



**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources**

Report to:	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Management Board</b>
Date:	<b>26 May 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>People Management Update – Quarter 4</b>

**Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the HR Management Information (HRMI) and on corporate People Strategy projects.

**Actions Required:**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is asked to seek assurance on HR Management Information and review the progress on the 2021-24 People Strategy projects.

## **1. Background**

This report provides a summary of the HR management information data from 2021 Quarter 4 which can be seen in the summary data dashboard in Appendix A.

The report also includes a high-level summary of the 2021-24 people strategy projects.

## **2. HR Management Information**

### **a. Employments**

The number of employments decreased by 43 (-0.8%) in Quarter 4 (5542) with all Directorates other than Resources having a reduction.

Overall, 2021/22 has seen the number of employments in Adult Care and Community Wellbeing (-2.2%), Children's Services (-0.8%), Commercial (-4.9%) and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (-4.0%) reduce. Corporate (7.1%), Place (3.5%) and Resources (9.6%) has however increased.

## **b. Voluntary turnover**

Current figures are returning to pre-pandemic levels and are increasing quarter on quarter reaching 10.01% at the end of Quarter 4. This is causing concern particularly where the national competition for recruiting skilled professionals is greater such as social work and care, legal, IMT and procurement. This has led to a need to increase agency usage and relief contracts in some areas. Alternative methods to increase capacity are being employed such as increasing the number of posts at a lower level where recruitment is less competitive.

## **c. Agency spend**

Based on the information available to date, in 2021/22, the total agency spend was £6m, £2m more than 2020/21 but slightly less than 2019/20. Not surprisingly due to issues with turnover and sickness absence, there has been an increase in spend each quarter to maintain staffing levels. This is particularly evident in Adult Care and Community Wellbeing, Children's Services and Legal Services (Resources). As part of the People Strategy, specifically attraction and retention, we are exploring longer-term solutions in significantly investing and growing apprenticeships and looking at alternative models.

## **d. Sickness absence**

At the end of Quarter 4, the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) days lost per FTE figure for Directorates stands at 8.47.

The number of absences attributed to cold, flu and viruses continued to rise steeply up to January 2022 where the seasonal illnesses were further increased by Covid-19 cases and chest infections. This dipped in February, rising again in March 2022.

All absence over the previous 12 months has been affected by the number of Covid-19 cases over the summer months in 2021 when absences due to colds and viruses would usually be low. The previously reported high level of mental health related absence since the summer months has been reducing in the last quarter.

In Quarter 4 the highest levels of absence have been in Adult Care and Community Wellbeing and Children's Services. Most absences are for cold and flu viruses (including Covid-19).

## **e. Council performance**

As part of the Local Government Association (LGA) benchmarking, key Council HR metrics can be compared to other councils. The latest LGA benchmarking figures available are for Quarter 3. The benchmarking covers labour turnover and sickness absence rates. In comparison to the average (mean) of English county local authorities reporting their data, Lincolnshire's figures for Quarter 3 were lower for both labour turnover and sickness absence. Further detail can be seen in Appendix B.

### 3. People Strategy

The People Strategy was launched in June 2021 to meet the Corporate Plan ambition on being an ‘employer of choice’. There is a focus on nine core areas for development over the next three years:



#### a) Attracting and Retaining Talent

- Attraction and Retention Framework

The main area of focus at the present time is the County Council’s ability to manage the challenges around attraction and retention.

In discussion with the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT), a new Attraction and Retention framework has been developed to support the Executive priority on Organisational Resilience.

The framework has been agreed with CLT and Directorates. It offers services different interventions that they can consider on a short, medium and long term basis to aid attraction and retention. Discussions are now in place on what options services desire, enabling the flexibility of Directorate decisions rather than any ‘corporate centre’ approval.

Children’s Services, Legal Services and Adult Care and Community Wellbeing are implementing new offers, with some longer-term objectives being pursued also.

- Apprenticeships

As of 1 April 2022, the total number of apprentices was 313 (up from 269 on roll from 1 January 2022, with a levy allocation of £2.7m). 71% of apprenticeship training provision is being delivered by local providers. The Council continues to support apprenticeships through the levy transfer scheme, through which we support 25 apprentices.

- Re-Procurement of Temporary Agency Staffing Contract

We will be undertaking a re-procurement of the Council's current contracts for temporary agency staff with Comensura (for general staffing requirements) and Retinue (for social care staffing requirements) which expire on 4 September 2022.

## **b) Health and Wellbeing**

Support for employee mental health remains a priority. We are monitoring the use of the new mental health first aider provision which launched in October 2021. There have been 18 contacts to the service with 83% of cases due to personal and 17% due to work issues. We are continuing to run resilience workshops and mindfulness sessions for staff to attend.

In addition to its usual service, the Employee Support and Counselling Team is providing 'wellbeing check ins' for staff and is developing peer support groups to help colleagues experiencing grief and loss. There is a new offer of assessment, priority referral to mainstream services and trauma support in development by specialist mental health practitioners.

Almost 400 employees took part in a recent fitness challenge with One You Lincolnshire where individuals and teams signed up to increase their activity levels. Employees now can sign up with One You Lincolnshire for a Health MOT to access advice and support to help them develop healthy habits and make positive lifestyle changes.

## **c) Communication and Engagement**

- Employee Survey 2021

The employee survey was completed in November and December 2021 and had a response rate of 44%. The detailed results have been discussed with Director Area Leadership Teams and actions taken to address the areas for development.

Building on the employee survey, we will be undertaking further engagement with our workforce to better understand culture and leadership practice and behaviours across the Council. Please see 3(e) below.

#### **d) Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

- Gender Pay Gap

Under the Equality Act 2020 (specific duties and Public Authorities) regulations 2017 the Council is required to publish statutory gender pay gap information on an annual basis. The last report was published in March 2022 and covers the year up to 31 March 2021.

We had 5,091 employees in scope for the 2021 gender pay gap exercise. Of these 1690 (33%) are men and 3401 (67%) are women. The calculations are based on a comparison of the mean and median hourly rates for men and women.

The 2021 gender pay gap report shows:

- LCC mean gender pay gap: 5.4% (0.5% improvement from 2020)
- National mean gender pay gap: 14.9%
  
- LCC median gender pay gap: 3.3% (0.3% improvement from 2020)
- National median gender pay gap: 15.4%

Although the pay gap figures are low, the Council continues to apply and develop approaches to be an inclusive employer. This includes:

- Unconscious bias e-learning training available for all staff, specific modules as part of our 'Inspired to Lead' and mandatory training for new managers
- New health and wellbeing initiatives including a menopause support group
- Commitment as part of 'Employers for Carers' providing support to members of our Carer's staff network
- Improved work life balance through a hybrid approach between working at home and in the office.

#### **e) Culture and Leadership**

- Diagnostic / Stocktake

As mentioned above, preparations have commenced on the Council's programme of a culture and leadership diagnostic to assess the views of leaders and the workforce on the 'how we do things around here' test.

As part of the diagnostic over 70 employees have volunteered to form part of the Culture Change Team and individuals will assist with four workstreams:

- i. Interviews with senior leaders (including the Corporate Leadership Team)
- ii. Focus groups with members of the workforce
- iii. Leadership survey open to the whole workforce
- iv. Information dashboard

The work will take place from June to September 2022 with a report published by November 2022. The report will be shared with CLT and then the whole workforce.

This overall work will enable us to understand, for example, whether we are a learning organisation; how empowering are our leaders and how well they demonstrate distributed leadership to improve our agility and performance. This will inform what action we need to take as an organisation.

**4. Conclusion**

The Board is invited to review the HRMI data from 2020 Quarter 4 to 2021 Quarter 4 and seek assurance on HR Management Information and the progress on People Strategy projects.

**5. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

Not Applicable

**6. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Quarterly HRMI Data 2020 Quarter 4 to 2021 Quarter 4
Appendix B	LGA Benchmarking Data 2021 Quarter 3

**7. Background Papers**

The following background papers as defined in section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
People Strategy 2021-2024	Copy can be requested via <a href="mailto:tony.kavanagh@lincolnshire.gov.uk">tony.kavanagh@lincolnshire.gov.uk</a>

This report was written by Tony Kavanagh (Assistant Director – HR and Organisational Support) and Lucy Shevill (Strategic HR Business Partner) both of whom can be contacted via e-mail at [tony.kavanagh@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:tony.kavanagh@lincolnshire.gov.uk) and [lucyk.shevill@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucyk.shevill@lincolnshire.gov.uk).