

## **SELECT COMMITTEE**

16 February 2022

**Present** – The Chair (Councillor Staveley) and Councillors Hull, Jaquin, Mercer, Moorby, Pighills, Shuttleworth, Solloway, and Whitaker.

**Officers** – The Chief Executive, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Communications, Customer Services and Partnerships Manager, Human Resources Manager and Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager.

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 8.30pm

### **Apologies for Absence –**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown and Brockbank.

### **Confirmation of Minutes –**

**Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting held 23 June 2021 are approved as a correct record.

### **Public Participation –**

There was no public participation.

### **Declarations of Interest –**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **Minutes for Report**

OS.474

### **Absence Management April - September 2021**

The Human Resources Manager submitted a report which presented an update on sickness absence statistics for April – September 2021.

The number of full time equivalent (FTE) absence is below target and long-term absence is at its lowest point. Total absence numbers increased in early 2021 and Covid was a factor in this. Back to work interviews are carried out by Line Managers and staff are encouraged to use Oasis counselling service. During April-September, there have been 4 referrals,

Members received a breakdown by service area. In Waste Management, short-term absence has increased whilst long term absence has decreased. In general, short-term absence has increased from last year with the main causes being linked to anxiety/stress and musculoskeletal issues. Long term absences have not been work-related. Back to work interviews are carried out by Line Managers and staff are encouraged to use Oasis counselling service. During April-September, there have been 4 referrals. One Member pointed out that all 4 referrals are women and asked if this was because men choose not to take up the offer. The HR Manager explained that men have been referred to Oasis, and it is just coincidence that they are all women on this occasion.

The average days lost per employee due to Covid was 4.57 days. Up to 26 January 2022, there has been 66 positive Covid cases recorded. Most employees have been able to work from home whilst isolating, with the exception of staff in Waste Management where this is not possible. The Chief Executive pointed out that staff in Waste Management were testing more often and this can account for the high number of positive cases (47% of all cases).

The HR Manager was asked if the reduction in FTE absences is due to many staff being able to work from home. CDC continues to adopt a flexible working policy and managers have regular 121's with staff. The Chief Executive said that as a result of not being in the office as much, less staff caught other illnesses such as flu. Moving forward, service managers can decide if they want to continue a flexible working model.

Members were informed that a lot of HR policies are on hold until the new LGR is in place and the HR Manager is part of a working group for LGR policies.

All of the Members felt that CDC staff have worked hard during Covid, especially the way they were extremely quick in administering the business grants.

**Resolved** – That, the sickness absence statistics for the year up to 30 September 2021 are noted.

OS.475

### **Customer Services Call Handling Performance**

The Communications, Customer Services and Partnerships Manager submitted a report on Customer Service performance during 2021-22.

Fortunately, the contact centre has been unaffected by Covid as all staff are set up to work from home, although some do choose to come into the office. The Reception at Belle View Mill has fully re-opened again, but there has been a huge drop in visits over the last year as customers are getting used to accessing services digitally and sending enquiries by email. It is important to still provide face to face customer service to assist the communities who prefer this method (and given the demographics of the area).

For the 2020/21 financial year, the customer service team successfully answered 95% of calls against a target of 90%. For 2021/22 Quarter 1, they were below target (87.6%) but are on target for the rest of the year. The call performance monitoring that was introduced in November 2017 continues to operate and monthly statistics for each officer are produced. They are set a target for the number of calls they should be answering per day to reach the 90% call handling target. If they fail to reach this for a consecutive 3 month period, their team leader will have a one to one meeting with them. Call recording that was introduced in 2019 continues to monitor the quality of calls taken. Monthly statistics are shared with each advisor and presented to CLT.

Facebook continues to be a good platform to get messages out, the post of Communications Officer has been vacant for the last 3 months, but a new officer is starting next week.

A new Customer Services charter has been launched which recognises that some services have service specific standards that will be communicated to customers at first point of contact. The Customer Services Team is also addressing how calls are logged and passed onto the planning team so that there is a clear audit trail. The planning team now respond directly to callers. Members were disappointed with the response figures from planning and agreed to raise this with the Planning Improvement Board. The Chief Executive pointed out that there is a national shortage of planning officers and CDC, like every other authority, is struggling to recruit.

It was agreed that there is some benefit in providing customer services training and CDC staff can access NYCC's training programme which includes basic customer service training.

**Resolved –** That, the Customer Services Performance report 2021-22 is noted. That, the Planning Improvement Board is made aware of customer contact performance figures.

OS.476

**Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, 20 April 2022 at 6.30pm

Chairman.