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Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Employment Report

Quarterly Update

November 2012

COMT   **19th November 2012**

EMPLOYMENT PANEL   **28th November 2012**

EMPLOYMENT REPORT

REPORT BY HR BUSINESS PARTNER (LGSS)

1.   INTRODUCTION

Employment Panel have requested regular updates on HR matters impacting on the performance of the organisation. This report contains information such as staffing levels and sickness absence and will update Members on the latest position and trends.

2.   Employee Numbers

At 30th September 2012, Huntingdonshire District Council had 709 contracted employees (excluding those employed on a variable and casual hours basis). These employees worked in jobs equivalent to 636 full-time posts. The table and graph below show how the number of employees and the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees has changed over recent years.

Note: unless otherwise stated, the figures contained in this report relate to contracted employees only and exclude those employed on a variable or casual hours basis.

2.1   Profile of employee numbers

Date	Total Employees	Total FTEs	Temporary	% Temp Staff
31 March 2005	771	679	79	12%
31 March 2006	775	691	81	12%
31 March 2007	787	697	74	11%
31 March 2008	814	722	66	9%
31 March 2009	825	733	58	8%
31 March 2010	821	731	59	8%
31 March 2011	794	713	59	8%
31 March 2012	730	655	31	5%
30 June 2012	726*	652	39.5	6.4%
30 September 2012	709	636	40	6.3%

The number of employees dipped at the end of Q2 but this is largely due to a number of ongoing recruitment campaigns so it is expected that the numbers will increase again in the next quarter once those people are in post.

At 30th September June 2012, the proportion of FTEs on temporary contracts had decreased slightly to 6.3%. There has been a general downward trend in recent years, both as a result of long-standing temporary employees moving to permanent posts and a reduction in fixed-term posts financed through external funding. However, the usage of temporary staff provides a degree of flexibility within the workforce, particularly where there may be a need to reduce salary costs.

2.2 Graph showing trend in employee numbers
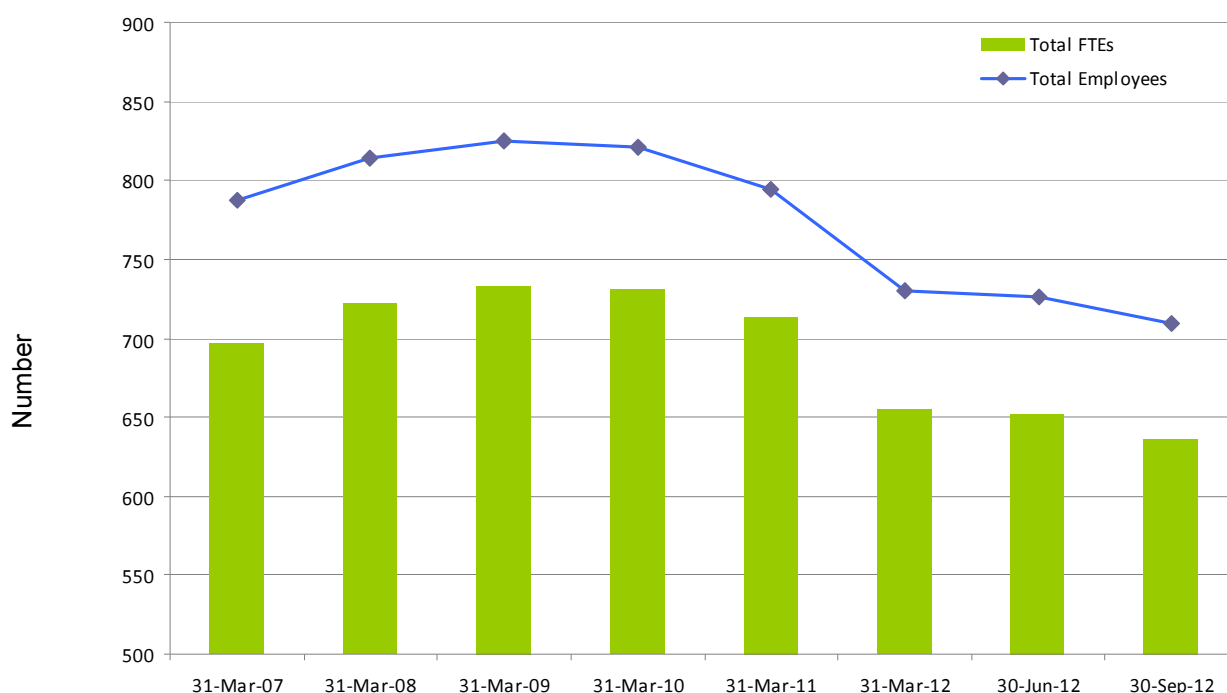
The graph above shows that staffing levels have remained stable since the start of the financial year, with a slight decrease in the last two quarters.

3.0 Salary costs – contracted employees only

The figures in the following table include the cost of Employer's National Insurance contributions and Local Government Pension Scheme costs.

Month	Monthly salary cost	Contracted staff at end of month
January 2011	£2,027,621	814
August 2011	£1,880,703	745
September 2011	£1,804,925	730
October 2011	£1,805,049	741
November 2011	£1,798,997	741

December 2011	£1,756,844	740
January 2012	£1,760,770	734
February 2012	£1,751,238	734
March 2012	£1,727,819	730
April 2012	£1,769,107.63	729
May 2012	£1,739,188.73	719
June 2012*	£1,810,336.17	726
September 2012	£1,691,895.90	709

NB The salary figure for June included £95k for the non consolidated payments which were made in lieu of increments this year.

As previously reported, salary costs fell significantly following the Voluntary Release Scheme in 2011. Staffing numbers and salary costs have remained fairly stable in 2012.

4.0 Turnover/Leavers

The trend in number of permanent employees leaving the Council, and the reasons for leaving are shown below.

4.1 Quarter 2 Leaving Reasons

During Q2 23 people left the organisation. The reasons are set out below. For comparator purposes, the number of leavers in the last quarter was 24.

Reason	Number	Team
Resignation	1	One Leisure Sawtry
	3	One Leisure Huntingdon
	1	One Leisure St Neots
	1	One Leisure St Ives
	1	Licensing
	2	Vehicle Fitters
	1	Revenues
	1	IMD Development
	1	Building Control
	1	Operations Division Admin
	1	Customer Services – Call Centre
	1	Accountancy
	1	Solicitors and Legal
	1	Facilities and Admin
Retirement age 65 or over	1	Facilities and Administration
	1	One Leisure St Ives
	1	Car Parks and Markets
Retirement ceasing on or after 60 but before 65	1	Refuse and Recycling
Redundancy	1	Grounds Maintenance
Ill Health Retirement	1	Building Control

5.0   Retention of new starters

The percentage of new permanent starters still employed at the Council after 12 and 24 months is an indicator of the success of our recruitment processes, and also on HDC as an employer. We aim to have a high level of new starters still employed after one or two years.

Starting Period	New starters	% still employed after 12 months	% still employed after 24 months
Jan-March 2010	6	100%	83%
April-June 2010	4	75%	75%
July-Sept 2010	10	90%	90%
Oct-Dec 2010	2	100%	N/a
Jan-March 2011	1	100%	N/a
April-June 2011	1	100%	N/a
July-Sept 2011	11	100%	N/a
Oct-Dec 2011	13	N/a	N/a
Jan-March 2012	7	N/a	N/a
April – June 2012	4	N/a	N/a
July – Sept 2012	5	N/a	N/a

Temporary employees have not been included here as they are employed on short-term contracts without any expectation they will remain with the Council after the end of their term. Some temporary employees move to permanent posts, some leave when their term ends and others leave early as an alternative job is found before their employment at the Council is due to finish. Those moving on to permanent contracts from similar temporary or variable/casual roles have also not been counted.

Retention rates continue to be high and a positive indicator.

6.0   HR caseload

The HR team's caseload has been recorded since April 2010 as it provides an indicator of the type of HR issues that the organisation is dealing with at any point in time. The types of case recorded typically are:

- Disciplinary cases
- Capability - Long-Term Sickness / Short-Term Sickness
- Capability - Performance
- Dignity at Work
- Grievances
- Sanctionable Pay Appeals
- Employment Tribunals

6.1   Live HR Caseload by Month
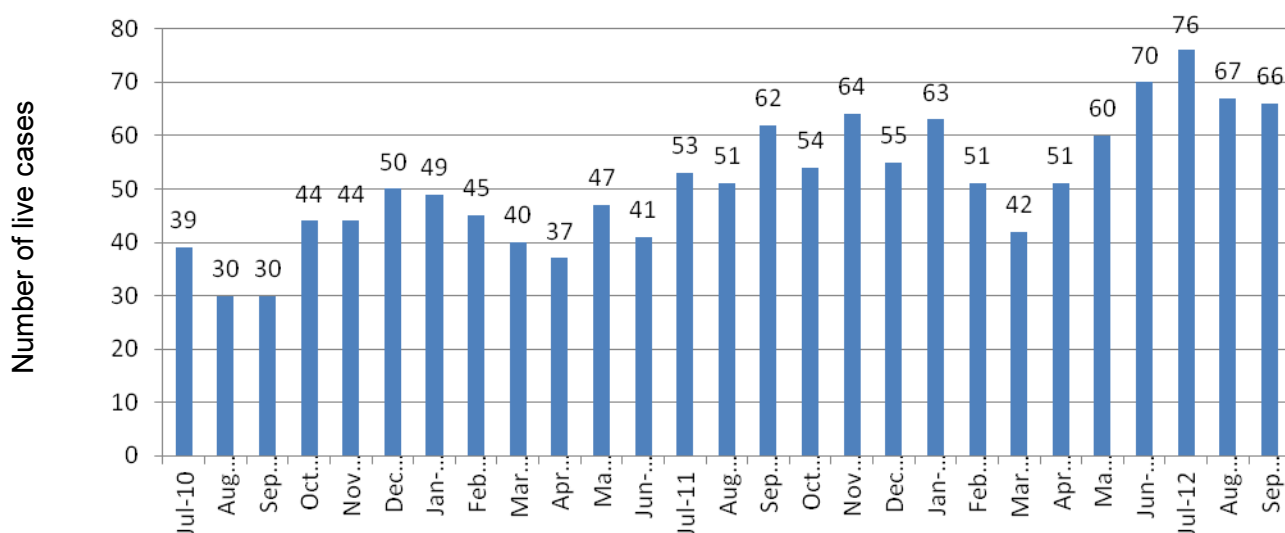
6.2   Breakdown of HR cases by type

	July 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012
Disciplinary	6	5	6
Capability – long-term sickness	12	11	13
Capability – short-term sickness	41	35	35
Capability – performance	5	4	3
Dignity at work	1	1	0
Grievance	5	6	6
Sanctionable pay appeal	0	0	0
Maternity	0	2	0
Employment Tribunal	2	2	0
Consultations	4	3	3
Total cases	**76**	**67**	**66**

The majority of cases continue to involve capability issues related to either long-term or short-term sickness absence. During the last quarter 62 people met the trigger points for either long term or short term sickness.

The trigger points are as follows:

- 3 or more periods of absence equating to 8 working days or more in a rolling 3 month period

- 5 plus periods of absence equating to 10 working days or more in a rolling 12 month period

- patterns of absence (e.g. regular Friday and/or Monday; repeated absences linked to holidays).

During the 3 month period there were 91 cases in progress (the numbers above show totals which include duplicates as the cases may have been live across more than one month). Of these 91 cases 66 were at the informal stage and the remaining 25 were dealt with under the formal procedures.

7.0   Sickness absence reporting

The graph below shows the average days sickness absence per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee for the twelve months previous to each date.   It shows that sickness absence has increased slightly from 8.5 days in the last quarter to 8.6 days per person at the end of Q2.

7.1   Trend of days lost across HDC

Days sickness taken per FTE
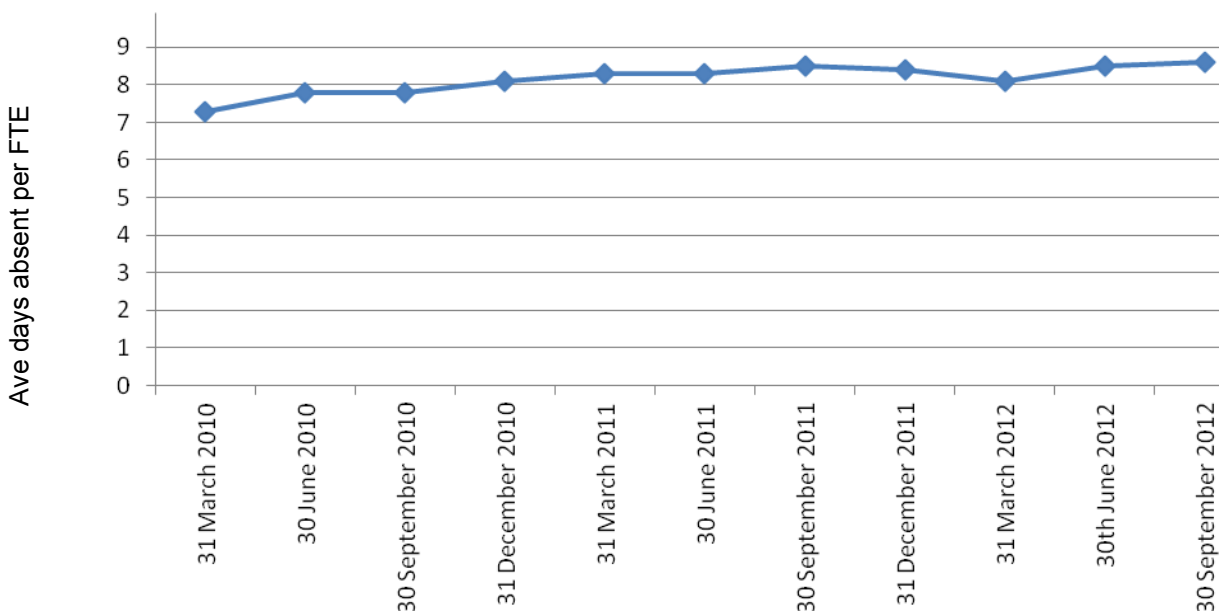
7.2   Summary of days lost per quarter:

	Total days sick	FTE average	Days/FTE
July-September 2009	1,300	731.8	1.8
October-December 2009	1,596	731.3	2.2
January-March 2010	1,452	729	2.0
April-June 2010	1,381	730.8	1.9
July-September 2010	1,275	731.6	1.7
October-December 2010	1,729	724.5	2.4
January-March 2011	1,621	716.1	2.3
April-June 2011	1,197	682.3	1.8
July-September 2011	1,354	662.5	2.0
October-December 2011	1,661	660	2.5
January-March 2012	1297	657	1.9
April 2012 – June 2012	1266	653	1.9
July-September 2012	1359	644	2.1

Note: figures do not sum to annual totals exactly due to rounding.

The number of days absence per FTE in the latest quarter was slightly higher than for the previous quarter but is consistent with the same period last year.

7.3   Reasons for Absence

Sickness reason given:	July-September 2011			July-September 2012		
	Employees	Days	%	Employees	Days	%
Stress, depression, mental health, fatigue	18	227	17%	24	360	26%
Non disclosed	53	360	27%	33	247.5	18%
Stomach, liver, kidney & digestion	57	131	10%	54	184.5	14%
Other musculo-skeletal problems	10	138	10%	16	179.5	13%
Chest & respiratory; chest infections	9	43	3%	15	80	6%
Infections; to include colds & flu	47	102	8%	35	83.5	6%
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental	31	132	10%	23	63.5	5%
Neurological; inc headaches & migraines	19	22	2%	27	63	5%
Back & neck problems	16	98	7%	12	42	3%
Heart, blood pressure & circulation	3	66	5%	4	40	3%
Genito-urinary and menstrual problems	9	15	1%	2	15	1%
Pregnancy related	3	20	1%	0	0	0%

Sickness categorised as 'Other' remains a high cause of absence. This has been addressed recently by the HR Team who have been challenging managers where the sickness returns have any absence listed as other. Going forward these returns will no longer be accepted

unless there is a reason which genuinely does not fit within the categories used. It is expected that the impact of this will be seen in future reporting periods.

The days lost due to stress continues to be a concern and remains a key area of focus for the HR Team.

Typically, stress related absence tends to be as a result of personal rather than work related factors. The category listed in the table above covers stress and depression. Of these days, 278 were specifically attributed to stress and the breakdown is shown below:

Work related stress	41	15%
Reported as work & personal related stress	123	44%
Personal reasons for the stress	114	41%
Total	278	100%

In addition to the existing supportive measure in place and reported on in the last quarter, LGSS have recently organised free Money Advice Sessions for staff to assist HDC employees. These have been well attended and further sessions are being arranged.

7.4   Number of employees taking any days of sickness absence in quarter:

	Number of contracted staff employed in quarter	Employees taking any sick leave in quarter
April-June 2010	834	244 (29%)
July-September 2010	843	248 (29%)
October-December 2010	827	333 (40%)
January-March 2011	818	283 (35%)
April-June 2011	774	224 (29%)
July-September 2011	759	242 (32%)
October-December 2011	752	263 (35%)
January-March 2012	746	274 (37%)
April-June 2012	752	228 (30%)
July-September 2012	734	215 (29%)

The table above, coupled with the information on the breakdown of short and long term absence below demonstrates that there was a slight decrease in the number of employees taking short term absence in the last quarter. However, over the last year this figure has reduced quite significantly and is a positive indicator.

7.5   Long/Short term sickness absence breakdown:

	Employees taking long-term sick leave	Total days of long-term sickness	% of total absence Long Term	% of total absence Short Term
January-March 2010	23 (7%)	596	41%	59%
April-June 2010	22 (9%)	667	49%	51%
July-September 2010	21 (8%)	665	52%	48%
October-December 2010	24 (7%)	755	44%	56%
January-March 2011	28 (10%)	796	49%	51%
April-June 2011	20 (9%)	646	54%	46%
July-September 2011	16 (7%)	770	57%	43%
October-December 2011	21 (8%)	811	50%	50%
January-March 2012	17 (6%)	511	40%	60%
April 2012-June 2012	16 (5%)	559	44%	56%
July-September 2012	20 (9%)	627	46%	54%

The ratio of short to long term absence has remained fairly constant in the first two quarters of this year.

7.6   Sickness absence reporting by division

This table ranks divisions by days sick per FTE during the last quarter, showing the number of days lost per person in bold. The days lost in the previous quarter is also shown to demonstrate the recent trend:

Division	FTE average	Total days sick	Days Lost/FTE	Last Quarter
Environmental Management	34.1	104	**3.1**	2.0
Customer Services	111.9	311.5	**2.8**	2.8
OneLeisure	123.6	340	**2.8**	2.1
Corporate Team	11.4	28.5	**2.5**	1.8
Environmental & Community Health Services	43.6	88.5	**2.0**	1.4
Operations Division	178.2	360	**2.0**	1.9
Financial Services	22.2	24	**1.1**	0.8
Legal & Democratic Services	36.7	39	**1.1**	2.5
Planning & Strategic Housing	51.0	43	**0.8**	1.1
IMD	29.9	20	**0.7**	1.2
Managing Directors	2.0	0	**0**	0

7.7   Percentage of employees taking any absence

The following table ranks divisions by the percentage of individuals who took any sickness absence during the last quarter:

Division	Individuals employed	Individuals off sick	% taking sick days	Last Quarter
Customer Services	126	49	39%	66%
Corporate Team	12	4	33%	52%
Financial Services	29	9	31%	40%
IMD	32	10	31%	41%
Operations Division	188	56	30%	43%
Environmental Management	41	12	29%	34%
Environmental & Community Health Services	47	13	28%	40%
OneLeisure	158	44	28%	41%
Legal & Democratic Services	42	11	26%	31%
Planning & Strategic Housing	59	7	12%	18%

The table shows the number of people who have taken any time off at all during the last quarter and also shows the information for the previous quarter. This demonstrates how the numbers can fluctuate significantly from period to period.   There was a significant improvement in the Customer Service and Operations Teams who have high numbers of staff, during Q2, and reduced numbers of people taking time off in the Corporate Team, Financial Services, IMD and Environmental Management.

7.8   Long term/Short term absence by division

The table below ranks divisions by the percentage of all sickness absence that was due to long-term sickness in the last quarter:

Division	Days sick	LT sick days	% LT	% ST
OneLeisure	342	225	66%	34%
Environmental & Community Health Services	88.5	53.5	60%	40%
Environmental Management	104	58	56%	44%
Customer Services	311.5	150	48%	52%
Operations Division	360	141	39%	61%
Planning & Strategic Housing	43	0	0%	100%
Legal & Democratic Services	39	0	0%	100%
Corporate Team	28.5	0	0%	100%
Financial Services	24	0	0%	100%
IMD	20	0	0%	100%

Absence management has been recognised as an important area of management responsibility by COMT and consequently this has been set as one of the KPA's for Heads of Service, which is reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Following the last Employment Panel which endorsed a move towards the consistent use of Return to Work Meetings and self certification for all periods of absence, the HR Business Partner is attending all management teams throughout November. This will then be

publicised in December with reminders being sent out to all Managers and information directly shared with staff. The new arrangements will then take effect from 1st January 2013.

8.   LGSS Organisational Workforce Development Activity April - June 2012

12 meetings have taken place with all Heads of Service and their Team Managers between July – September 2012. In addition two focus groups involving a cross section of HDC staff were held on the 14th September. The outcomes of all the meetings have been collated to inform the priorities to be considered for the development of an HDC Workforce Development Strategy.

During Quarter 2 the main focus for OWD has been to build relationships with the Heads of Service and their Team Managers and provide information on what they can expect from OWD in relation to Organisational Development support and training provision. The outcome of the meetings is development of an HDC Workforce Development Strategy and HDC Training plan 2012 – 2013.

Following on from these meetings an Open Day was held at Pathfinder House on the 14th September 2012. The aim on the day was to raise awareness of LGSS OWD provision. It also gave the opportunity for HDC staff and managers to discuss individual needs with OWD Advisors in relation to Management training, Vocational qualification, Apprenticeships and the Open Directory courses. Managers were also invited to attend bite sized sessions on three different aspects of the Leading and Empowered Organisation (LEO) programme. Staff were also asked to participate in a survey relating to future Administration processes. The day was a great success with in excess of 60 HDC staff attending.

For the next Quarter the OWD focus will be on delivering the training needs that have been identified through the recent focus group activity and open days.

In addition to this, progress has been made regarding the introduction of an Apprenticeship Scheme for HDC. LGSS have been undertaking discussion around Apprenticeship frameworks and the co-ordinating and supportive role LGSS Organisational Workforce and Development can play in the development of the Apprenticeship Strategy and delivery of Apprenticeship frameworks. LGSS HR is also drafting a policy and guidance for managers.

Within HDC the following areas have been identified to pilot apprenticeships:

- Grounds maintenance
- Customer Service
- Call Centre
- Corporate Team (Web based Communicator).

9.   Recruitment

In July the recruitment activity for HDC was taken on by the LGSS Recruitment Team. The main benefit of this is that a dedicated team of staff experienced in recruitment now manage the end to end process. This is part of the LGSS contract.

Some comments have been received from HDC managers in recent weeks that they have been experiencing difficulties in attracting and recruiting the right calibre of staff. This will be monitored going forwards and we will now be able to report on the number of applicants for roles, and where they have been successfully filled or otherwise. In addition, we will seek to identify where a failure to recruit may be the result of salaries not being competitive in the local market.

There were 22 campaigns that LGSS dealt with for HDC in the period May - Sept. The breakdown of these are:

14 Filled by External candidates
4 Filled by Internal candidates
2 Not Filled & Not re-advertised
1 Vacancy withdrawn
1 Filled by Re-advertisement

The cost of external media advertising in this period was approximately £3924.87.

10.   Conclusion

This report contains a considerable amount of information relating to the management of the Council's workforce and the workload of the HR team. In order to monitor workforce trends and organisational progress, future employment reports will be presented to Employment Panel by LGSS.

11.   Recommendation

11.1   Review of Sickness Absence Procedure

LGSS will be working on reviewing and revising the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedures over the coming months with a view to reporting to Employment Panel in February. Discussion with managers who use the policies regularly will be undertaken by way of a focus group to make sure that their views are taken into consideration when proposing changes.

Once the review has been complete and the policy is approved, training sessions will be arranged to brief and coach managers.

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