

SUBJECT:	Human Resources Update
REPORT OF:	Bob Smith, Chief Executive
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Bob Smith, Chief Executive
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WARD/S AFFECTED	All

1. Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on:

- Staff turnover and sickness absence within the Councils
- Key HR projects

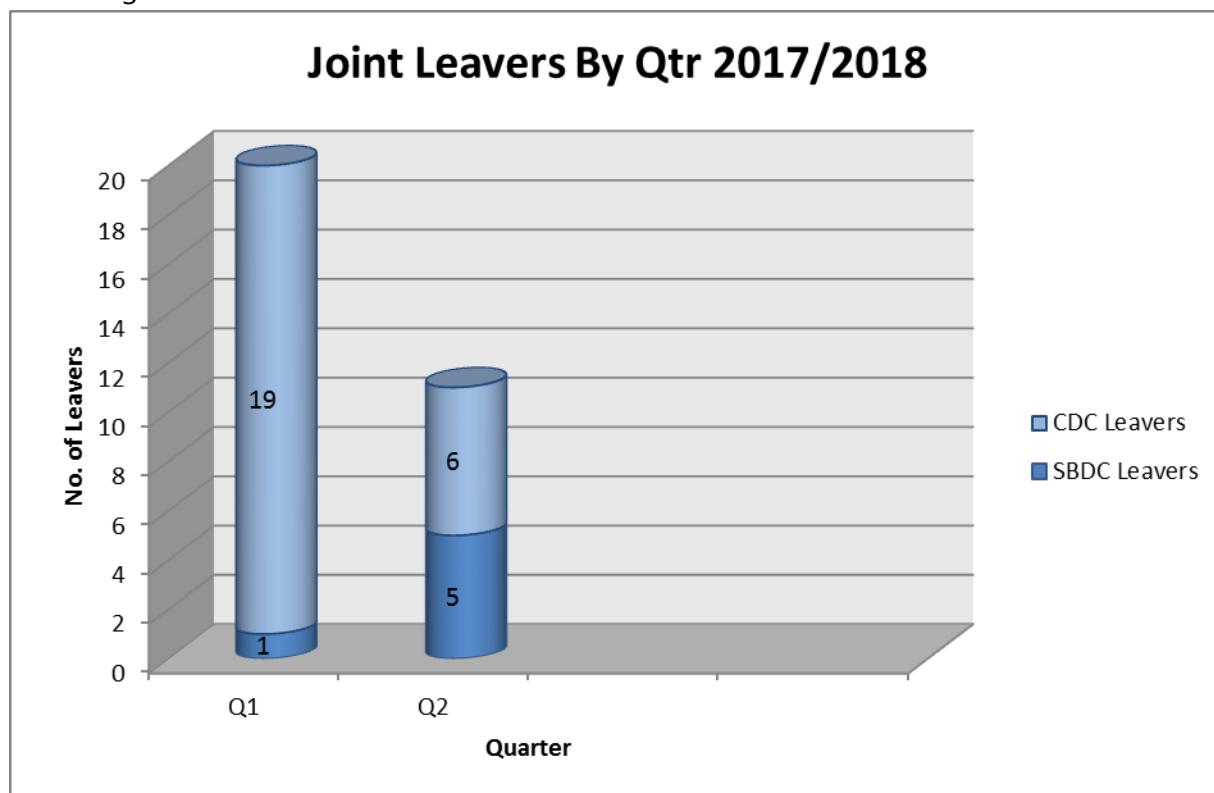
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Joint Staffing Committee is asked to note the report.

2. Content of Report

2.1 Leavers Figures 2017/18

2.1.1. The chart below shows the number of leavers in Qtr1 and Qtr2 of this year, please note the high Chiltern figure for Qtr1 reflects 10 cleaners TUPE transferred to Derwent FM. These figures also include staff who have retired.



- 2.1.2 An analysis for the reasons for leaving show that staff have left for a variety of reasons and there does not seem to be an underlying trend. It should be noted, however, that there have been higher levels of staff leaving in planning than in other areas and compared to previous months. These numbers will be reflected in the Qtr3 figures.
- 2.1.3 Analysis of the exit information gathered from planning leavers shows that employees have resigned for different reasons such as the attraction of a new job in the private sector and wanting to have private practice experience, domestic circumstances outside the control of the council, taking a job closer to home with less travel. There is always, as well, a small rise in leavers after a service review process.
- 2.1.4 It is acknowledged that there is a need to address gaps created by the resignation of experienced planners in "hard to fill" roles. The recent recruitment programme has led to a number of successful appointments and the majority of the vacant roles have been filled.
- 2.1.5 The HR team are currently working with the Interim Head of Planning and Economic Development to implement a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for the service area. This will include the introduction of a structured induction programme, a clear training and development programme and a succession plan. We are also reviewing our approach to recruitment and this includes using LinkedIn as an advertising and recruitment tool, working with local Universities to provide a "feeder" for graduate roles. We are also holding a Planning Career Open Day in January. A full report on these and other initiatives will be submitted to the next meeting of this committee.

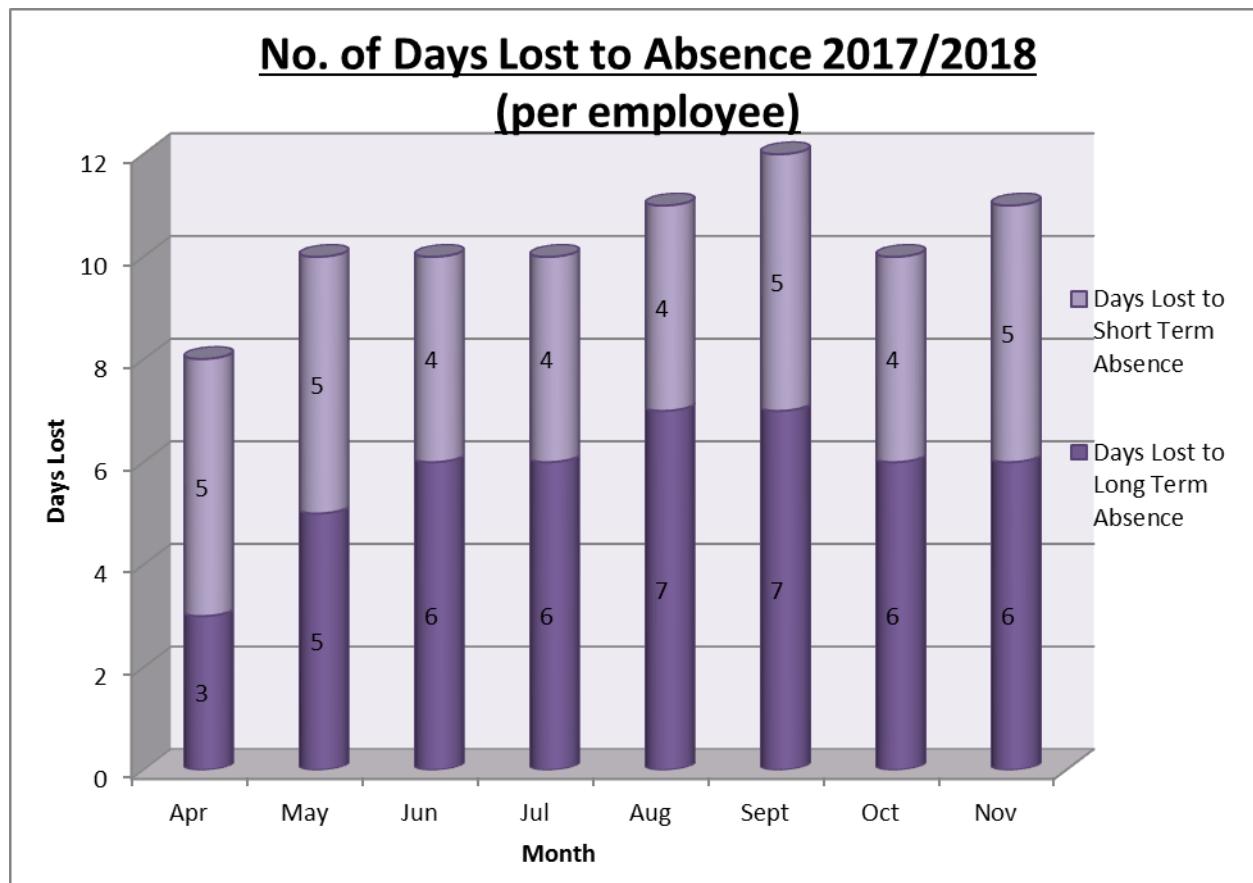
2.2 Recruitment Figures

- 2.2.1 Turnover rates are more meaningful if considered against the statistics of recruitment. Please see below the number of roles advertised in the first two quarters, the number filled and the average time to hire.

	No. of Positions	No. Filled	Average Time to Hire
Qtr1	13	13	31 days
Qtr2	16	15	40 days

2.3 Sickness Absence Figures 2016/17 and 2017/18

- 2.3.1 The table below shows a breakdown of the number of days lost due to absence per employee per month for the current year broken down into long term and short term sickness.



- 2.3.2 The Councils have a key performance indicator for absence which is a maximum ceiling of 10 days per employee. This has been exceeded in August and September and November this year which is largely due to an increase in a small number of employees on long term sick absences. Whilst two employees on long term sick left the Council in October we have seen a further rise in the number of employees who are very poorly.
- 2.3.3 Short term absence is defined as "up to and including 20 working days absence" and long term absence is "over 20 working days absence".
- 2.3.4 Please note that current sickness absence figures are also affected by the Councils' current practice to record partial days' sickness when staff undertake a phased return to work. This practice is currently being revised as a matter of priority as part of the review and update of the Sickness Absence Policy. This is part of an overall strategy to manage sickness absence consistently and robustly across all the services which includes running workshops for managers on sickness absence management and taking a range of other approaches:-
- The use of occupational health services to get timely advice on how we can assist employees in returning to work e.g. through a phased return, amended duties or adaptations that can be made to the workplace.
 - The use of sickness absence procedures which support employees and the management of employees while absent due to sickness and on their return to work. This includes

return to work meetings for all employees returning to work regardless of the length of sickness.

- Active management of sickness absence stats and sickness review meetings with employees when they meet our internal trigger points.
- Risk assessments.
- Employee Assistance Programme.
- A range of initiatives and activities are in place for employees to access to support them in maintaining good health and well-being.

2.3.5 The HR team continue to focus their efforts on managing sickness absence using all the approaches given above and this will be monitored closely during the year.

CURRENT PROJECTS

2.4 **Economic Development Team**

2.4.1 The Councils adopted the Economic Development Strategy in February 2017 and an implementation Action Plan followed, performance managed through the Council's performance management framework.

2.4.2 The Action Plan includes the creation of an Economic Development Team to give greater drive and focus to the Economic Development Strategy. Currently there is no dedicated resource within the Councils to deliver economic development priorities. This places the Councils at risk of under-delivering on the Economic Development Strategy. The plan is therefore to create two additional posts in this area:-

- One senior Economic Development Officer; who would be responsible for the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy, would be the key liaison with existing businesses across the patch and also be responsible for seeking and securing external funds to support businesses in the area.
- The second officer would support the senior officer through information and performance statistics but would also be responsible for working in communities to support local business initiatives, for example in supporting and developing the health of town centres across the two districts. This could be in the form of encouraging the formation of town centre partnerships, and also working with those partnerships on delivering town centre action plans.

2.4.3 The aim is to recruit to the new roles immediately so as to maintain the momentum established with the adoption of the Economic Development Strategy and building on the success of recent events such as the annual business meeting.

2.4.4 The new officers will be based within the existing Planning Policy Team (re-named Planning Policy and Economic Development Team). Such a change would impact on the role of the Planning Policy Team Manager in the long term. However recognising both the importance of not disrupting the work of the Planning Policy Team at a crucial time in Local Plan preparation and also the importance of establishing the Councils economic development agenda, for the first 18 months the new economic development officers will report directly into the Head of Service.

- 2.4.5 These proposals fall within the Chief Executive's delegated powers (C2) to determine the Council's establishment, numbers of staff, remuneration and deployments and agree terms and conditions of employment of staff, provided that these are not "fundamental changes" to the organisation structure and that the proposals are within existing budgets.
- 2.4.6 For the first two years the roles will be funded from reserves and after two years the funding will be mainstreamed and funded from the general revenue account.
- 2.4.7 The cost of the roles are provided for in the draft budgets going to SBDC Cabinet on 7th February and CDC Cabinet on 6th February. The cost to be shared between CDC and SBDC and to be met from the Economic Development Reserves.

2.5 **Organisational Development: Values and Behaviour Framework**

- 2.5.1 We are continuing the work to bring our values to life in our day to day working practices through our Unwritten Ground Rule (UGR) approach. The UGR Champions meet regularly to share initiatives and ideas and continue to hold events in their teams to agree areas for improvement.
- 2.5.2 In February 2018 we will have the one year anniversary of the UGR Champion network and we will be marking the event with an annual newsletter and a series of hosted, lunchtime sessions when employees will be sharing an interesting and inspiring short video such as a TED talk and discussing it with colleagues.
- 2.5.3 As the Customer Experience Strategy is implemented throughout 2018 and 2019 we will have an increased focus on our culture and behaviours in relation to our customers.

2.6 **Health and Well-Being**

- 2.6.1 A Health and Wellbeing Strategy and accompanying Action Plan will be launched in January 2018. It aims to:
- Create a safe and healthy working environment;
 - Improve employees' physical and emotional wellbeing;
 - Encourage and support employees to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle;
 - Support people with manageable health problems or disabilities to remain in work or return to work after a period of absence;
 - Improve staff satisfaction, recruitment and retention.
- 2.6.2 We already have many effective policies, procedures and initiatives in place to support employee health and wellbeing at the Councils and have drawn these together and presented them in an accessible format on the intranet. We will also ensure that through a variety of means we provide information and support to our employees to increase their awareness of the importance of ensuring their own health and wellbeing.
- 2.6.3 In partnership with Mind and with Richmond Fellowship in 2018 we will offer training to Managers to equip them to identify the signs of mental ill health and support employees with mental health problems to remain in work or return to work following a period of absence.

2.6.4 In conjunction with our Occupational Health provider, in April 2018 we will introduce "Health Manager" which is an interactive online behaviour change platform packed with information resources, health programmes, lifestyle assessment and log book to motivate employees towards pursuing their health and wellbeing goals. Statistical data provided by employee usage of this system can identify the specific wellbeing needs of our workforce which can be incorporated into future action plan development to enable targeted wellbeing interventions that address our priorities.

2.6.5 We have changed the supplier of our cycle purchase scheme in order to benefit from much more proactive marketing of the scheme. Benefits to staff remain similar.

2.7 **HR Team Processes**

2.7.1 Work is continuing to standardise and harmonise our HR processes. We have begun a process review with the Payroll team in order to identify areas of potential improvement and streamlining between the two teams.

2.7.2 In December we had a further internal audit (5th this year) looking at our recruitment procedures and we were provided with "substantial assurance".

2.7.3 We have updated the content on the recruitment pages on the internets to improve our promotional materials and to highlight the benefits of working for the Councils.

2.7.4 We are currently reviewing the personal data we hold on employees and candidates to ensure we comply with the General Data Protection Act coming to force in May 2018.

2.8 **Staff Survey**

2.8.1 The staff survey for 2017 went out in December 2017 and closed on the 12 January 2018. Results will be reported in February.

2.9 **Middle Managers Development Programme**

2.9.1 Of the initial cohort of 50 middle managers, 4 have left or given notice and one has not actively participated. The remaining 45 are all engaged and on track to successfully complete the programme. It is anticipated that they will all be awarded an ILM Level 4 qualification in March 2018.

2.9.2 Next year we anticipate running a substantially similar programme, albeit slightly condensed, for the Middle Managers who did not attend this year (due to being new in post, on maternity leave, etc.) plus the next tier of 'Junior Managers' across the councils. This will be a total cohort of approximately 60 people.

2.9.3 In following years, running a comparable programme for a small cohort of 10-15 people should ensure that we provide consistent approach to addressing management development needs that result from staff turnover.

2.10 **Collaborative Working WDC**

We meet regularly with our counterparts at Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale District Councils and have been exploring collaboration in a number of areas in order to make savings through economies of scale. We will be putting forward a proposal in April to develop a shared in-house Coaching and Mentoring Scheme.

2.11 Apprenticeships

- 2.11.1 A trailblazer degree-level apprenticeship in Town Planning is currently being developed and subject to it meeting its anticipated launch date, we intend to begin offering apprenticeships in Planning from Autumn 2018. Apprentices will rotate through all planning disciplines.
- 2.11.2 Alongside this we are in discussions with Bucks Learning Trust with a view to using apprenticeships to offer development opportunities to our existing staff.

2.12 Induction for new staff

- 2.12.1 We have introduced a new Induction programme for new staff which ensures they are properly introduced and welcomed in to the organisation and supported through the first few months of their employment. This includes meeting with the UGR Champions, an informal meeting with the Chief Executive and pairing new staff with buddy's where possible.

2.13 Bereavement Leave

- 2.13.1 The Parental Bereavement (Pay and Leave) Bill (supported by the Government) seeks to honour a manifesto commitment by introducing an entitlement to two weeks paid leave to employed parents who lose a child aged under 18 years old. In anticipation of this becoming a statutory requirement we have proactively amended our Bereavement Leave guidelines accordingly.

2.14 Implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy

- 2.14.1 We have started work on the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy which is one of the key areas of work for HR over the next 2 years both in terms of leading on the organisation structural design and also the cultural change which will underpin this transformation.

2.15 Key Projects Coming Up for 2018/19

1. Customer Experience Strategy implementation.
2. Roll out of our Health and Well Being strategy and further initiatives to support this particularly around mental health.
3. Further roll out of the Management Development programme for continued development for managers who completed the course in 2017/18 and to introduce an updated course for new managers and supervisors and team leaders.
4. Implementation of the Workforce Plan which is tied in with a review of the Appraisal Scheme and the development of a co-ordinated approach to learning and development and succession planning across services.
5. Review our recruitment strategies and develop further approaches.
6. 9 Harmonised policies are due for review in 2018.

3. Consultation

N/A

4. Options

N/A

5. Corporate Implications

Good management of resources including employees leads to efficient and effective use of council finances and improved delivery of council services.

6. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Monitoring staff turnover, recruitment and sickness absences and ensuring all Council policies, procedures and practices are current, underpin the delivery of the Council's aims and management principles and ensure legislative compliance and best practice.

7. Next Step

Continue to monitor and update Committee Members on a quarterly basis.

Background Papers:	None other than referred to in this report.
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