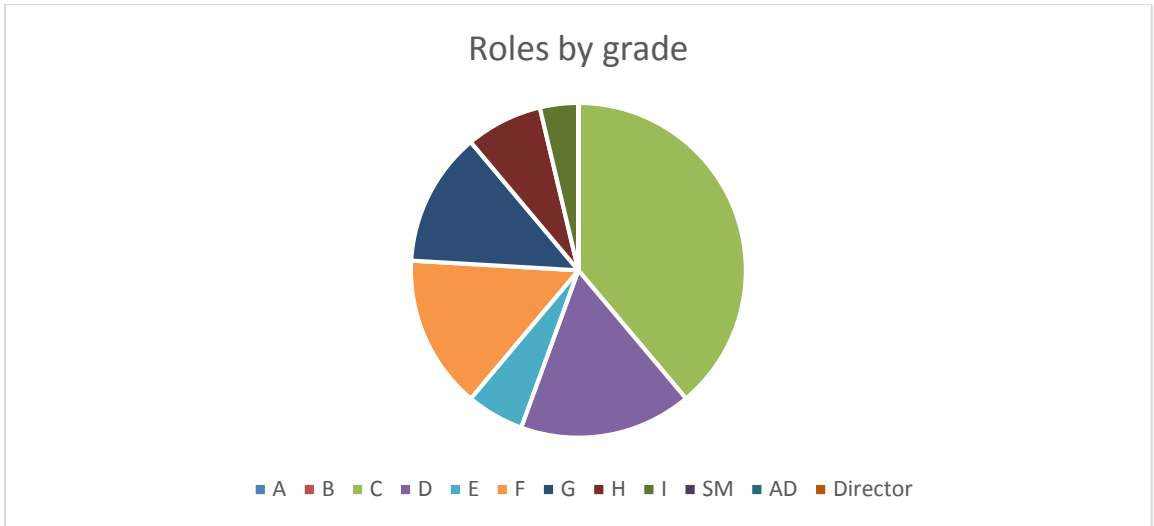
Metrics on Recruitment have only been included in the workforce report since Q2 2020/21, next workforce report we will be able to include annual trend data on some of these metrics.

Since last quarter we have seen recruitment activity (employed posts) increase by 25%. The increasing internal demand for candidates, matches the external position, the market is currently saturated with vacancies – work will be required to manage expectations of hiring managers on the volume of candidates expected and how we can improve the attraction and retention through employee value proposition.

Recruitment Metrics	Notes	Figures
Advertised Roles in Q1 April-June 2021	39 roles were advertised, with 54 roles recruited for (due to number of campaigns recruiting multiple posts – such as Refuse Loaders and Drivers; CCTV Monitoring Operators; One Leisure Team leaders and Grounds Maintenance Operatives)	39
Offers of employment made in Q1	Total Offers made in Q1 Broken down as follows:	50
	Permanent offers in Q1	27
	FTC/Temporary offers in Q1	9
	Variable offers in Q1	12
	Offers made (candidate withdrew Q1) Internal Auditor and CCTV Monitoring Operator	2
Roles still vacant that were advertised in Q1	Building Maintenance Assistant – offered but not filled (due to competitive offer); role changed into Building Maintenance Officer then successfully recruited. Various Planning positions (contractor and perm)	
Advertised Roles per business area	ICT	7
	Corporate Services (HR, Finance, Facilities, Dem Services)	9
	COO (Development/Planning, Community, Revs & Bens)	4
	Strategic Housing & Growth	1
	One Leisure	21
	Recovery Services (Car parking; Countryside, Parks & Open Spaces)	4
	Operations (Waste, CCTV, Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleaning)	8
Grade of roles advertised	A	0

	B C D E F G H I SM AD Director	0 21 9 3 8 7 4 2 0 0 0
Most popular source of recruitment - candidate shortlisted for interview	1. HDC website 2. Indeed 3. Recruitment Agency	
Most Popular source of recruitment - candidate offered	1. Internal 2. HDC website 3. Recruitment Agency	
Average time from Date Job Advertised to closing date	Calendar Days. Note this may not be the full days vacant on establishment but is the date when hiring manager starts recruitment activity.	18
Average time from Date Job Advertised to shortlisting completed		20
Average time from Date Job Advertised to offer		36
Average time from Date Job Advertised to employment start date		62





2.0 SICKNESS ABSENCE

Definition: Long term sickness is classified as a continuous period of absence of 28 or more calendar days. All other periods of absence are defined as **short term**.

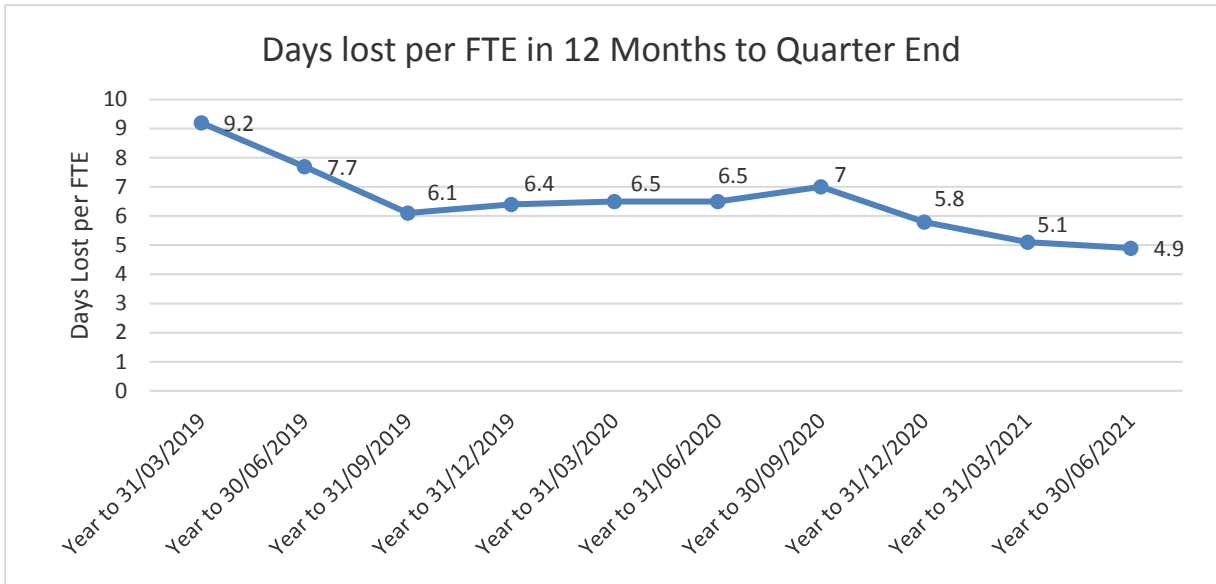
The absence data is calculated per full-time equivalent (FTE) as per the guidelines set out in the previous Best Value Performance Indicators (former statutory dataset) for sickness to account for adjustments in working hours.

Trigger points for management action under HDC policy are as follows:

- 3 or more periods of absence in a rolling 3-month period
- 6 or more periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period
- 8 working days or more in a rolling 12-month period
- Long term absence of 28 calendar days or more
- Pattern of absence (e.g. regular Friday and/or Monday; repeated absences linked to holidays)

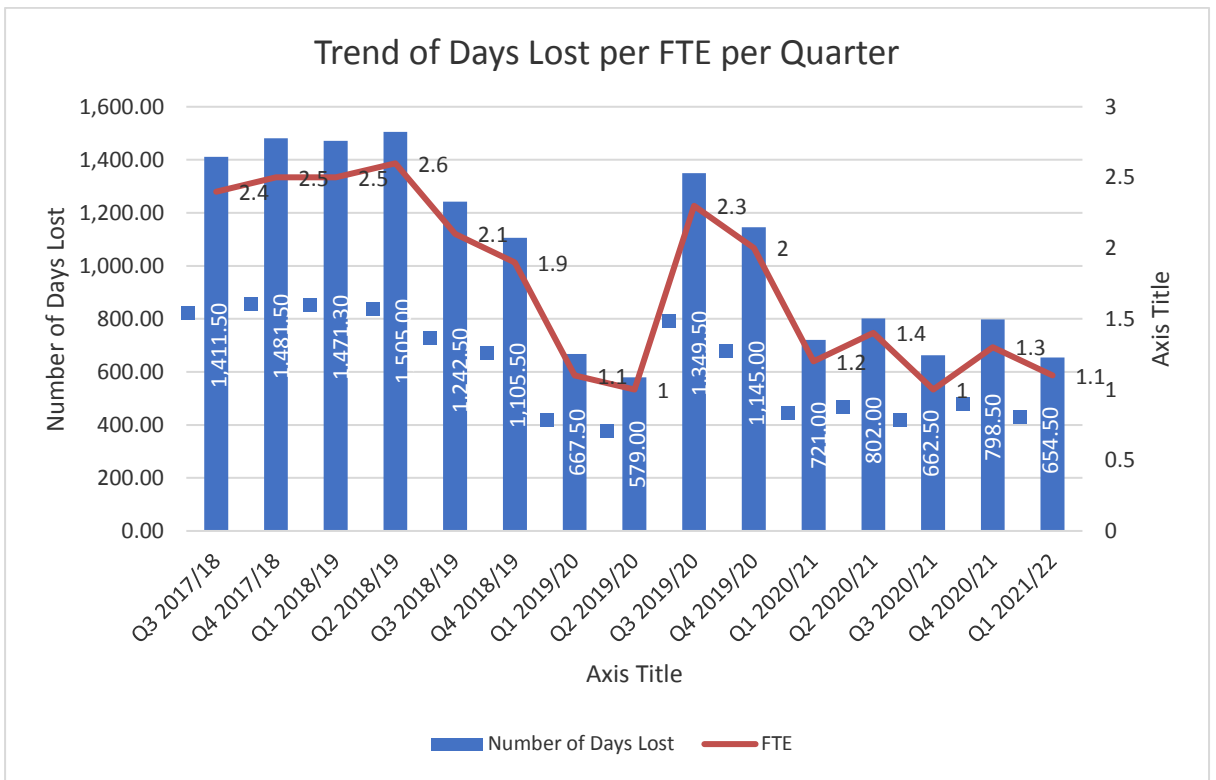
2.1 TREND OF WORKING DAYS LOST ACROSS HDC OVER ROLLING 12 MONTH PERIODS

The graph shows the trend in sickness absence per FTE employee over a rolling 12-month period to the end of each Quarter since June 2019. It shows that sickness absence to the end of Quarter One has decreased, to **4.9** days per FTE. This remains low compared to results over recent years. It should be noted that absences due to Covid are not included in this data.



2.2 TREND OF WORKING DAYS LOST ACROSS HDC BY QUARTER

The total number of working days lost in Quarter One (654.5) is lower than in the previous Quarter; as is the days lost per FTE (1.1) for sickness absence. Covid sickness absences are included within sickness absences (however, those Isolating unable to work from home or shielding and unable to work from home are not included).



2.3 REASONS FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

Please see sickness reporting by category below: -

Absence Reason	Quarter One 2021/2022		
	Days Lost	Employees	%
3rd party accidents	65	1	9.9
Asthma chest respiratory heart cardiac circulatory	40	4	6.1
Benign and malignant tumours or cancers	47	2	7.1
Burns poisoning frostbite hypothermia	2	1	0.3
Cold/Cough/Influenza including eye, ear, nose and throat problems	53.5	19	8.1
Covid-19	21	12	3.2
Endocrine / glandular - diabetes thyroid metabolic	2	1	0.3
Gastrointestinal - abdominal pain vomiting diarrhoea gastroenteritis	72.5	17	11.0
Genito urinary and gynaecological	20	2	3.0
Headache migraine dental oral	23	12	3.5
Injury fracture	42.5	4	6.49
Musculoskeletal problems inc back and neck	134	9	20.0
Pregnancy related	25	2	3.8
Stress Anxiety Depression	107	10	16.4

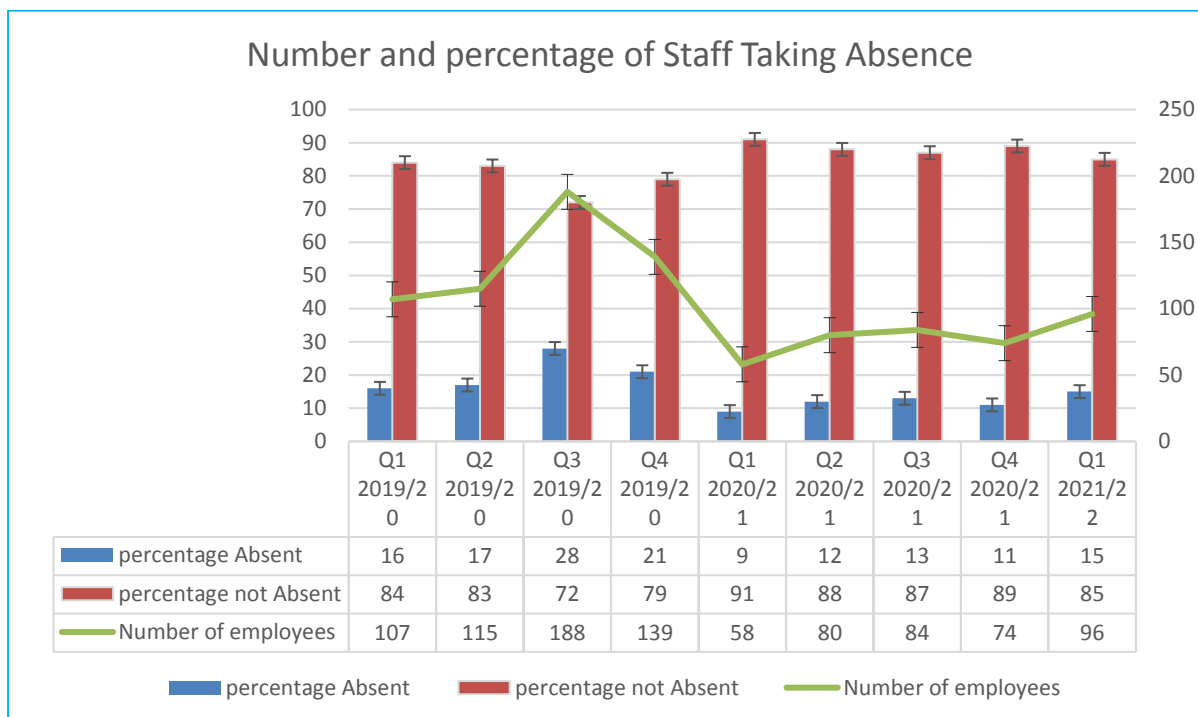
Though working days overall have reduced since Q4, there has been increases in working days lost by each category, with the exception of Cancer, Musculoskeletal and Fractures/Injury which have all increased since last quarter.

The highest two reporting absence trends over Q1, continue to be Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Musculoskeletal. However, we have seen a reduction (by almost a 1/3) in overall working days lost related to Stress, compared to Q4. We continue to provide support to employees through Mental Health First Aiders, Counselling services and other wellbeing approaches. Our H&S Manager has just procured, an online DSE tool which is targeted at 'hybrid working practices', this will provide more targeted interventions to match our current and new ways of working.

Reason for Stress related Absence	No of Days Absence	% of Days Absence	No of People
Personal Reasons	75	70%	6
Work Related	14	13%	1
Both Work and Personal Reasons	18	17%	3
Total	107		10

2.4 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WITH ANY DAYS OF SICKNESS ABSENCE IN QUARTER

96 employees were absent due to sickness in Quarter One which is 15% of all those employed during the period (excluding those with variable/casual posts only).



2.5 LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN

Quarter	Employees taking long-term sick leave	Total days of long-term sickness	% of total absence long-term
Q4 2018/19	17 (10% of those sick)	503	45%
Q1 2019/20	13 (12%)	391.5	55%
Q2 2019/20	12 (10%)	310	50%
Q3 2019/20	26 (14%)	833	59%
Q4 2019/20	28 (20%)	724.1	63%
Q1 2020/21	18 (31%)	551.4	76%
Q2 2020/21	15 (19%)	517.3	65%
Q3 2020/21	15 (18%)	412	62%
Q4 2020/21	15 (18%)	541	68%
Q1 2021/22	6 (6%)	259	40%

Days lost due to long-term sickness has dropped when compared to the previous Quarter and is around half of all days lost in Quarter One.

2.6 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING BY SERVICE

The table below shows that sickness has decreased in all but 3 of the services compared to the previous Quarter. The number of days recorded for the previous Quarter are listed in brackets in the second column.

Service	Total days sick		Employees absent in Quarter
Chief Operating Officer	222.5 (239.5)	↓	35
CLT/Exec Support/Transformation	0 (2)	↓	0
Corporate Resources	52 (74)	↓	5
Digital & ICT Services	75 (44)	↑	13
Growth	1 (0)	↑	1
Leisure and Health	40 (24)	↑	10
Operations	264 (415)	↓	32
OVERALL	645.5 (798.5)	↓	96 (15% of all HDC employees)

Service	Total days sick – short-term		Employees absent in Quarter – short-term sickness
Chief Operating Officer	190.5 (90.5)	↑	34
CLT/Exec Support/Transformation	0 (2)	↓	0
Corporate Resources	9 (11)	↓	4
Digital & ICT Services	41 (44)	↓	12
Growth	1 (0)	↑	1
Leisure and Health	40 (0)	↑	10
Operations	114 (110)	↑	29
OVERALL	395.5 (257.5)	↑	90 (13.7% of all HDC employees)

Service	Total days sick – long-term		Employees absent in Quarter – long-term sickness
Chief Operating Officer	32 (149)	↓	1
CLT/Exec Support/Transformation	0 (0)	↓	0
Corporate Resources	43 (63)	↓	1
Digital & ICT Services	34 (0)	↑	1
Growth	0 (0)	↓	0
Leisure and Health	0 (24)	↓	0
Operations	150 (305)	↓	3
OVERALL	259 (541)	↓	6 (0.91% of all HDC employees)

Note: Numbers of employees shown as absent in the short-term and long-term tables do not necessarily add up to totals shown in the first table because some individuals had both long-term and short-term absences.

2.7 LONG TERM/SHORT TERM ABSENCE TRENDS

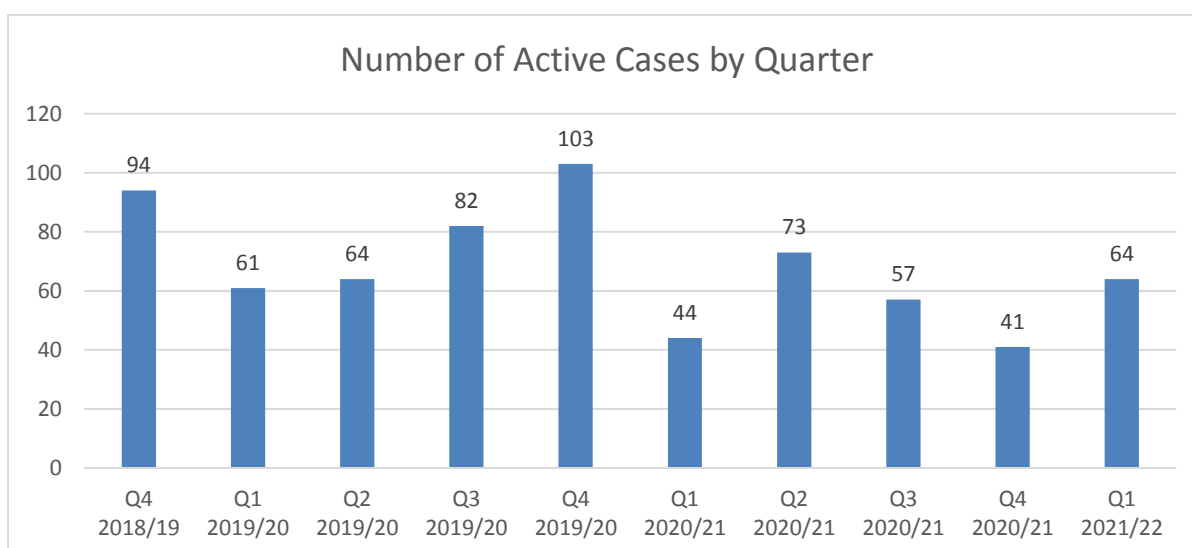
This Table shows the increase in this quarter to short term sickness absences compared to Long term sickness Absences. We have now gone live with new HR system, and the rollout included training and reminder on recording sickness absences; as well as more accurate reporting tool. HR and managers continue to monitor absences and short-term absences are more likely to hit triggers through absence management process.

Quarter	Total Working days lost (Short term sickness)	Total working days lost (Long term sickness)
Q1 2020/21	170	551
Q2 2020/21	285	517
Q3 2020/21	250.5	412
Q4 2020/21	257.5	541
Q1 2021/22	395.5	259

3.0 HR CASELOAD

The HR Team's caseload is recorded to provide an indicator of the type of HR issues that the organisation has been dealing with over time.

3.1 BREAKDOWN OF HR CASES BY TYPE FOR THE QUARTER



During Quarter One, there were 64 cases in progress, of which 28 (44%) were dealt with under formal procedures. The total was higher than in the previous Quarter, with cases for the previous Quarter also shown below for comparison purposes.

Type of Case	Informal Cases	Formal Cases	Total	Previous Quarter
Appeals	0	1	1	0
Capability – Long Term Sickness	6	1	7	11
Capability – Short Term Sickness	19	9	28	16
Capability – Performance	2	1	3	2
Consultations (including TUPE)	1	0	1	2
Bullying and Harassment (Dignity at Work)	3	3	6	3
Disciplinary	4	5	9	4
Employment Tribunals	0	2	2	0
Grievance	1	2	3	2
Probation	0	2	2	0
Subject Access Request	0	2	2	0
Other	0	0	0	1
Total	36	28	64	41

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Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Use of Consultants, Hired Staff and Temporary Staff

Meeting/Date: Employment Committee 15 September 2021

Executive Portfolio: Strategic Finance: Councillor J A Gray

Report by: Chief Finance Officer

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Members requested this annual report in order to monitor the Council's use of interim staff (consultants and temporary staff).

Capital

During 2020/21, consultants have continued to be employed to provide technical and professional advice in respect of the Commercial Investment Strategy, Local Plans, future high street funding and development of market town prospectus for growth. There were also costs for temporary staff which have been employed on capital projects in the year.

Revenue

Overall, there was a net decrease of £131k in the cost of interim staff in 2020/21 when compared to 2019/20. There is a continued use of interim staff to meet vacancies across the Council, and to provide expert advice and interim capacity whilst the Council follows the current transformation programme, development of the Local Plans and other business efficiency improvements.

All costs relating to interim staff have been met from within current resources (existing budgets or use of earmarked reserves) and the use of such staff has given the Council the flexibility and short-term capacity to undertake its transformation programme.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to consider the report and comment as they consider necessary.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise of the use of consultants and temporary staff during the 2020/21 financial year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2014 the Employment Panel approved guidance notes for managers regarding the use of consultants and temporary staff.
- 2.2 The use of interim staff is an essential requirement in the day-to-day management of the Council's business. However, there use is limited to a range of specific purposes i.e., to meet a specialist skills gap where a full-time resource would not award the Council value for money, to cover for unplanned gaps in staffing or to meet short-term peaks in workload. The Council's accepted definitions for consultants and temporary staff is shown below:

Consultants

Individuals contracted to the Council as a sole trader or employees of a contractor to provide skills and knowledge the Council lacks. The contract terminates after a defined period of event (e.g., delivery of a report of advice).

Temporary Staff

Individuals contracted to the Council as employees of an agency or contractor to provide additional capacity. They may be providing short term cover for staff absences (e.g., refuse operatives) or medium-term cover (e.g., cover for vacant posts while permanent recruitment completes). The supplier is paid by invoice.

3. EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The analysis shown below is split between capital and revenue. The reason for this distinction is that interim staff employed for capital development projects are incidental to the project and can be financed from capital resources i.e., the sale of assets.

Capital

- 3.2 During 2020/21, there was a net decrease of £306k in the cost of interim staff compared to 2019/20, a summary is shown below, and the detailed analysis is shown in **Appendix 1**.

Capital Comparison of consultants and temporary staff 2019/20 and 2020/21			
	Consultants	Temporary	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000
2020/21	125	99	224
2019/20	515	15	530
(Decrease)/Increase	(390)	84	(306)

Revenue

- 3.3 During 2020/21, there was a net decrease of £131k in the cost of interim staff compared to 2019/20, a summary is shown below, and the detailed analysis is shown in **Appendix 2**.

Revenue Comparison of consultants and temporary staff 2019/20 and 2020/21			
	Consultants	Temporary	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000
2020/21	932	1,627	2,559
2019/20	1,020	1,670	2,690
(Decrease)	(88)	(43)	(131)

4. KEY IMPACTS

- 4.1 The use of interim staff assists the Council in meeting services needs and objectives. If such resources are not used from time-to-time, then it is very likely that service delivery and priorities would be impacted, and the process of transformation would take considerably longer.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Regarding capital, as the Commercial Investment Strategy matures there will be incidental costs relating to both the acquisition, and in time, disposal of assets. Also, over the life of a capital asset it is necessary for the Council to undertake some enhancement activity to ensure that such assets maintain their capital value, can continue to meet agreed lease standards and health & safety obligations.
- 6.3 New regulations came into force on 6 April 2017 changing the responsibility for assessing the tax status of consultants, interims, and temporary staff. If directly engaged (not through an agency), the Council must determine whether the individual is acting as if a member of staff and if appropriate, collect National Insurance (NI) contributions and tax. The determination, based on HMRC guidance, considers a number of factors including duration, if a post holder, ability to substitute, etc. Failure to collect the correct tax and NI risks incurring fines, interest charges and back tax. The Management Team have been briefed and provided with links to the HMRC guidance and the HMRC online assessment tool. The Heads of Service have been tasked with identifying any consultants, interims and temporary staff that fall within the scope of the regulations and carrying out the appropriate assessment.

7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

- Appendix 1 - consultants and temporary staff – capital expenditure
- Appendix 2 - consultants and temporary staff – revenue expenditure

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

CONTACT OFFICER

Claire Edwards / Eric Symons
Chief Finance Officer
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CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Comments on expenditure in excess of £10,000 are provided.

CONSULTANTS CAPITAL EXPENDITURE			
Head of Service	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	
COO	43	9	
Leisure & Health	39	23	Fees related to St Ives changing rooms project.
Operations	2	19	Fees relating to Godmanchester Mill weir improvements (£14k) plus small spends across a number of other projects.
Resources	431	70	Project Management for Alms Close development.
Transformation	0	4	
TOTAL	515	125	

TEMPORARY STAFF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE			
Head of Service	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	
Resources	15	3	Additional support in relation to sale of Bridge Place Car Park
		56	Project management costs relating to the Alms Close
		28	Project management costs relating to the Oak Tree Car Park redevelopment
		12	Project management costs relating to the Oak Tree Centre
TOTAL	15	99	

REVENUE EXPENDITURE

Comments on expenditure in excess of £10,000 are provided.

CONSULTANTS REVENUE EXPENDITURE				
Head of Service	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	Expenditure for 2020/21 includes	Justification for Spend
COO	147	135	£59k in support of loss of senior member of staff; £20k for advice for planning application appeal; £56k support of licensing	Specialist advice not within establishment.
Corporate Leadership Team	7	0		
Housing	27	90	£75k in support of housing strategy; £15k in support of development of housing options	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment. Income generating
ICT Shared Services	123	169	£71k in support of IDOX application; £23k in support of ESRI application; £20k in support of Phoenix application; £15k in support of Northgate application; £12k in support of Bramble Hub application; £7k in support of Civica application; £21k in support of other areas	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment.
Leisure & Health	48	12	In support of Threadneedle application.	Specialist advice not within establishment.
Operations	14	168	£87k in support of media campaigns; £20k in support of trade waste market strategy; £37k in support of parks planning proposals and feasibility studies; £24k in support of other areas.	Specialist advice not within establishment.
Planning Policy	427	112	£12k in support of development of Market Town prospectuses for growth; £23k in support of review of HDC community infrastructure levy; £65k in support St Neots future funding of the highstreets bid; £24k in support of other areas.	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment.
Programmes	19	9		

Resources	180	205	£79k in support of Covid-19 initiatives; £13k in support of advice on proposed investment in energy from waste; £39k in support of estates services; £53k in support of treasury, valuations and pension fund administration; £25k in support of other areas.	Specialist knowledge not available within the establishment and that is required for financial stewardship and audit.
Transformation	28	32	In support of ongoing transformation projects	Creation of business efficiencies
TOTAL	1,020	932		

TEMPORARY STAFF REVENUE EXPENDITURE				
Head of Service	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	Expenditure for 2020/21 includes	Justification for Spend
COO	181	247	Temporary staff	To cover vacancies, particularly in Development Management where, due to Covid, temporary staff were retained longer than anticipated, and to help with Universal Credit caseload migration in Housing Benefits.
Growth	0	138	Temporary staff	Market town programme manager costs.
Housing	5	1		
Leisure & Health	10	0		
Operations	555	334	Use of agency staff to cover basic collection rounds.	Requirements to back fill vacancies and holidays with agency staff to maintain service delivery.
Resources	548	740	Covid-19 cover (£251k) Attempts to fill the vacant Estates Management posts have failed and staff are required to fill the income generating portfolio of property (£334k). Security costs at Pathfinder House (£87k)	Cost of temporary staff employed as a direct result of Covid-19. Covering vacant posts which should be income generating. Ongoing costs.
ICT Shared Services	367	167	Hire of specialist staff to assist with software and other implementations	To cover vacancies and one-off projects. Offset by increased charge to partners.
Transformation	4	0		
TOTAL	1,670	1,627		

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Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Equality Position

Meeting/Date: Employment Panel 15/09/21

Executive Portfolio: Councillor David Keane Executive Councillor for Corporate Services

Report by: Jo Lancaster

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's current position with regards to having due regard to Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Recommendation(s):

The Panel is invited to comment on the Equality Position Paper and approve the proportionate and Huntingdonshire focused response to fulfilling our statutory obligations around Equality.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the Council's position with regards to equalities and recommend an option to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council needs to demonstrate due regard to Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED entails having due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance Equality of Opportunity
 - Foster good relations

Specific duties were introduced in June 2011, to assist public authorities in the better performance of the PSED. Specific Duties mean that the Council will need to publish:

- Equality objectives, at least every four years
- Information to demonstrate their compliance with the equality duty, at least annually.

The latter will need to include, in particular, information relating to our employees and others affected by Council policies and practices such as service users.

- 2.2 Equalities was a responsibility of the Corporate Team, when this team disbanded around October 2019, partial responsibilities for equalities and workforce went to HR, leaving a gap around corporate responsibility for updating corporate strategy/policy.
- 2.3 The last Corporate Equalities Report was Jan 2016 (for 2015) which contained equality objectives for 2015/19. Other more recent activities include an HR Equality Policy, approved by Members in 2018 and a report on Gender Pay Gap, published in 2021 which has been published annually, except for 2020 when need to publish was suspended due to Covid. To ensure compliance with PSED, the Council will need to provide an annual equality workforce monitoring report i.e. breakdown of staff by protected characteristics. Workforce data is already reported quarterly (age/pay, age/leavers, gender/pay) moving forward this will be amended to include where possible, the other protected characteristics.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 We are currently working on refreshing our approach to equalities, our equality objectives will need to show how HDC will meet the aims of the General and Specific Equality Duty during the period 2021-24.
- 3.2 A number of options are available to us:
- **Option 1** - Create a separate four-year Equality Scheme
 - **Option 2** – Link our equality objectives to our corporate plan
 - **Option 3** – Adopt a short position statement with a small number of equality objectives

- 3.3 There is no obligation to have a separate and distinct equality policy as long as the Council has identified equality objectives and can demonstrate compliance with the other specific duties. It is recommended that the Council adopts Option 2. This would be the more proportionate and efficient approach as our Corporate Plan already provides a clear direction for what we are doing and why we are doing it. It sets out what we aim to achieve in addition to the provision of core statutory services and also provides the framework for evaluating the council's performance.
- 3.4 An assessment has been undertaken of approaches adopted by our 'nearest neighbours'. Some authorities have a separate Equality Scheme; many have a small number of broad equality objectives and many link their equality objectives to actions within their Corporate Plan.
- 3.5 The Council is already demonstrating its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in our Corporate Plan, particularly through the **People, Place and Becoming a more customer focused organisation** priorities. However, it is not currently reporting annually on progress with specific equality objectives/actions.
- 3.6 It is recommended that HR sponsor equality objectives and manage activities moving forward.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to demonstrate compliance with the PSED, the adoption of Option 2 with an annual report on progress to senior officers and Members ensures the Council is complying with its statutory duties. Although a pragmatic and proportionate approach, it will require resources to establish, with an ongoing resource to monitor and report on performance data.
- 4.2 This refresh is an opportunity to establish Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) and assurance process which will provide the framework moving forward to ensure our decision-making process are fair and do not create any unnecessary barriers.
- 4.2 The Equality & Human Rights Commission is responsible for regulating the PSED, if a public authority does not publish equality information as required by the specific duty regulations, they risk being subject to legal challenge (including enforcement action by the Commission), as well as potential damage to reputation.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

[See Corporate Plan](#)

- 5.1 Equalities links to the following Strategic Priorities within the Corporate Plan – People, Place and Becoming a more Customer Focused Organisation.

6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 6.1 The Council should take a proportionate and effective response to statutory and business requirements. Members are invited to note the Equality Position Paper and endorse the recommended approach.

7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 Proposed action plan

CONTACT OFFICER

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Appendix 1

Proposed Equalities Action Plan 2021/25

Priority Actions
People
Support people to improve their health and well-being (7 priority actions for 20/21)
Develop a flexible and skilled local workforce (1 key action for 20/21)
Develop stronger and more resilient communities to enable people to help themselves (4 priority actions for 20/21)
Place
Create, protect, and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment (<i>identify priority actions that have direct equality links for 21/25</i>)
Accelerate business growth and investment (<i>identify priority actions that have direct equality links for 21/25</i>)
Support development of infrastructure to enable growth (<i>identify priority actions that have direct equality links for 21/25</i>)
Improve the supply of new and affordable housing, jobs, and community facilities to meet current and future need (<i>identify priority actions that have direct equality links for 21/25</i>)
Becoming a more Customer Focused Organisation
Develop our understanding of customer and resident needs and demands
Other
Covid Recovery work (to be identified)
Re-establish EIAs and assurance process
Review process for collection of data e.g. equality monitoring (service users, consultation & engagement etc)
Leadership commitment to champion equality issues (internally & externally)
Review of council policies to ensure equality embedded within them (e.g. Code of Conduct, Pay Processes, HR policies, Safeguarding, Whistleblowing etc)

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