

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>EMPLOYEE RESOURCING</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Mike Murphy Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development	
<b>Background Papers</b>		<b>Public Report: Yes</b>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.	
	<b>Signed off by the Deputy Section 151 Officer: Yes</b>	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes</b>	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	There are no direct staffing or corporate implications to consider.	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes</b>	
<b>Reason Agenda Item Submitted to Scrutiny Committee</b>	To provide members with information about the current workforce capacity and resourcing considerations in response to a request from the Committee.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>That the report be noted.</b>	

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides information about the Council’s workforce and outlines the measures being undertaken to address the recruitment and retention issues in some parts of the workforce that can, from time to time, impact on service delivery ambitions and effectiveness.

The report details the improvements that have been made to the Council’s offer in terms of pay and non-pay benefits to seek to both make the Council an attractive employer to perspective applicants and to retain existing staff.

The Council draws candidates from a wide range of occupational areas – from solicitors to plumbers to refuse operatives, drivers, and accountants to name a few. This means the job markets the Council competes in are varied and complex and increasingly the Council is in competition with the private sector where there is often greater flexibility around pay and benefits options.

Nationally there are well documented shortages of staff in some professional areas. The ones that have most directly affected this Council in recent years are those in the Planning, Accountancy, Audit, Legal and Environmental Health areas. The Council has also experienced difficulties in recruiting HGV drivers, some skilled craft workers, and the availability of some “unskilled” workers has on occasion been problematic.

## 2.0 TURNOVER / WORKFORCE NUMBERS

2.1 Turnover in the workforce has varied in the past few years. Unsurprisingly the turnover during the year of the COVID pandemic and associated lockdowns was low, with just fifty-six leavers from permanent and contract roles, amounting to a turnover rate of 10.1%. The turnover increased to 18.3% during 2021/22 in the wake of the pandemic and fell back to a level of 15.4% in 2022/23. During 2023/24 the turnover rate fell to 11.92% which is a “normal” or healthy level of workforce turnover. It is important to recognise that the recruitment and retention difficulties are confined to small (but significant) areas of the workforce. Is it also worth recognising that this is not just confined to this Council, other councils locally, regionally and nationally are all experiencing similar challenges and work is in progress at these levels too.

2.2 The size of the workforce has been stable in the past few years, as demonstrated in the table below.

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Average headcount	553.83	550.67	544.14	579.00

## 3.0 AGE PROFILE OF THE WORKFORCE

Age	Over 60	51 to 60	41 to 50	31 to 40	21 to 30	Under 21
Grand Total	71	167	154	101	73	13
% of workforce	12.3	28.8	26.6	17.4	12.6	2.2

3.1 The Council has ageing workforce, with a high proportion of employees aged fifty and over, with relatively low numbers of younger workers. This is not dissimilar to other councils. As such, it is recognised that the Council needs to develop approaches to attract and retain employees in the lower age cohorts, through apprenticeships and career development and succession plans. There is also a need to retain and attract older workers in some occupational areas where the numbers of skilled available workers numbers are low.

## 4.0 RECRUITMENT AND ADVERTISING

Year	Adverts	Average applications per vacancy
2020-21	87	6.34
2021-22	137	3.20
2022-23	78	3.49
2023-24	90	4.0

The table above shows the number of adverts placed in each of the past four years. Overall, the number of applicants per vacancy has fallen during the period. The trend was undoubtedly affected by the COVID pandemic period, but there is a downward trend overall which in part reflects changes to the national labour markets. There has been a marginal improvement in the last year, but this is not significant.

- 4.1 The Council is constantly reviewing its advertising strategies. The Indeed platform is used to provide national coverage and the Ashby and Coalville Nub news local website are used for all vacancies.

Specialist journals and their associated websites are also used depending on the role, for example when seeking roles at Corporate Leadership Team level, the Council will often use the Local Government Chronicle or other specialist professional journals.

LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media, and Forces families' jobs are also used. The Human Resources team works closely with the Communications team to further improve job advertisements and approaches including wider use of social media options.

The use of social media and methods / approaches to ensure our job roles appeal to the younger generations when seeking to fill roles are also being reviewed.

- 4.2 The Council's recruitment processes have also been reviewed to try to make the process easier for potential applicants by accepting CV's and a reduced application form. This is to try to make the application process more customer friendly for roles where applicants may have low levels of literacy. In areas of high-volume regular recruitment, managers have been encouraged to have "rolling" adverts.
- 4.3 Work is also underway at national and regional level to promote the Local Government sector and the opportunities available as it has been recognised that these recruitment and retention concerns run across all types of local authorities' country wide.
- 4.4 The Council has previously used an external search consultancy for job roles at Chief Officer level (Chief Executive, Directors, and Heads of Service). The final appointment decisions are delegated to the Appointments Committee (with a final consideration at Council when appointing a Chief Executive).

## **5.0 APPRENTICES**

The Council currently has ten apprentices in post and a further four other employees undertaking apprentice funded training with eight different training providers ranging from Stephenson College to Nottingham Trent University.

The “quota” numbers designated in the early days of the apprenticeship scheme do not apply now. This Council was previously 7.5 employees. The apprentice numbers struggled during the COVID period due to issues around supervision support and college course availability. The apprenticeship scheme now provides more flexibility around higher-level qualifications and is proving an effective scheme for both the apprentices and the Council. A number of the Council's previous apprentices have moved into permanent vacancies and developed their careers following their training.

The Council has in the last two years encouraged younger members of staff to take part in the Young Local Authority of the Year challenge - to support their career development. The Council's team was runner up this year.

In addition, the Council provides the opportunity for staff to take part in the East Midlands Council's Tri-Sector Challenge where staff from across the Council compete with other Council's becoming a Leadership Team for the day.

The Council has also encouraged participation in the District Council's Network Leadership Development Programme, with two managers benefiting from this opportunity. Also add that senior managers, including the Chief Executive are mentoring participants on this programme.

The Council is also investigating the possibility of a sponsorship for an undergraduate placement from the National Graduate Development Programme. Graduate placements with our local universities are also encouraged where possible.

## **6.0 AGENCY WORKERS**

6.1 Some areas of the Council are very dependent on the use of agency workers. The rates payable through an umbrella Agency provider have been increased to attract workers particularly in craft and manual roles – but also in professional roles such as solicitors, environmental health workers, finance, and planning. The preference is always to recruit directly where possible, and agency workers are encouraged to apply for permanent vacancies. However, there have been a number of occasions where there is a reluctance to move due to the premium rates being provided while on agency work. It is important to note that managers are encouraged to contain agency spend levels within existing staffing budgets wherever possible.

## **7.0 PAY ARRANGEMENTS**

7.1 The Council has a single status agreement in place which covers most of the workforce. The pay and grading scheme is linked to the national pay spine through the National Joint Council job evaluation pay grading scheme, and these arrangements have been effective in minimising risks around equal pay. The single status agreement was signed in 2005 and has been updated in line with the

changes to the national pay scale and in accordance with our commitment to the voluntary living wage annually.

- 7.2 The single status agreement includes a process for market supplements where there have been difficulties in recruiting to a post. The process requires for the post to have been unsuccessfully advertised on two occasions, and at that time a market analysis of similar vacancies can be undertaken using similarly sized local authority comparators. If the analysis shows a market discrepancy, then market supplements in the form of additional increments may be added to the post for a temporary (four year) period. The market supplements process has been used rarely since 2005 but has needed to be used more frequently in the past few years in the professional areas where we have experienced recruitment difficulties. These exercises have led to supplements being applied to posts in audit, legal services, and planning.
- 7.3 There have been recent situations where a whole service area is at service risk due to significant recruitment difficulties. In these circumstances, the Council can undertake a wider market analysis of all professional posts and add market supplements to both vacant roles and to existing employees currently in post.
- 7.4 The market supplements option has not always been effective in recruiting to some vacancies and further add-ons including lease cars and “golden hellos” can be considered for difficult to recruit to roles.

## **8.0 NON-PAY BENEFITS**

- 8.1 The Council has improved its non-pay benefits for employees to seek to improve the recruitment offer and to retain existing employees. The employee benefits package now includes the following: -
- Health Cash back scheme (covers optical, dental, health screening, prescriptions, consultations etc)
  - Salary sacrifice green personal lease car scheme.
  - Subsidised Leisure facility
  - 24/7 Counselling line
  - Leadership Development programme
  - Investors in People award at silver level. (Training and development)
  - Free will writing service.
  - Purchase of additional leave (salary sacrifice)
  - Flexible hybrid working scheme.
  - Cycle to work scheme (salary sacrifice)
  - Relocation scheme
  - Lease car scheme (selected posts only)
  - Car allowances
  - Standby and call out scheme.
  - Free car parking
  - New refurbished offices accommodation

The above non-pay benefits put us in a leading position compared to most Councils in the region.

## 9.0 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 We are continuing to review our recruitment and retention options to ensure the Council remains competitive in its various Labour markets. A report is currently in preparation following a Corporate Leadership Team and Managers task and finish group and will form part of the developing updated People management plan for the Council.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	A well-run Council
Policy Considerations:	Single status policy adopted by Council in 2005.
Safeguarding:	None
Equalities/Diversity:	Equality and diversity considerations are intrinsic to recruitment, development and people management policies.
Customer Impact:	Staff resource issues can impact on service delivery arrangements.
Economic and Social Impact:	None
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	None
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Not applicable.
Risks:	The corporate risk of inadequate staffing resources is included in the corporate risk register.
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