

RE-PROCUREMENT OF THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CONTRACT

COMMENTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

At its meeting on 26 August 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered the report and unanimously agreed to support the recommendations to the Executive Councillor.

The following points were confirmed:

- The occupational health contract would provide a range of activities to help improve staff's health and wellbeing, but would not resolve all health issues for staff as a number of these would be reliant on the health service, such as for operations or treatment. The occupational health service would enable staff to continue to work by identifying adjustments that could be made to their role or workplace.
- An assessment of the number of staff that were able to continue working through early screening and intervention would show the benefits of the service and how it was performing.
- The Council has an ageing workforce and the Board recognised that early intervention was important to ensure that staff were able to thrive at work and then have a long and healthy retirement. It was recommended that a preventative strategy, with some key performance indicators, should be considered to ensure early intervention was provided to support staff with health issues.
- Occupational health would provide a more in-depth assessment of a person's ability to work than a GP, and would look at options such as making adjustments or redeployment to enable a person to continue to work.
- The person's health issues and the need for a physical assessment would be taken into account when deciding whether to offer a face to face or video appointment.
- The option for video appointments had been included to open up the contract to a wider range of providers for the tendering process.
- All of Lincolnshire's District Councils were offered the opportunity to be included in the contract but all except one had declined the offer. It was unclear whether this was as a result of the formation of the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, as Boston Borough Council already has an alternative provider for occupational health services.
- Sickness levels were continuing on a downward trend year on year. However there had been an increase in stress and emotional wellbeing sickness amongst staff and the Council was working with partners to increase the services available. There was a

need to improve awareness of the health and wellbeing services available to staff and remove the stigma around accessing these services.

- It was recommended that councillors should also be able to have access to some of the health and wellbeing services available to staff.
- It was suggested that a councillor development session should be considered to support councillors to raise awareness amongst staff of the services that were available.