

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	20th July 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
Head of Service	Louise Dougal – Interim Head of Service
Report author	Louise Dougal – Interim Head of Service
Title	Workforce Planning, Recruitment & Retention and Sickness Absence

1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report provides current information and progress of the workforce plan including recruitment and retention activities and also provides turnover and sickness absence data for 2022/2023.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide current information, data and progress.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the information being presented and supports the ongoing monitoring of turnover and absence.

4. Report details

Workforce Plan (including Recruitment and Retention Activities)

4.1. A corporate workforce plan was agreed by the Council in January 2022 together with an Action Plan to address the agreed priorities. The plan and action plan

were brought to Performance Scrutiny Committee in March 2022. Workforce planning for 2023 has been paused to allow the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) restructure to be completed and the recruitment of our 5 vacant Head of Service roles. However, work on the action plan continues.

- 4.2. An audit has just been completed of the workforce plan action plan, this report is due to go to Governance and Audit Committee in July 2023 by the Head of Internal Audit. A copy of this report is in Appendix 1.
- 4.3. In summary, the report confirmed that Human Resources (HR) have robust HR initiatives and strategies in place to support the Corporate Workforce Plan. The development of some policies and guidance has been delayed due to vacancies within the team and workload pressures, however these have new revised completion dates.

Recruitment, Retention and Staff Turnover

- 4.4. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the staff turnover. Staff turnover rate defines how many employees leave an organisation during a set period of time . The Denbighshire County Council (DCC) turnover rate is 11.6 %, turnover in 2022/23 has increased and it is at its highest rate for 6 years in Denbighshire. As a general rule, an organisation should be aiming for a turnover rate of 10% or less.
- 4.5. A high turnover rate can be costly and disruptive to a business; however, it is important to note that whilst we are experiencing a higher turnover rate, our rate is still average compared to the national average and is below the UK average.
- 4.6. Appendix 2 shows that there have been 299 leavers to DCC in the last financial year, however the position headcount has increased during this time by 114 positions. The position headcount for services at the end of March does demonstrate that position headcount has been maintained therefore we have been able to recruit in most cases.
- 4.7. Recruitment & Retention Strategies which have been introduced or improved to support the Council in the delivery of services in the future:
- 4.8. Recruitment:

- New recruitment pages on the intranet to promote DCC – please visit : <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/jobs-and-employees/jobs-and-employees.aspx>
- Increase in career pathways to support recruitment into hard to fill positions.
- Recruitment workshops for frontline jobs rather than traditional application form approach – out in the communities
- Created new basic application form for lower graded posts.
- Created new advert templates to promote Denbighshire as an employer of choice.
- Advertising in special publications
- Created new Facebook page for recruitment only – increased followers and increasing posts.
- Paid / sponsored adverts on LinkedIn & Facebook
- Specialist recruitment Packs for hard to fill posts.
- Mystery Shopper
- Looking at best practice across the UK and using self-assessment tools to ensure we are maximising opportunities.

4.9. Retention:

- Benefits page updated on intranet.
- Benefits sessions advertised for staff.
- Cost of living sessions.
- Learning & Development opportunities increased.
- Access to free training and have establish good links with colleges and universities.
- Bespoke training for departments – funding where possible through the free apprenticeship levy.
- Looking at terms and conditions (T&Cs) to ensure they are comparable with regional colleagues and reviewing some areas.
- Pay table review.
- People Strategy – Promotion of our Culture and Values

Sickness Absence

4.10. Appendix 3 gives an overview of sickness absence for 2022/2023. The average days lost for this period is 9.56 days which is a reduction from the previous year. In a recent circular for Wales, 15 councils responded, from those responses, Denbighshire were in 2nd position with the lowest days lost for employees, with the average being at 12.19 days lost.

4.11. The top 5 reasons for absence have remained consistent over the previous 3 years, however, there has been a notable reduction in the number of absences recorded as Stress – Personal which no longer features as a top 3 reason.

4.12. COVID absence accounts for 10.48% of our absence rates.

4.13. Sickness absence is monitored on a monthly basis by HR and Managers and support is provided to managers on the application of the policy.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. The work on these key areas contributes to theme 9 in ensuring Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and is an excellent place to work by delivering and embedding the staff well-being policy, supporting training and workforce development, promoting fairness, equality and diversity and working collaboratively both across the Council and with partners to alleviate problems with recruitment and retention.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. Absence of staff to carry out their roles can have a significant impact on services. Financial costs arrive from back filling roles, i.e. cooks, refuse collectors. Non-financial costs come from the additional pressures on managers, teams, and employees in services to carry out additional work and training.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. Not applicable

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. Not applicable

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Staff costs form the majority of the Council's revenue expenditure and it is vital that this resource is managed effectively and efficiently. The workforce plan is an important tool in that management and the possible financial impacts are summarised in section 6.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. The main risk comes from staff absence whether that be due to sickness absence or turnover. We have HR Officers working in services to support and improve attendance through our HR Policies.

10.2. We are also promoting our values and supporting our leaders to lead with compassion. We promote the importance of 1-2-1 meetings for all staff so employee's health, wellbeing, work life balance and workload is actively managed.

11. Power to make the decision.

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

11.2. Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's powers with respect of monitoring performance in relation to policy delivery and/or service areas.