

**POLICY & RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

**13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012**

**FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ICT**

**STEPHEN JOHN**

**INDEX OF REPORT ITEM**

**Doc Code: PRB-130912-REP-FS-SJ**

**SECTION C – MATTER FOR MONITORING**

<b>Report Item</b>	<b>Page Nos.</b>	<b>Wards Affected</b>
1. Maximising Attendance at Work – <b>ICT Business Services</b>	2 - 5	All

## **SECTION C - MATTERS FOR MONITORING**

### **ITEM 1**

#### **MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE AT WORK – PROGRESS UPDATE**

##### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Members with a summary of sickness absence information and an opportunity to consider information from a specific service area within the Council.

##### **Background**

In 2010-11 the Council established a comprehensive Workforce Strategy to underpin its change programme. One of the elements of that Strategy was the reduction of sickness absence.

Whilst consideration had been given to reducing the cost of sickness absence by removing entitlement to sickness pay on the first three days of any period of absence, following negotiations with trade unions, the Council decided to take forward a review of the way in which sickness absence was being managed. That review was led by the Director of Environment and the Head of Change Management and Innovation. The approach was based on systems thinking principles with trade union representatives (full time officers and shop stewards) working alongside human resources professionals, service managers and employees to examine the underlying causes of sickness absence and then designing a new policy approach to addressing those underlying causes.

During 2010/2011 the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee recommended that service managers be invited to attend the relevant Scrutiny Committee meetings to discuss any issues around the sickness absence levels in particular services under their remit.

This initiative will continue during 2012/2013 and the information provided to Members today is in relation to the **ICT Business Services**

Some of the issues Members may wish to address during the consideration of this report are:

- What is the background to the service? What types of activities are the staff involved in?

*The Business Services team has 24 staff members and covers the functions of Problem Contact, Service Improvement and Administration within the IT division. Roles range from desk based administrative roles to on site day to day IT activities including PC and printer installation and maintenance. Staff visit and undertake duties across a large range of civic buildings and schools.*

- What are the overall levels of absence for the service area, and what particular patterns have been identified? (e.g. is most absence of a short term duration, linked to long term absence of a small number of individuals, linked to particular kinds of ill-health etc);

*The absence figures for the team have been greatly skewed by one employee's long term absence. The long term absence was being monitored and addressed following corporate procedures involving Occupational Health and HR. The employee has now resigned. Of the other 7 staff who had 3 occurrences within 12 months, 3 are part time employees. In many of the cases there is a precondition which results in the absences. There is no evidence that the absences are avoidable.*

- What management strategies are being used to help improve attendance at work? How well are these working?

*Sickness management policies, including Return to Work interviews are being undertaken and staff are made aware of the need to maximize attendance.*

- Are there any barriers to addressing absence that the Council could be addressing that are not covered by the revised policy and procedures?
- What are the associated costs if any in relation to sickness absence i.e. where someone is on long term sick and cover has to be arranged?

*For short term absences colleagues absorb the workload. In the case of the long term absence within the team a temporary agency worker was employed. That temporary role has since been terminated.*

## **List of Background Papers**

Workforce Strategy  
Maximising Attendance at Work Policy

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Summary of **ICT Business Services** sickness data.

## **Wards Affected**

All

## **Officer Contact**

Stephen John  
Head of ICT  
Telephone Number: 01639 686218  
E-mail: s.john@npt.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Summary of ICT Business Services sickness data.

<b>Summary sickness Totals - Annual Sickness pattern</b>		<b>Feb-12</b>	<b>Mar- 12</b>	<b>Apr-12</b>	<b>May-12</b>	<b>Jun-12</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Number of employees (posts) with 3 or more instances of sickness within last year</b>	4	4	8	8	8
	Number of working days lost/shifts for those employees with 3 or more instances of sick in last year.	176	189	250	283	294
<b>Annual Long Term Sickness Pattern</b>		<b>Feb-12</b>	<b>Mar- 12</b>	<b>Apr-12</b>	<b>May-12</b>	<b>Jun-12</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Number of employees (posts) who are consecutively sick for 28 days or more on the last day of each month.</b>	1	0	1	1	1
	Number of working days/shifts lost for those employees who are consecutively sick for 28 days or more	88	0	24	47	68