

*Meeting:* **Employment Committee**

*Date/Time:* **Thursday, 3 December 2015 at 10.00 am**

*Location:* **Goscote Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

*Contact:* **Miss. A. Rog (0116 305 0455)**

*Email:* **anna.rog@leics.gov.uk**

### **Membership**

Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC (Chairman)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC    Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC  
Mrs. J. Fox CC    Mrs. H. E. Loydall CC  
Mr. D. Jennings CC    Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

### **AGENDA**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Report by</u>	
1. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015.		(Pages 3 - 6)
2. Question Time.		
3. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).		
4. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.		
5. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.		
6. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure: Summary of Action Plans.	Chief Executive	(Pages 7 - 12)
7. Employees as Foster Carers.	Director of Corporate Resources	(Pages 13 - 16)



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|-----|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 8.  | Pay Update.  | Director of<br>Corporate<br>Resources | (Pages 17 - 18) |
| 9.  | Sickness Absence.  | Director of<br>Corporate<br>Resources | (Pages 19 - 22) |
| 10. | Any other items which the Chairman has<br>decided to take as urgent. |                                       |                 |
| 11. | Date of Next Meeting.  |                                       |                 |

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on 4  
February 2016 at 10.00am.



Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 22 October 2015.

PRESENT

Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC (in the Chair)

Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC

Dr. S. Hill CC

Mr. Max Hunt CC

Mr. D. Jennings CC

Mr. L. J. P. O'Shea CC

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

14. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2015 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

15. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

16. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

17. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

18. Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

19. Sickness Absence.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on the Council's overall position on sickness absence as of 31 August 2015. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) Over the last five years the corporate target of 7.5 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) had not been met. Actions had been taken to work towards this target, including a recently introduced initiative 'Star Chamber sessions' to assess how

sickness absence was managed within departments.

- (ii) The Committee emphasised that absence levels should be taken seriously and suggested that examples of well managed absence practices should be shared within the Council to inform and educate those departments experiencing continuous high levels of absence. In addition intelligence on good practice could be sought from other public bodies, such as District Councils, the police, fire service and public health organisations.
- (iii) There was a reduction in reported absence through stress/ depression and mental health. Concern was expressed that the two highest reasons for absence, viral infections and stomach, liver, kidney or digestion problems could have underlying causes in stress/depression and more general mental health problems. The Director assured the Committee that, although some employees might not provide the underlying reason for their absence at the onset of a period of long absence, the reasons would hopefully be addressed during a review which was performed by managers on absences of four weeks or more.
- (iv) The Committee was assured that Mental Health First Aiders worked throughout the Council to raise awareness, and offer support in respect of, stress/depression and mental health wellbeing. The Director advised that a report on the impact was being prepared for a future committee meeting.
- (v) Members expressed concern that the pressures of being under an attendance action plan could be a reason behind employees attending work with an infection, thus posing the risk of further infection to other colleagues. The Director advised that infection control protocols were being rolled out as part of the new County Hall Master Plan. In addition increased access to home and other flexible working would be one way to avoid infection. A suggestion was put forward that of the free flu vaccination being made available to all employees;
- (vi) The Committee welcomed attempts to increase flexible working practices. The Director gave assurances that flexible working policies and procedures were being rolled out across the Council to encourage a better work–life balance for staff.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the progress being made to achieve the corporate target of 7.5 days per FTE be noted;
- (b) That the steps being taken to extend flexible working opportunities at the Council be supported;
- (c) That consideration be given to the extension of a flu vaccination offer to all employees;
- (d) That the Director of Adults and Communities be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to report on the ways in which sickness absence is being managed in the Department;
- (e) That the Director of Corporate Resources be asked to investigate further how sickness absence is being managed at District Councils, the police, the fire service

and health organisations, and that the findings be presented in the Committee's consideration of sickness absence at its next meetings on 3 December 2015.

- (f) That future reports on sickness absence should include a detailed breakdown of long and short-term absence rates across the Council.

20. Pay Update 2016-17.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on recent proposed changes to pay, particularly for lower paid staff, to be implemented from 2016-17 and for the following 4 years. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

The Director advised that a review of the entire pay structure would need to be conducted in the light of the National Living Wage policy.

The Committee raised concern that the implementation of the National Living Wage could impact the Council's ability to compete with the private sector. This was highlighted as an issue particularly in respect of the recruitment and retention of specialised staff, such as those in IT and social care. The Committee was advised that in order to ensure the staff with the necessary skills were attracted and retained by the Council, an emphasis would need to be placed on both pay and non-pay benefits, such as the Local Government Pension Scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the pay update for 2016-17 be noted;
- (b) That a report on the scope and timeline of the work being undertaken to review the Council's pay structure be presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 3 December 2015.

21. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure: Summary of Action Plans.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented a summary of current Action Plans which contained provision for compulsory redundancy and details of progress in their implementation. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

22. Dates of Future Meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday 3 December 2015 at 10.00am.

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**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE: 3 DECEMBER 2015****ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE POLICY AND PROCEDURE****SUMMARY OF ACTION PLANS****REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****Introduction**

1. The purpose of this report is to present a summary of current Action Plans which contain provision for compulsory redundancy and details of progress in their implementation.

**Background**

2. At its meeting on 11 February 2010 the Committee approved a new Organisational Change Policy and Procedure (replacing the Policy in the Event of Redeployment and Redundancy) together with revised arrangements through which the Committee would exercise its oversight of the implementation of that procedure.
3. In accordance with that decision, summaries of current Action Plans are attached as follows:
  - Appendix A1 – Implementation Completed
  - Appendix A2 – Implementation Underway
4. The arrangements also involve presenting a summary of any outstanding comments/concerns raised by members of the Committee. There are no outstanding comments/concerns on this occasion.
5. Members are asked to indicate where they wish a representative of the Department concerned to be present to answer any questions in any particular case, if they have not already done so.

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

6. The Organisational Change Policy and Procedure is designed to ensure that changes which impact on employees are implemented in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

**Recommendation**

7. That the report be noted.

**Officer to Contact**

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**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER 2015**

**SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTION PLANS - IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETED**

Action Plan	Date Approved	Outcome
A&C - Strategy & Commissioning : Termination of 1 Fixed Term Contract	08/07/2015	1 compulsory redundancy
Closure of Snibston Discovery Museum	04/08/2015	4 compulsory redundancies

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## EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER 2015

### SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTION PLANS - IMPLEMENTATION UNDERWAY

Action Plan	Date Approved	Current Position	Next Steps	Max Compulsory Redundancies
A&C - Personal Care and Support - The Trees	06/01/2015	Final consultation meeting held	Rota to be confirmed	2 redundancies
A&C – Communities and Wellbeing – The Limes Day Centre	06/08/2015	Action Plan launched with 30 day consultation period	Notice for redundancies to be issued from 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	5 redundancies
CEX – Policy, Economy & Communities Service	15/04/2015	Structure implemented		1 redundancy
CEX – Strategy, Partnership & Communities : BI Service Review & Action Plan	30/10/2015	Formal consultation began 02/11/2015		6 redundancies
RES – People & Transformation : Departmental Management Team Stage 1	08/10/2015	Draft Action Plan launched on 13/10/15	Individual meetings to take place with the Assistant Directors	1 redundancy
RES - Restructuring of the Corporate Communications Unit	25/09/2015	Action Plan launched	Final action is being drawn up	1 redundancy
RES – Ending of Business Analyst Fixed Term Contracts	10/09/2015	Launched on 11 September 2015. Letters issued	Notice period has commenced and will end on 21st October 2015	3 redundancies
RES - Strategic Information Technology & Communications	02/10/2015	Launched Action Plan on 15 October 2015		1 redundancy

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**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**  
**3 DECEMBER 2015**

**EMPLOYEES AS FOSTER CARERS**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to obtain the Employment Committee's feedback in relation to the proposed changes to the Council's leave provisions for employees who are foster carers, prospective foster carers and shared lives carers.

**Background**

2. The Council currently spends a significant amount of money on independent foster carers due to a shortage of local authority foster carers. In order to address this issue, Children and Family Services are working on a 'foster friendly employer' initiative to encourage local businesses to support their employees, by offering flexible working opportunities and time off work, to become foster carers with the Council.
3. As part of this process, the Fostering and Adoption Team are keen to encourage more Leicestershire County Council (LCC) employees to become foster carers and wish to promote the support that is available to enable employees to take on this role. Currently only 1-2% of the Council's 120 fostering households are LCC employees.
4. At present, council employees who are foster carers, either with LCC or another authority, are allowed up to five days unpaid leave per year to attend necessary meetings and assessments related to their fostering responsibilities. This leave can be taken in whole or part days. Where both foster parents are employed by the Council only one of the individuals can take the leave or the leave may be apportioned between them.
5. Although there is a number of other supportive measures available, including flexible working to enable school drop offs or to attend meetings these are not currently actively promoted to employees who are, or wish to become foster carers.
6. To coincide with the 'foster friendly employer' initiative, a review is being undertaken of the guidance available to employees who are interested in becoming a foster carer. This includes whether the leave provisions are still appropriate particularly as the majority of other family-related leave offered by the Council is paid. For example, the Council allows employees who are prospective adoptive parents up to five days paid leave for the purpose of attending pre-adoption meetings, assessments and training. If both adoptive parents work for the Council, only one of the parents may take the leave or the leave may be apportioned between them.
7. In addition, there are other leave provisions where a significant paid leave is offered. For example, up to 15 days paid leave per year may be granted to employees who are

members or officials of certain public bodies, such as youth offending panels, school governors, probation boards and up to ten days paid leave a year may be granted when employees are representing their county or country at sporting fixtures.

### **Arrangements within Other Organisations**

8. To assist the Committee with their decision, the following are examples of the arrangements in place in other organisations:
- (a) The Department for Education (DfE) - In April 2014 the DfE became the government's first foster family friendly employer. Employees who foster, as well as those who care for children of family or friends (such as a grandparent caring permanently for their grandchild) will be able to take up to 20 days paid leave in a twelve month period to attend training or meetings relating to their role as a carer. Up to five days leave can be taken during the assessment process, an additional five days during the approval process or when caring for a foster child (for meetings, training or unforeseen emergencies such as an emergency placement) and up to ten days leave at the start of a planned permanent placement. Employees will also be entitled to additional unpaid time off to deal with unexpected emergencies, such as welcoming a child into their home at short notice.
  - (b) North Lincolnshire Council - The Council has recently adopted the leave provisions set out in the DfE's policy.
  - (c) Cumbria County Council (CCC)- Up to five days additional paid leave of absence per year can be granted to any member of staff undertaking training related to their role as a foster carer (or applicant foster carer). CCC is already a foster friendly employer.
  - (d) Coventry City Council - An employee who is applying to become a foster carer may be granted five days extra paid leave to attend any meetings, home visits or training sessions as part of the preparation and assessment process. If a couple is applying and they both work for the Council, they are both allowed the extra leave so that they can support each other. Once approved as foster carers, employees are allowed extra three days' leave per year to attend meetings or training and to cover appointments.
  - (e) Brighton and Hove City Council - Employees may be granted up to three days paid leave per year to attend meetings, home visits, mandatory training, as part of the preparation and assessment process. Where both partners are employees of the council, the leave entitlement will apply to each partner. Employees who become approved foster carers may be granted up to five days paid leave per year to attend training courses and review meetings in connection with the child's placement. Where both partners are employees, the leave entitlement will apply to each partner. Additional unpaid leave can also be requested. These leave provisions only apply where the employee is becoming a foster carer with the council.
  - (f) Edinburgh City Council - Employees who are prospective foster carers may be granted up to three days paid leave to cover the preparation and assessment process to be registered as a foster carer. An accepted foster carer may be granted up to a day paid leave and up to four days unpaid leave in any twelve month period to enable him/her to attend urgent meetings convened in respect of

the placement of a child. Additional unpaid leave to care for a placed child may be granted.

- (g) Islington Council - Up to five days paid leave is available to employees who are registered foster carers to foster a baby or a child (up to the age of 16). This leave is to allow the prospective foster carer to attend related meetings, training sessions or help with the child's settlement into their new home.
- (h) Tesco - Up to five days paid leave is available to employees to apply to become a foster carer or attend foster care related meetings or training. Foster carers are also entitled to emergency leave if an emergency arises. In addition, all staff are able to swap their shifts to help them juggle their family or other commitments, and to take compassionate leave if the need arises.
- (i) O2 - Fostering leave policy gives all employees being assessed for foster care approval up to five days paid leave per year so that they can attend meetings and other activities related to their application. If an employee needs more than five days fostering leave, they are able to speak to their manager about other time out options, such as holiday, work back-time or unpaid leave.

### **Further Considerations**

- 10. It is intended that any provisions agreed would only apply where the employee is a foster carer with LCC or another council. It would not apply to those who are independent foster carers.
- 11. It is also proposed that an element of paid leave could also be introduced for employees who are applying to become a shared lives carer within Adults and Communities Department. As shared lives carers are all self-employed, this provision is only likely to apply to part-time employees. A limited amount of paid leave (for instance up to five days) would be beneficial to enable these employees to attend matching appointments and training.
- 12. A substantial amount of part-time employees who do become shared lives carers tend to leave the Council's employment to undertake this role on a full-time basis.

### **Recommendations**

- 13. Based on the information set out in this report, the Committee is asked to consider whether it would be appropriate to review the Council's existing leave provisions for employees who are or wish to become foster carers and consider implementing an element of paid leave. Specifically, the views of the Committee are sought with regard to the following:-
  - (a) The amount of paid leave being introduced to support employees who are foster carers or shared lives carers;
  - (b) The amount of paid leave that should be provided for each type of carer;
  - (c) Whether, in relation to foster carers, they wish to determine, as some of the organisations listed above have, the purposes for which this time can be used or whether they are happy to allow the leave to be used flexibly.

14. Subject to the Committee's views, the Leave Arrangements Policy will be updated and the new leave provisions promoted to employees along with how the Smarter Working Policy can support these employees to balance their commitments.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Circulation under Local Issue Alert Procedure**

None.

### **Officer to Contact**

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### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

15. The policy proposed seeks to ensure that changes which impact on employees as foster carers promote greater equality and are implemented in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.





**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**  
**3 DECEMBER 2015**

**PAY UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Employment Committee in relation to pay. Following discussions at the last meeting about the potential impact of the implementation of the National Living Wage and noting forthcoming pay negotiations, the Committee asked for a high level plan relating to work on pay and reward.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. The report presented to the Committee on 22 October 2015 outlined the recent and forthcoming changes to pay, particularly those in relation to lower paid staff and also to begin to explore the implications of these changes on the pay structure as a whole.

**Review of Pay Structure**

3. Strategic Human Resources and Strategic Finance are working jointly to examine the options available to the Council in order to implement the National Living Wage. Particular consideration will be given to:
  - Cost and how this is managed;
  - Pay differentials and how the increase to at least £9 per hour by 2020 will impact upon these.
4. Further exploratory work is being carried out in relation to medium and long term pay and reward objectives and challenges, including:
  - (a) Market analysis, in order to benchmark Leicestershire's pay structure;
  - (b) Considering broadening or merging grades, which may help us to recruit and retain specialist skills, and also provide flexibility to pay market rate salaries for hard to recruit posts;
  - (c) Considering the number of incremental points within each grade;
  - (d) Considering how new ways of working could reduce the overtime bill, for example four days on, four days off rotas and annualised hours contracts. This links into additional work that is being carried out in relation to flexible deployment;
  - (e) Reviewing recruitment and retention initiatives and incentives.

5. This work will be carried out over the next twelve months, whilst monitoring the direction and impact of the national pay negotiations for 2016-17.

**Next steps**

6. Options in relation to the direct impact of implementing the National Living Wage and also the longer term work will be presented at future Employment Committee meetings.

**Recommendation**

7. The Employment Committee is asked to note the report.

**Background Papers.**

Report to the Employment Committee 22 October 2015 - "Pay Update 2016-17"  
<http://ow.ly/V11fo>

**Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure.**

None.

**Officer to contact**

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**Equality and Human Rights Implications**

8. Any review of pay will need to take into consideration equal pay issues, and also any other Equality and Human Rights Implications to ensure the policy is fair and non-discriminatory.



## EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE: 3 DECEMBER 2015

### SICKNESS ABSENCE

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

##### Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Employment Committee with an update on the Council's overall position on sickness absence at the end of Quarter 2 2015-16.

##### Background

2. The Employment Committee considered the end of year sickness absence position on 22 October 2015.
3. The Committee requested further information about the sickness absence levels within Leicestershire Borough and District Councils and for discussions to take place with those County Councils (table provided in the report dated 22 October 2015) with lower levels of absence to understand any specific activity they were undertaking to effectively manage attendance.

##### Absence Data

Table 1.

Department Days per FTE	2014/15	15/16 Q1	15/16 Q2
Chief Executive's	5.55	6.01	6.11
Environment and Transport	8.23	7.66	7.63
Children and Families Services	10.37	9.31	9.42
Corporate Resources	7.86	7.86	7.13
Adults and Communities	12.24	11.98	11.90
Public Health	9.14	7.48	5.28
<b>Total:</b>	<b>9.83</b>	<b>9.39</b>	<b>9.32</b>
ESPO	12.07	12.25	12.03
EMSS	6.65	6.76	7.52

4. At the end of Quarter 2 2015-16 Chief Executive's, Public Health and Corporate Resources are all under the corporate target of 7.5 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE). Environment and Transport are also making steady progress toward this target.
5. Children and Family Services have made improvements since the end of the financial year however there has been a small increase in sickness absence since the last quarter.
6. Adults and Communities Department is making reductions in sickness levels however the number of days absent per FTE is still at a concerning level.
7. ESPO and EMSS sickness absence is not included within the Council's overall figure, however both areas of the organisation are taking action towards achieving the 7.5 days per FTE target.

### **Reasons for Absence**

Table 2.

<b>Reasons % days lost</b>	<b>End of Q 1 2015-16</b>	<b>End of Q2 2015-16</b>
Back & neck problems	4.76	4.89
Other musculo-skeletal	6.04	5.71
Stress/depression, mental health	5.94	6.54
Viral infection	27.09	28.58
Neurological	5.33	5.40
Genito-Urinary/Gynaecological	2.77	2.93
Pregnancy Related	1.46	1.71
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	18.73	18.62
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	0.79	0.81
Chest, respiratory	4.65	4.79
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental	4.55	4.44
Other	10.74	8.81
Nothing stated	7.13	6.78

8. Table 2. details the percentage of days lost at the end of Quarter 1 and 2 2015-16. The two highest reasons for absence continue to be viral infections and stomach problems.

### **Comparative Data & Actions**

9. At the last meeting of this Committee, sickness absence data for 2014-15 was requested from Leicestershire Borough and District Councils. East Midlands Councils assisted in providing data from 5 councils. In days lost per FTE these figures were 3.45, 7.41, 8.1, 8.45 and 9.31.
10. Discussions have taken place with other county councils who have reported less than 7 days absence per FTE in order to share and generate ideas to improve attendance. One council has implemented a policy which directly links performance (including attendance) to the entitlement to receive and maintain pay increments. This is an area which could be developed for consideration as part of the review of pay and reward. The high level plan for this is the subject of a separate report to the Committee.

### **Attendance Management Action Plan**

11. The following actions have taken place since the last meeting of the Employment Committee :
- (a) Adults and Communities, Children and Family Services and Environment and Transport are undertaking Absence Star Chamber sessions;
  - (b) Prioritisation of managers for the attendance management workshops has been agreed and sessions are being scheduled;
  - (c) Employment Committee will receive a separate paper on the review of Mental Health First Aiders;
  - (d) Information for the attendance improvement plan audit has been collected and the audit has commenced.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

### **Background Papers**

Report to the Employment Committee 22 October 2015 - "Sickness Absence"  
<http://ow.ly/V11jV>

### **Circulation under the Local Issue Alert Procedure**

None.

**Officer to Contact**

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**Equal and Human Rights Implications**

12. The attendance management policy has been subject to an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment, and this was published in 2014. There are no equalities and human rights issues arising directly from this report.