

SELECT COMMITTEE

26th July 2017

Present – The Chairman (Councillor Staveley) and Councillors Brown, Graham, Mason, Shuttleworth, Solloway, Sutcliffe, Thompson and Whitaker.

Officer – Environmental Services and Housing Manager, Waste Operations Manager, Senior Human Resources Officer and Committee Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mercer, Moorby and Pighills.

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 7.26pm

The minutes of the Committee's Crime and Disorder meeting held on 28th June 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman, subject to an amendment in respect of reference to the technical capacity of the safety camera vans, to show that in responding to a question Inspector Crocker had stated that some discretion, 10% plus 2mph, was allowed over the speed limit.

Minutes for Report

OS.390

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT 2016-17

Further to Minute OS.370/16-17, the Senior Human Resources Officer submitted a report presenting the Council's sickness absence data for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, together with comparative data in respect of total days lost and long / short term absence in the period 2007-08 to 2015-16

For 2016/17 the Best Value Performance Indicator target for sickness absence had been set at 8.5 days absence per fulltime employee (FTE). The actual average number of days lost per FTE in the year had been 8.31 days; with the total number of days lost amounting to 1,576.1 compared to 1,532.6 in 2015-16. Long term absence had increased by 24% (854.60 days in total : 4.51 days per FTE) and short term had decreased by 12% (720.50 days in total : 3.80 days per FTE). Across all services there had been 95 staff (49%) with nil absence, an improvement of 11% on 2015-16. Given the nature of the work the waste management service had historically shown the highest rate of absence, however due to good management practice and the support of a dedicated human resources representative, short term absence had reduced by 35% when compared to 2015-16. The Environmental Services and Housing Manager pointed out that the North Yorkshire Waste Partnership was currently looking at a benchmarking exercise on sickness absence, the outcome of which he would be able to share with the Committee. In presenting her report the Human Resources Officer highlighted the initiatives currently in place, the arrangements for absence monitoring and proposed initiatives, including consideration being given to the Council trialling a medical telephone service which employees, struggling to access an appointment with their own surgery, would be able to access and speak to a doctor. The cost to the Council would be approximately £6,500 per annum (£2.20 per employee per month). Statistics provided showed organisations using the service had experienced a reduction in absence.

During the course of the ensuing discussion Members raised a number of comments and questions, including the following, and received replies from the Human Resources officer as indicated.

a. Compared to the national average of four days, the Council's target of 8 days absence per fulltime employee was a little disappointing.

b. Waste management was to be congratulated on the work done in improving rates of absence; it would be interesting if future reports could show the position if the figures for waste management were separated out. Response : Yes, that would be possible.

c. Bearing in mind the proactive approach adopted by management within waste management, were managers within the remainder of the Council assessed on their efforts in managing sickness within their respective areas. Response : Managers were aware of their responsibilities for absence management and were monitored.

d. Could future reports provide an indication as to the estimated cost to the Council of sickness absence. Response : The estimated cost would be provided.

In discussing the proposed medical telephone service trial, Members expressed mixed views with regard to support or otherwise for the Council trialling the service, officers were asked to take those views into account in considering whether to progress the proposed trial. The Chairman indicated that the Committee would welcome a further report / information on the proposal before a decision was taken to proceed. In closing the discussion the Chairman thanked the Senior Human Resources Officer for her attendance and requested submission of a report, incorporating the additional information now requested at (b) and (d) above, in respect of the mid-year position on absence.

OS.391

NEXT MEETING - COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Further to Minute OS.389/17-18, Members were asked to note that arrangements had been made for Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire, to attend the Committee's meeting on 6th September 2017 to present / discuss her business case for the future governance of the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. In commenting on the proposed meeting some members expressed the opinion that it would be helpful to involve representatives of the North Yorkshire Fire Authority in the meeting, or at least have an awareness of that Authority's position.

It was agreed that all Members of Council be invited to attend and participate in the meeting.

Chairman.