

**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2026****WORKFORCE REPORT 2026 – 2027 QUARTER 1****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES****Purpose of the Report**

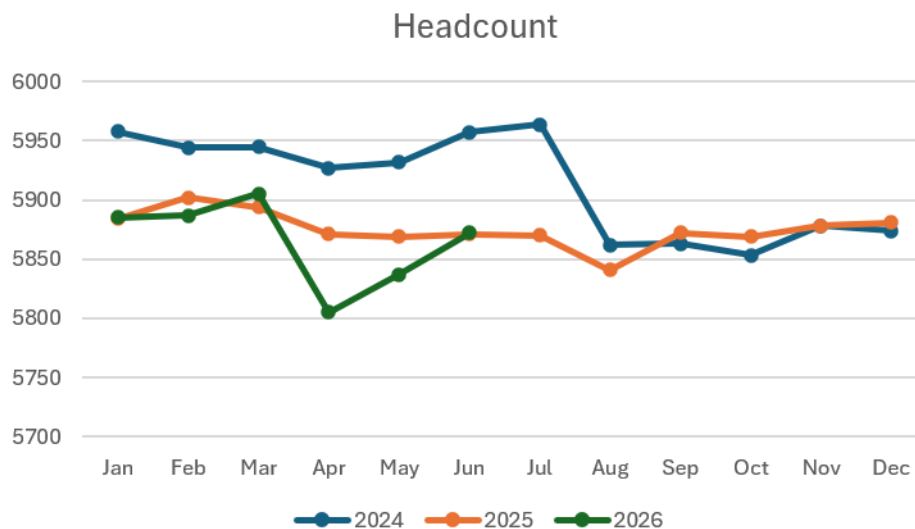
1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Employment Committee with Quarter 1 workforce information for 2026/2027, setting out the scale and composition of the Council's workforce, highlighting key workforce trends and supporting the Committee in discharging its constitutional assurance role.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

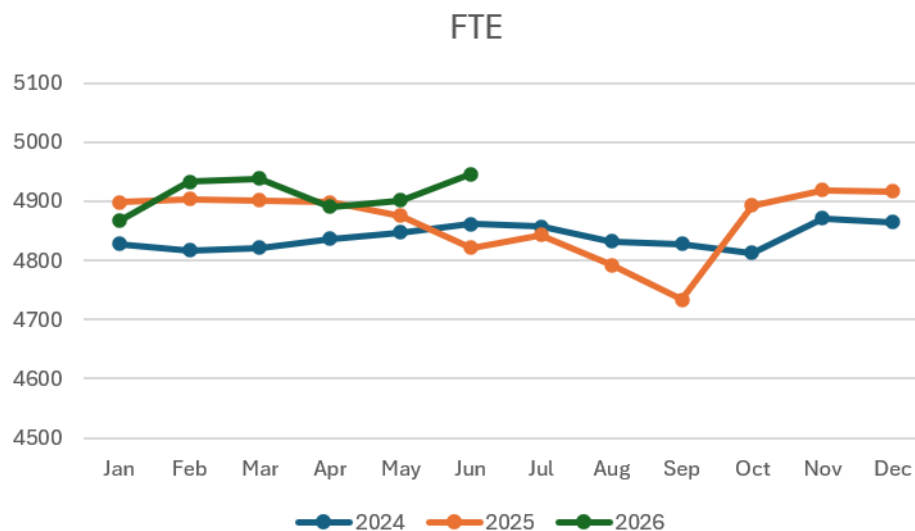
2. The staff employed by Leicestershire County Council are governed by the Terms and Conditions that form part of their contract of employment.
3. The Committee considered the Annual Workforce Report 2025/2026 on 21 May 2026.

Background**Organisational Headcount and FTE**

4. This includes employees on Leicestershire County Council terms and conditions but excludes those employed within ESPO and Maintained Schools. As of June 2026, the Council's headcount was 5872, which is a full time equivalent (FTE) of 4945.64.
 - Adults and Cultural Services (1578 Headcount, 1266.06 FTE)
 - Children and Family Services (1645 Headcount, 1450.45 FTE)
 - Corporate Resources (1145 Headcount, 945.37 FTE)
 - Growth, Environment and Transport (1117 Headcount, 936.89 FTE)
 - Public Health, Communities, Law and Governance (385 Headcount, 346.87 FTE)
5. The Council has experienced a decrease in headcount of 72 but an increase in FTE of 127.96 compared with this time last year.
6. Graphs 1 and 2 below provide the headline organisational trend for headcount and FTE, supported by the definitions used for workforce reporting.



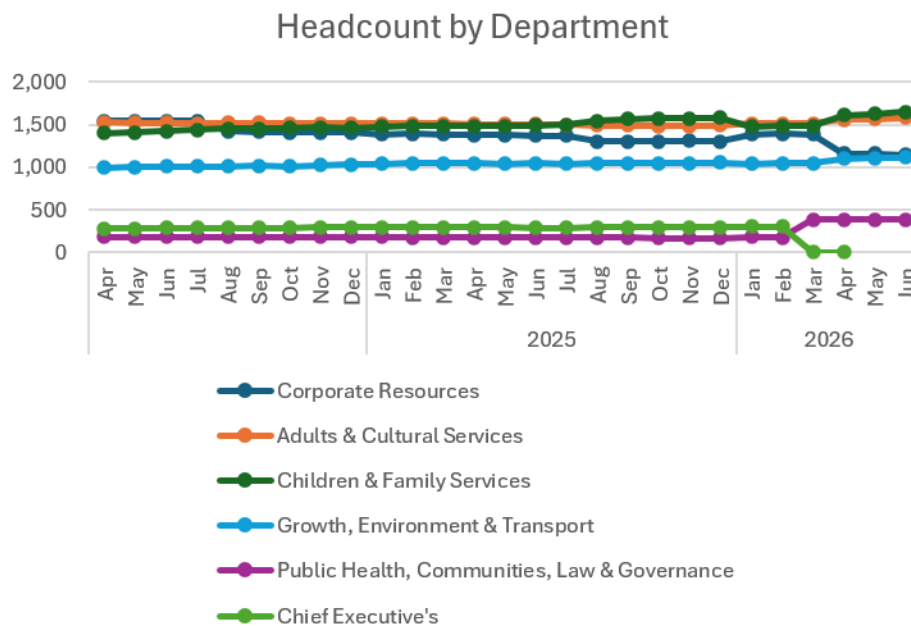
Graph 1



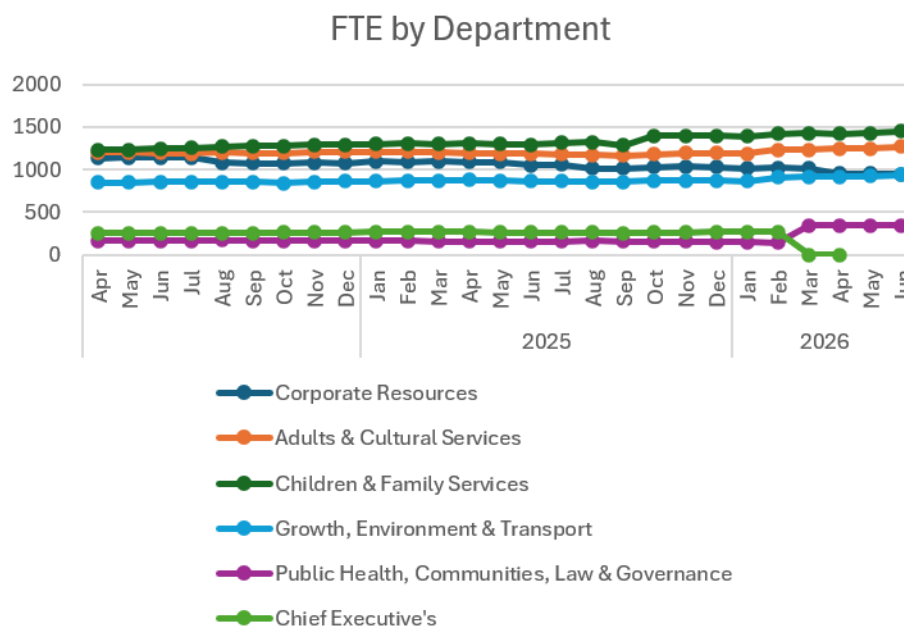
Graph 2

7. Graph 1 shows a reduction in overall headcount over the period, with the June 2026 position lower than the equivalent point last year.
8. Graph 2 shows an increase in FTE over the same period, indicating that the Council's contracted workforce capacity has increased despite the reduction in employee numbers.
9. The year-on-year comparison and the trend shown in Graphs 1 and 2 indicate that the Council employs fewer people overall but has more contracted capacity. This reflects changes in the make-up of the workforce, including working patterns, the balance between full-time and part-time roles, and structural or service changes during the period. This can make day-to-day workforce management more straightforward, for example by reducing the number of APRs, one-to-ones and individual employment arrangements that managers need to oversee. However, the trend and impact will continue to be monitored alongside service demand, vacancies and recruitment activity.

Departmental Headcount and FTE



Graph 3



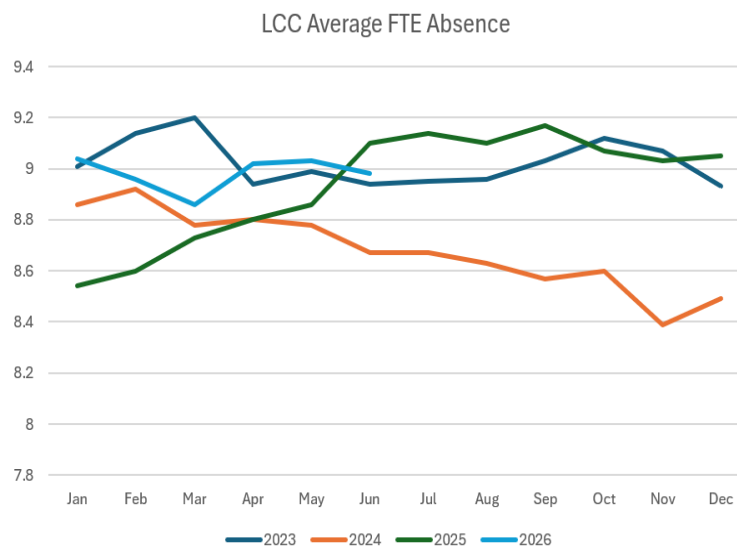
Graph 4

10. Departmental headcount and FTE data is affected by structural and reporting changes during the period. In particular, Corporate Resources reduced following the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) transfer of school kitchen staff to new suppliers, while Public Health, Communities, Law and Governance increased following the transfer of services from the former Chief Executive's Department. Departmental name changes also affect year-on-year comparability.
11. Graphs 3 and 4 provide the departmental breakdown of headcount and FTE, showing where the most significant movements have occurred.

12. Corporate Resources shows the most significant reduction in both headcount and FTE, largely reflecting the TUPE transfer of school kitchen staff to new suppliers rather than an underlying reduction across the wider department.
13. Public Health, Communities, Law and Governance shows an increase in both headcount and FTE, reflecting the movement of services from the former Chief Executive's Department into that department.
14. The departmental charts therefore show both workforce movement and the impact of organisational reconfiguration, so year-on-year comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

Absence

15. As at June 2026, the Council's sickness absence rate was 3.53%, equating to an average of 8.98 days lost per full-time employee over the previous 12 months.



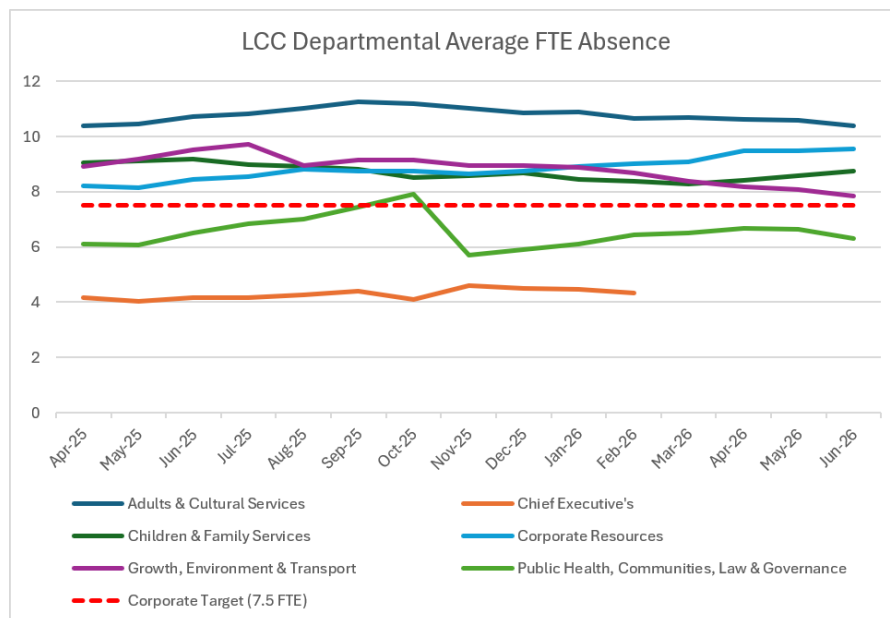
Graph 5

16. The Council has retained the 7.5-day target because it provides a consistent benchmark and maintains a clear expectation that absence needs to reduce. Revising the target upwards to reflect performance could risk normalising higher absence levels and weakening the focus on early intervention, wellbeing support and consistent management action.
17. The monthly breakdown shows that absence has remained within a relatively narrow range during 2026 to date, moving between 8.86 and 9.04 days lost per FTE. This suggests a stable position. Within Quarter 1, there has been a slight reduction from 9.02 days in April to 8.98 days in June. The June 2026 position is also marginally lower than June 2025, but remains above June 2024, indicating that further sustained improvement is needed before the Council moves closer to target.

Month	2023	2024	2025	2026
January	9.01	8.86	8.54	9.04
February	9.14	8.92	8.60	8.96
March	9.20	8.78	8.73	8.86
April	8.94	8.80	8.80	9.02
May	8.99	8.78	8.86	9.03
June	8.94	8.67	9.10	8.98

Table 6

18. The Council employs a wide range of professions across very different service areas, so departmental absence performance is particularly useful in understanding the overall absence position. It shows where absence pressures are concentrated, highlights variation between services and helps ensure that management action, wellbeing support and attendance interventions are targeted where they are most needed.



Graph 7

Department	Jun-26 rolling 12-month FTE days lost	Jun-26 % absence
Adults and Cultural Services	10.39	4.09%
Children and Family Services	8.75	3.45%
Corporate Resources	9.54	3.75%
Growth, Environment and Transport	7.85	3.09%
Public Health, Communities, Law and Governance	6.32	2.47%

Table 7

19. Adults and Cultural Services has the highest departmental absence rate at 4.09%, which is above the Council average and should remain a focus for departmental monitoring and support.

20. Public Health, Communities, Law and Governance has the lowest reported departmental absence rate at 2.47%, which is below the Council target equivalent and provides a useful comparator for understanding variation across services.
21. The departmental spread indicates that absence is not uniform across the organisation, and local management action should continue to be informed by service-specific patterns, causes and operational pressures.
22. Managers continue to actively manage any absences, conducting return to work interviews, monitoring the time, length and reasons for absence, referring individuals to Occupational Health, and following the informal and formal elements of the Council's Attendance Management Policy.
23. Stress, depression, and mental health remain the leading causes of long-term sickness absence within the organisation and the Council is committed to continuing to provide current targeted support and counselling interventions. Short-term absences are most frequently attributed to Covid-19, coughs, colds, and flu.

Absence reason	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 Q1
Stress, depression and mental health	31.4%	25.7%	28.2%	32.2%
Other musculoskeletal	13.2%	12.8%	12.4%	10.9%
Covid-19, coughs, colds and flu	11.5%	11.8%	11.3%	4.9%
Gastro, stomach and digestion	6.2%	8.1%	7.7%	7.4%
Chest and respiratory	4.0%	5.0%	3.9%	3.5%
Back and neck	6.0%	4.4%	3.9%	7.4%
Neurological	4.3%	4.4%	3.7%	5.4%
Cancer	4.7%	3.5%	4.0%	3.3%
Eye, ear, nose, mouth, dental and throat	3.4%	3.0%	4.3%	5.0%
Not disclosed	3.7%	6.6%	4.3%	3.8%

Table 8

24. The wider benchmarking position provides important context: the Council compares favourably with the NHS and remains broadly in line with the all-sector comparator when measured in average FTE days lost. However, absence remains above the Council's internal target, so benchmarking should be viewed as context rather than a reason to reduce management focus.

Benchmark comparator	Average FTE days lost	Equivalent % sickness absence
Leicestershire County Council (June 2026)	8.98	3.53%
Leicestershire County Council target	7.50	2.88%
NHS (April 2026)	17.61	5.0%
All sectors average (September 2025)	9.04	4.1%
Non-profit sector average (September 2025)	6.50	Not available
Private sector services average (September 2025)	9.10	Not available
Public services average (April 2025)	13.30	Not available

Table 9

25. Overall, the absence data shows a stable but persistently above-target position. While the Council compares favourably with some external benchmarks, absence remains above the internal target and varies across departments and absence reasons. The focus will therefore remain on consistent application of the Attendance Management Policy, early intervention, effective return-to-work discussions, Occupational Health referrals where appropriate, and targeted wellbeing support, particularly in relation to stress, depression and mental health.

Resource Implications

26. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Equality Implications

27. Changes in workforce demographics are to be reported on an annual basis. Currently planned for May 2027.
28. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Right Implications

29. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

30. It is recommended that Employment Committee note the content of the Workforce Quarter 1 Report 2026-2027.

Background Papers

Annual Workforce Report – 2025/26 – 21 May 2026

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=212&MId=8437&Ver=4>

Workforce Report - 2025/2026 Quarter 3 – 05 February 2026

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=212&MId=8436&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

31. None.

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