

Report for: General Purposes Committee - 3 April 2025

Item number: 7

Title: People Report December 2024

Report authorised by: Dan Paul, Chief People Officer

Lead Officer: Tanya Patchett, Head of Employee Relations, Business Partners and Reward

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non-key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

The People Report is designed to give Officers and Members relevant workforce data in an easy to understand format in order to support informed strategic decision making.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

The report is for information and for the Committee to note.

4. Reason for Decision

Not applicable.

5. Alternative Options Considered

Not applicable.

6. Background information

The People Report combines key workforce data and analysis including headcount, the cost of both the permanent workforce and off payroll arrangements, starters/leavers, sickness absence and Apprentices as shown in Appendix A.

6.1 People Report Headlines

- 6.1.1 As at the end of this reporting quarter, the established workforce has grown by an additional 2.9% since September 2024. The Council's pay bill has risen by 6.1%, which is primarily as a result of processing the agreed NJC pay award in November 2024, as well as the increase in headcount.
- 6.1.2 Between September and December 2024, the number of agency workers reduced by 58, resulting in a 17.1% cost saving. This change decreased the proportion of agency staff within the overall workforce from 12.8% to 10.8%. Although the Council aims to minimise reliance on agency workers, they remain necessary for addressing short-term gaps or imbalances in staffing, workload or during ongoing recruitment processes. This ensures the Council can maintain the delivery of critical services to its residents. The two-week rule, whereby agency workers did not work in December, played a key role in achieving the cost savings this quarter. Additionally, a further reduction in costs is anticipated for March/ April 2025, as the Corporate Leadership Team has instructed all 'non-essential' agency staff to take another two-week holiday during this period with the aim of reducing spending in the final weeks of the financial year and the early weeks of 2025/26.
- 6.1.3 As of December 2024, the Council employed 63 'off payroll' workers with a daily rate exceeding £500, reflecting a decrease of 5 in headcount and a 12.2% reduction in costs compared to the previous quarter. The top three directorates with the highest usage of these workers are Culture, Strategy & Engagement, Placemaking & Housing and Finance.
- 6.1.4 The total workforce has seen a 1% increase overall, representing a very slight change.
- 6.1.5 Over the past rolling year, 54% of new starters were under the age of 40, marking a 1% increase compared to the previous rolling year. Similarly, 36% of leavers belonged to this age group, reflecting a 3% rise from the previous rolling year period.
- 6.1.6 Overall sickness rates have improved across the board. During the last rolling year, the top three recorded reasons for sickness have been: stress/mental health, anxiety/ depression and back related. Strategic HR and OD Business Partners continue to actively work with Directors to tackle sickness rates throughout the Council.
- 6.1.7 The Council has a total of 128 apprenticeships, with the top three directorates being Placemaking & Housing, Adults, Health & Communities and Children's Services. The most popular apprenticeship standards/frameworks at the moment include Operations or Departmental Manager (Level 5), Data Technician (Level 3), and Senior Leader (Level 7). Since April 2024, the Council has welcomed 39 new apprentices and seen 19 completions.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

In order to streamline the production of timely workforce data the People Report will act as a single source of people data for the use of both officers and members.

The production of this report will complement the reports produced by Finance to give officers and members a set of management controls that will help track the reduction in the workforce, both on and off payroll; and the associated spend across the Council.

It will enable officers and members to track the progress of HR related initiatives controlling recruitment, establishment numbers, and performance management exercises.

8. Statutory Officers' comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

This report recommends Committee to note the changes in the workforce from September 2024 to December 2024. The impact of these changes has already been considered as part of the regular budget monitoring process and would have been reported accordingly. There are no other financial implications arising from this report.

8.2 Head of Legal and Governance

There are no legal implications arising from this report. The report is for information only.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix A - People Report (December 2024)

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.