

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

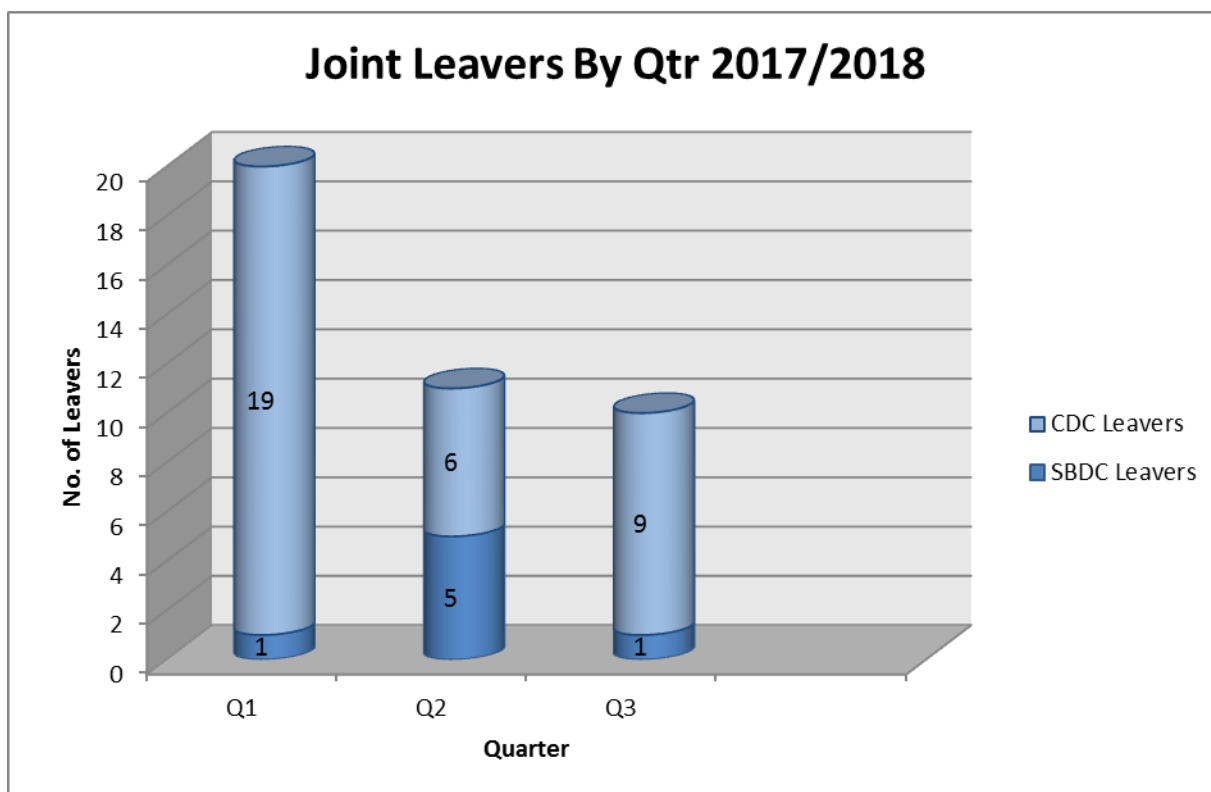
RECOMMENDATIONS

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, Qtr2 and Qtr3 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 Qtr4 figures. A recruitment drive in planning has led to the successful filling of almost all vacancies. Work is now underway to agree a medium and long term recruitment and retention plan for the service area. Further details are in this report under Current Projects.

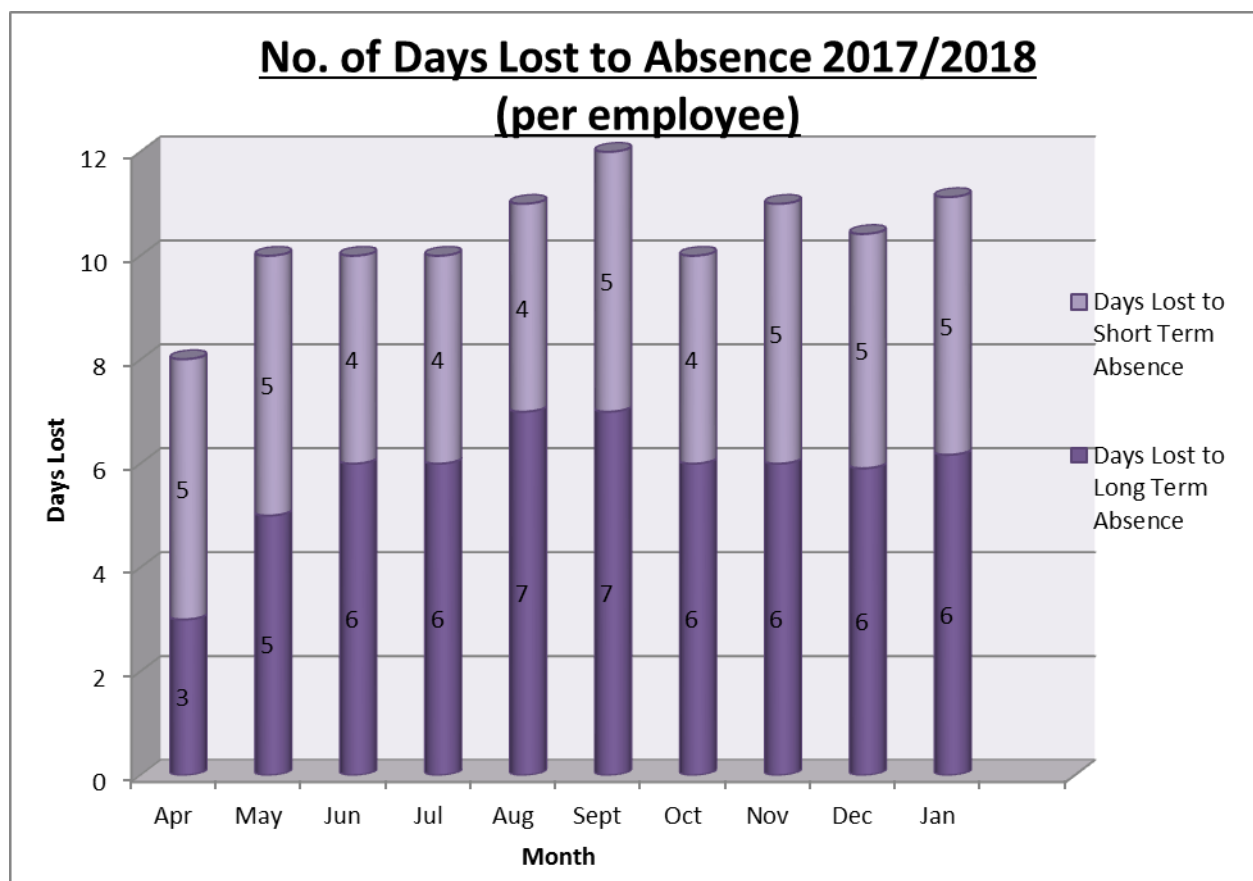
2.2 Recruitment Figures

- 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 three quarters, the number filled and the average time to hire.

	No. of Positions	No. Filled	Average Time to Hire
Qtr 1	13	13	31 days
Qtr 2	16	15	40 days
Qtr 3	19	17	30 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 quite regularly since August 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 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, due to start in April, 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 Organisational Development: Values and Behaviour Framework

- 2.4.1 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.

2.4.2 In February 2018 we had a one year anniversary of the UGR Champion network and marked the event with an annual newsletter and the launch of a series of hosted, lunchtime sessions when employees share an interesting and inspiring short video such as a TED talk and discuss this with colleagues.

2.4.3 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.

2.5 **Middle Managers Development Programme**

2.5.1 The second cohort of 36 managers and team leaders are commencing the Management Development Programme in April 2018 taking the total number of staff who have undertaken this programme to 84.

2.6 **Collaborative Working WDC – Coaching and Mentoring**

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 are currently planning to set up an in-house Coaching and Mentoring Scheme with WDC.

2.7 **Apprenticeships**

2.7.1 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.

2.7.2 Alongside this we are in discussions with Bucks Learning Trust with a view to using apprenticeships to offer development opportunities to our existing staff.

2.7.3 Additionally, we have one member of the Finance Team who is due to start a Finance Apprenticeship programme from April this year.

2.8 **Implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy**

2.8.1 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.

2.9 **Harmonisation**

2.9.1 We have now completed our harmonisation processes with the transfer of Golf Club staff on to the Harmonised Pay Spine from 1st April 2018. Golf Club staff were harmonised on to the terms and conditions of the collective agreement in January 2017 but transfer on to the pay spine was delayed whilst work was undertaken to assess the appropriateness of the HAY Job Evaluation Scheme to evaluate and reward posts in this commercial environment. Following a review of the evaluation scheme and a benchmarking exercise of the roles across the industry assimilation will take place in line with all staff in the Councils.

2.10 Recruitment and Retention Plan – Planning and Economic Development

2.10.1 A short, medium and long term plan for the Planning and Economic Development Service has been proposed and is currently being considered by staff in the service.

2.10.2 This plan is set against the background of a higher turnover rate at the end of 2017, the retirement of the Head of Service, exit interview data which shows staff have left for a variety of different reasons, the imperative need to provide a stable and motivated workforce over the next two years and in the long term.

2.10.3 Recruitment: In the short term we have taken the following initiatives:-

- hold open days to recruit to vacancies, to over recruit where appropriate;
- recruiting managers and senior staff to increase their social media presence;
- fill roles in the interim using agency staff;
- temporarily move staff within the service to cover management posts.

2.10.4 In the medium term we are considering:-

- develop our promotion materials and selling points as a local employer of choice. An employer which makes a commitment to train and develop staff and “grow your own”. An employer which provides career progression and opportunities.
- offering a Recruitment Introduction Fee to existing staff who introduce employees to hard to fill roles subject to the new starter passing their probation period;
- continue with open days to raise the profile of the service and Councils;
- introducing an Apprenticeship programme.

2.10.4 In the long term initiatives we are considering:-

- offering a bursary to first year graduates;
- offer paid 1 year placements for gap year graduates or placement students;
- develop affiliations with local schools, colleges and universities.

2.10.5 With respect to retention the initiatives we are considering are:-

- to continue to highlight and publicise the Total Reward Package which includes the flexible working opportunities;
- Ensure all new and existing employees have stretching objectives linked to the strategy and vision of the Councils;
- through appraisal meetings ensure all employees have Personal Development Plans in place;
- managers to continue to embed the coaching and feedback techniques learnt as part of the Management Development Programme;
- continue to ensure effective team meetings and 1:1's take place;
- all new employees to be supported at work using the Councils' new induction programme;
- to offer bonuses to assist in retaining staff on key projects tied in to short and medium term objectives ;
- to use the honorarium and acting up allowances scheme to reward staff where appropriate.

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.
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