

FORMAL RESPONSE OR CONSULTATION REQUESTS FROM THE CABINET AND/OR SELECT COMMITTEES FOLLOWING MATTERS REFERRED BY THE COMMITTEE

- (a) Performance Monitoring: LPI HR 003 – Number of working days lost through long term sickness absence per FTE (>20cumulative days) (Response from Services Select Committee - 19 June 2012, referred on 13 March 2012)

10. Sickness Absence

The Human Resources Manager, Syreeta Gill, introduced herself to the Committee and gave a brief description of her career background.

She reported that at the meeting of the Performance and Governance Committee on 13 March 2012, a Performance Monitoring report was considered which highlighted areas across the council where performance was not meeting target. Due to Members concerns surrounding the levels of sickness absence it was resolved that the matter be referred to the Services Select Committee to review. The report updated Members on the levels of sickness absence across the council and set out an analysis of sickness absence levels across the council, incorporating trends from previous years and available benchmarking. The strategy and actions to reduce sickness absence levels was also included for Members consideration.

Members discussed the differences between the statistics on manual and non manual staff. In response to questions the Human Resources Manager advised that it was difficult to find comparable data with the private sector. The Director of Corporate Resources (Deputy Chief Executive) advised that he would need to confirm but that the private sector was around 7.1 days lost to sickness absence per year compared to 9.6 days in local government.

Action 4: The Director of Corporate Resources (Deputy Chief Executive) to obtain confirmation of the figures.

Members agreed that it was a clear report with helpful statistics., and were very pleased with the progress made on reducing sickness absence. A Member stressed the importance of monitoring the quality of return to work interviews. Another Member queried whether flu jabs were provided, advised that positive working from home could help reduce sickness absence, and queried whether the time between the first day of long term sickness and a possible termination period could be reduced by swifter action by managers. It was confirmed that free flu jabs were not provided. The Vice Chairman whilst agreeing with the general point made about speed of action added a note of caution that very often a certain period of time was required in order to prove due process.

The Director of Corporate Resources (Deputy Chief Executive) reported that a number of factors had helped reduce the figures which included a change to the Occupational Health service provider and improved practices for managers including the return to work procedures.

Action 5: That the report be appended to the referral back to Performance and Governance Committee.

Resolved: That the levels of sickness absence be noted and the planned action to reduce the levels of sickness absence, endorsed.