
SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on
Monday, 11th February, 2019 at 10.30 am

(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 10.00 a.m.)

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

- G Almas - Beeston and Holbeck;
- A Blackburn - Farnley and Wortley;
- S Firth - Harewood;
- P Grahame (Chair) - Cross Gates and Whinmoor;
- R Grahame - Burmantofts and Richmond Hill;
- D Jenkins - Killingbeck and Seacroft;
- J McKenna - Armley;
- M Robinson - Harewood;
- A Smart - Armley;
- P Wray - Hunslet and Riverside;

Please note: Certain or all items on this agenda may be recorded

Principal Scrutiny Adviser:
Angela Brogden
Tel: 37 88661

Produced on Recycled Paper

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25* of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded).</p> <p>(* In accordance with Procedure Rule 25, notice of an appeal must be received in writing by the Head of Governance Services at least 24 hours before the meeting).</p>	
2			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p>RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:</p> <p>No exempt items have been identified.</p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
3			<p>LATE ITEMS</p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)</p>	
4			<p>DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS</p> <p>To disclose or draw attention to any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and paragraphs 13-16 of the Members' Code of Conduct.</p>	
5			<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.</p>	
6			<p>MINUTES - 21ST JANUARY 2019</p> <p>To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2019.</p>	1 - 8
7			<p>ELECTIONS, REGISTRARS AND LAND AND PROPERTY SEARCH SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT</p> <p>To consider a report from the Director of Communities & Environment which presents a summary of Elections, Registrars and Land and Property Search Services performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city and other performance areas relevant to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources).</p>	9 - 14

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
8			<p>BUSINESS RATES APPEALS</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support summarising key information to help prompt further discussion surrounding business rates appeals and ways of addressing local authority exposure to appeals risk and volatility.</p>	15 - 24
9			<p>EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING</p> <p>To consider a report from the Director of Resources and Housing which provides an update in relation to employee health and wellbeing.</p>	25 - 46
10			<p>UPDATE - STAFF SURVEY</p> <p>To receive a report from the Director of Resources and Housing presenting a summary of the proposals for the Council's Staff Survey which is due to launch in Spring 2019.</p>	47 - 52
11			<p>THE MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF VOID PROPERTIES IN COUNCIL OWNERSHIP - DRAFT STATEMENT OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support presenting the Board's draft Statement following its review of the management and financial implications of void properties in Council ownership.</p>	53 - 54
12			<p>WORK SCHEDULE</p> <p>To consider the Scrutiny Board's work schedule for the 2017/18 municipal year.</p>	55 - 64
13			<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Monday, 1st April 2019 at 11.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 10.30 am)</p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
			<p>THIRD PARTY RECORDING</p> <p>Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts on the front of this agenda.</p> <p>Use of Recordings by Third Parties – code of practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title. b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete. 	

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SCRUTINY BOARD (STRATEGY AND RESOURCES)

MONDAY, 21ST JANUARY, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor P Grahame in the Chair

Councillors G Almas, A Blackburn, S Firth,
R Grahame, D Jenkins, J McKenna,
M Robinson, A Smart and P Wray

CHAIRS COMMENT

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She wished everyone a Happy New Year as this was the first meeting of the Board in 2019.

51 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

52 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

53 Late Items

There were no late items.

54 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

On this occasion no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

55 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies.

56 Minutes - 12th November 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

57 Matters arising

Minute No. 45. Work Schedule

Further to the Board's discussion surrounding the Social Media Guidance Note, Members noted that the Chair subsequently met with the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support to discuss how further rigour can be brought to ensuring Members' awareness of the Guidance. Linked to this, there was an acknowledgement of a recent Member Code of Conduct Complaint case in Oxford City Council where an investigation recommended that the Council adopt a Social Media guidance for councillors with the purpose of encouraging members to at least aspire to act in a manner that is conducive to supporting the principles set out in the Code, even in their private capacity.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 11th February, 2019

To address this matter swiftly, the Chair had made a request to the Monitoring Officer and the Chair of Standards Committee, to support a similar application of the Social Media guidance document that we already have the benefit of in Leeds. This request had been positively received and assurance given that the Board's comments will form part of the Standard Committee's forthcoming review of the Guidance Note.

Minute No 47. Devolution

It was noted that Board Members had received a copy of the letter sent by the Chair to the Secretary of State and will be notified once a response has been received.

58 Financial Health Monitoring

The meeting was advised that Cllr. Lewis had other engagements to attend and therefore items 8, 9 and 10 were moved up the agenda on the agreement of the Board.

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support provided Board Members with information with regard to the financial health of those service areas that fall within the remit of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board.

Members were advised that the financial health monitoring report for month 7 had been considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on 19th December 2018.

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Councillor James Lewis – Executive Member for Resources and Sustainability
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor – Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Strategy
- Doug Meeson – Chief Officer Financial Services
- Richard Ellis – Head of Finance
- Mark Amson – Business Rates Manager
- John Bywater – Head of Finance

In consideration of the report, the following areas were discussed:

- *Street lighting* – The Board was informed that an over spend on street lighting was a reflection of the rise in energy prices. It was noted that action was already being taken to switch street lighting to LED and that whilst there would be initial costs involved, this change would be better economically going forward for the future;
- *Energy costs* - Members were advised of how the Council procures energy and manages costs, with reference made to the work being undertaken as part of the Council's wider Low Carbon Programme;

- *Business Rates* - An update in relation to Business Rates reminded Members of the links between Business Rates and the Budget. There was particular discussion surrounding Business Rates appeal cases. It was noted that the Valuation Office, who deal with appeals, provide figures on a monthly basis and that figures in December 2018 showed appeals reducing to 1,475. Whilst it was not possible to provide information on individual appeals, the Board learned of 300 appeal cases outstanding in relation to ATM's. Whilst this issue was thought to have been resolved with businesses winning the appeals, it was noted that the Valuation Office is now challenging the decision through the Supreme Court. Until this matter is resolved, these appeals cases cannot be closed out;
- *Parks and Countryside underspend* – Further clarification was sought regarding the reasons for the £50k underspend in this service area;
- *Aireborough Swimming Pool refurbishment* – Members discussed the financial impact of the delayed refurbishment works, acknowledging that this was a result of additional essential capital works being identified;
- *Kirkgate Market increased security costs* – It was noted that security guards had been employed at Kirkgate Market due to Anti-social behaviour around the markets area. It was noted that the Anti-social behaviour had now dropped since the introduction of the security guards;
- *Carnival and Black Music Festival Events* – The Board was informed that additional spending had been incurred for such events linked to required safety measures;
- *Nationality Checking Service* - More detailed information was requested from Electoral and Regulatory Services in relation to the Nationality Checking Service.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the content of the report.
- b) That the Board be provided with the information requested.

59 Initial 2019/20 Budget Proposals

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support set out the initial budget proposals for 2019/20. In accordance with the Council's budget and policy framework it was referred by the Executive Board to Scrutiny for consideration.

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Councillor James Lewis – Executive Member for Resources and Sustainability
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor – Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Strategy
- Doug Meeson – Chief Officer, Financial Services
- Richard Ellis – Head of Finance
- Mark Amson – Business Rates Manager

- John Bywater – Head of Finance
- Cluny Macpherson – Chief Officer, Culture and Sport

In consideration of the report, the following areas were discussed:

- *Elected Member training* – The Board raised the issue of Member Development and the potential use of the Apprenticeship Levy. However, it was advised that only accredited training programmes could qualify for the Apprenticeship Levy and that the budget allows for Member development separately.
- *Managing financial risks* – Particular reference was made to recent studies and reports from the National Audit Office regarding the financial sustainability of local authorities. Whilst it was noted that other authorities were facing severe financial pressures in services such as Adult Social Care and Children’s Services, such pressures were being contained in order to avoid Leeds being at crisis point like many other authorities. Linked to this, particular acknowledgement was given to the Council’s focus on targeting resources into preventative measures.
- *Preparing for Brexit* – the Board discussed the need to prepare for service provision post 29th March 2019 and the UK’s planned exit from the European Union.
- *Implications of Right to Buy* – The Board was advised that a representation was to be made to Central Government raising concerns that the Right to Buy process could be undermined by the claims that private landlords buy the properties to rent. It was noted that the Council was also lobbying the Government for the whole of Right to Buy receipts to be retained by local authorities.
- *Future management of the Settlement Funding Assessment* – Whilst the Board discussed the wider consideration of the core spending power assessment of funding coming to Leeds and also the implications surrounding the national Growth and Infrastructure Bill, particular importance was placed upon the Council’s duty to demonstrate value for money and financial sustainability with regard to the management of the Settlement Funding Assessment. Linked to this, concerns were expressed that the 2019/20 represents the final year of the agreed 4-year funding offer, thereby intensifying financial uncertainty for the future.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Board notes the Executive’s initial 2019/20 budget proposals as set out in the attached Executive Board report;
- b) That the Board’s comments are reflected as part of the Scrutiny submission to Executive Board for its consideration.

60 Best Council Plan Refresh 2019/20 - 2020/21

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support advised Members of the approach to refresh the Best Council Plan for 2019/20 to 2020/21. In accordance with the Council’s budget and policy framework it was referred by the Executive Board to Scrutiny for consideration.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 11th February, 2019

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Councillor James Lewis – Executive Member for Resources and Sustainability
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor – Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Housing
- Tim Rollett – Intelligence and Policy Manager

Members were advised that this was a refresh of the current Best Council Plan, with this document sitting alongside the budget proposals, taking into account progress in delivering the Plan's priorities and latest insight from the Joint Strategic Assessment.

The following key areas were discussed:

- The Board sought clarification of the role of the Clinical Commissioning Group as part of the Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment for 2018;
- The Board raised the issue of the Leeds Clean Air Zone, particularly in relation to meeting the Council's ambition to be the best city for health and wellbeing. Particular reference was made to the future funding of the CAZ and technology used for measuring and monitoring its impact;
- The Board was informed of the Council's offer to assist EU citizens who work for the Council and to pay the £65 application fee to settle in the UK. Members were supportive of this gesture of goodwill. The Council will also be asking other employers to consider assisting their EU workers. It was noted that the Communities Team would also be organising events aimed at offering advice and support to local EU citizens who wished to stay in the UK.
- Acknowledging the Board's previous and ongoing interest in the health and wellbeing of the Council's workforce, the proposal to expand the Best Council 'efficient and enterprising' strapline to incorporate 'healthy', encompassing a focus on health across the council's workforce, was welcomed by the Board.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) That the Board's comments are reflected as part of the Scrutiny submission to Executive Board for its consideration.

(Councillor Wray vacated the meeting at 12:10 pm at the end of this item).

61 Performance Reporting - Culture and An Efficient and Enterprising Organisation

The report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support provided a summary of performance relating to the Best City Priority: Culture and the Best Council Ambition: An Efficient and Enterprising Organisation, which fall within the scope of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board.

In attendance at the meeting were:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor – Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Neil Evans – Director of Resources and Housing
- Tim Rollett – Intelligence and Policy Manager
- Cluny Macpherson – Chief Officer, Culture and Sport

Members discussed the following points:

- *Gender pay gap* – It was acknowledged that the Council’s budget had accounted for an increase in pay for lower level paid jobs, such as care workers and catering staff, to help in narrowing the gender pay gap. It was suggested by the Board that it would be helpful to have a further breakdown of pay by Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and part-time staff both male and female;
- *Staff sickness levels* - Particular concerns were raised by the Board in relation to staff sickness levels which had increased gradually throughout the year and particularly in all high-volume frontline services despite action plans being in place alongside the wider Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy. The Board was particularly interested to learn that during that 12 month period, 42,289 sickness days were attributed to mental health conditions. The Board was therefore pleased to acknowledge that more preventative measures were being introduced as well as plans to look at specific areas of concern. It was noted that more emphasis would also be placed upon the role of managers/supervisors in terms of looking out for their staffs’ general health and wellbeing.
- *Workforce representation* – It was noted that work is ongoing to explore a better way of reporting in relation to the current KPI on ‘workforce more representative of our communities’ given that this is currently assessed and compared to the baseline of 2011 census data and has always proven difficult to provide a simple numerical way to express an overall result for this indicator.
- *Workforce diversity data* – It was reported that disclosure rates surrounding the workforce diversity indicator were low (particularly in relation to the disclosure of being a carer) and whilst such disclosures will remain optional to staff, there will be ongoing efforts to improve disclosure rates in underrepresented areas.
- *Staff appraisals* - The Board was pleased to see that appraisals had taken place with staff across the Council, although the Members did request more details of why appraisals were low within the Children and Families Service.
- *Aging workforce* - concerns were raised in relation to the stability of the workforce given that only 6% were under 25 years of age. The Board were advised that redundancies had been kept to a minimum with a reduction of the workforce through natural wastage. It was the hope that more young people would be encouraged to work for the Council through apprenticeships, however the Board acknowledged that apprenticeships were open to people of all ages;
- There were opportunities for disabled people within the workforce however, it was acknowledged that there is still some sensitivity around

disclosure of a disability. Linked to this, the Board was advised of the work of DAWN – the Disability and Wellbeing Network;

- *Staff satisfaction* – Members expressed an interest to learn more about the results of the staff satisfaction data and acknowledged that the Board would be receiving an update report around employee engagement at its next meeting.
- *Customer complaints* – Once completed, the Board requested an update on the findings of the analysis work being undertaken by Customer Relations.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the content of the report.
- b) That the information requested be provided to the Board.

62 Work Schedule

The Principal Scrutiny Officer presented the report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support which set out the latest iteration of the Boards work schedule which was attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

With Members agreement it was proposed that the Board should have an extra meeting on Monday 1st April 2019, at 11:00am, with a pre meeting for all Members at 10:30am.

In consideration of the agenda items planned for its meeting on 11th February 2019, the Chief Officer for Culture and Sport requested that the update report relating to the Leeds Culture Strategy be deferred until April, which was agreed by the Board. Linked to this, Board Members also expressed an interest to receive an update surrounding the Tourism Levy.

The Chair also requested that further information in relation to Business Rates Appeals comes back to the Board in February.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the work schedule be updated to reflect the discussions of the Board during today's meeting.
- (b) That an additional Board meeting is scheduled for Monday 1st April 2019 at 11 am (pre-meeting at 10.30 am)
- (c) That the update report on the Culture Strategy be scheduled for the Board's April meeting.
- (d) That further information in relation to Business Rates Appeals comes back to the Board in February.

63 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board will be Monday 11th February at 10:30 am with a pre meeting for all Board Members 10:00am

The meeting concluded at 12:25pm

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Monday, 11th February, 2019

Report of the Director Communities & Environment

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 11 February 2019

Subject: Elections, Registrars and Land and Property Search Services Performance Report

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Summary of main issues

This report provides a summary of Elections, Registrars and Land and Property Search Services performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city and other performance areas relevant to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources).

2. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:-

- Note the most recent performance information in this report and the issues which have been highlighted and consider if they wish to undertake further scrutiny work to support improvement over the coming year in any of these areas; and
- Consider if there is further detail in any of the areas which Scrutiny would like to be further developed in the next performance report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report presents a summary of the most recent performance data, and provides an update on progress in delivering the relevant priorities in the Best Council Plan 2018 – 2021.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Members will note that the Best Council Plan (BCP) sets out the Council's key objectives and priorities. This report provides an overview of the relevant Elections, Registrars and Land and Property Search Services performance relating to this plan, enabling the Scrutiny Board to consider and challenge the council's performance.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The main performance information from Elections, Registrars and Land and Property Search Services is detailed below.

3.2 Elections

Members' attention is drawn to the following performance areas: -

- 3.2.1 **All-out elections** - The elections team effectively arranged all-out elections to elect 99 Councillors following a ward boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). This included an innovative block vote counting method not previously adopted in Leeds which was well received by both Members and the counting staff.
- 3.2.2 **Register of Electors** - Publication of the 1 December 2017 register of electors took place in accordance with regulations, and showed there were 560,303 people on the Register of Electors. This decreased to 552,977 on the 1 December 2018 publication of the Register of Electors. On 2 January 2019 this figure has decreased slightly by 228 electors to 552,749 due to registration applications continuing to come in after the end of the annual canvass and removal over 1,000 expired overseas electors declarations.
- Due to GDPR the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is no longer able to block add students to the register using information supplied by Universities but has instead used the information to write out to each individual student inviting them to register and provide the further information we require. The response to these invitations is low and has affected the electorate as such. The ERO has now followed up these invitations with reminders.
- 3.2.3 **Vote100** - A commemoration event which was hosted by Councillor Judith Blake, Leader of the Council was held on 9th February 2018 to celebrate some women getting the vote for the first time. The event provided an opportunity for women and girls to influence established programmes of activities around women's issues in the city as well as an opportunity to directly influence service leads within the council on identified priorities for women and girls.

The findings of the discussions were incorporated into the work being undertaken by Women's Lives Leeds and the Women's Voice staff network. There were approximately 150 women at the event who come from a range of backgrounds, including, service users and service delivers and elected Members.

3.2.4 **New Software** – Electoral Services are now fully migrated to their new electoral software and have successfully carried out the all-out elections in May 2018 and the annual canvass from August – December 2018 using the new functionality.

3.2.5 **Electoral Review** - All-out elections have now been held as a consequence of the ward boundary review conducted by the LGBCE. The new boundaries and changes to the electoral register were accurately made by the Electoral Services Team and implemented in a timely manner.

3.3 Registrars

Members' attention are drawn to the following performance areas: -

3.3.1 **Registration of Deaths** – Whilst availability of appointments to register a death within 2 working days of customer contact has consistently been above target (target of 95% and achieved 100%), the target to register 90% of deaths within 5 days of death has not been achieved (achieved 81% in quarter 1, rising to 84% in quarter 2 and 86% in quarter 3). There has been a national dip in figures in the early part of the year, which was replicated in Leeds, and which was a continuation of a national decline over recent years. However, at 86% Leeds still compares favourably to the national performance of 80% and regional performance of 85%. It is recognised that various factors contribute to failed targets nationally, mainly customer choice (where customer chooses an appointment outside the 5 day statutory target) and delays in receiving the Medical certificate from the hospital but much work has been done during the period to improve customer acknowledgement of the statutory target and overall performance. The following actions are continuing:

- Re-enforcing the 5 day target in all literature/web-site information;
- Emphasizing the need, where possible, for Contact centre staff to book appointments to meet the 5 day target, taking into account customer preference as to date/location for their appointment;
- Liaising with hospital Bereavement office to identify where delays in process may occur and to sign-post informants to quicker appointments;

In addition the following are also being actioned:

- Reminding community GPs about the statutory target
- Providing more appointments on Fridays and at more One stop centres.

3.3.2 **Registration of Births** - Leeds is registering 99% of births within 42 days in comparison to 98% regionally and 97% nationally. The performance target is 98%. The performance target (95%) for availability of birth registration appointments has also been met – with Leeds achieving 100%.

3.3.3 **Notices of Marriage / Civil Partnership** - The performance target (95%) for availability of notice of marriage / civil partnership appointments has also been met – with Leeds achieving 98%.

3.3.4 **Appointment waiting times** – the performance target of dealing with 95% of appointments within 10 minutes has been met.

3.3.5 **Move to Merrion** – the service relocated in May 2018 with minimal disruption and has adapted well to the new surroundings although there are still some on-going accommodation issues relating to office space and affecting the customer journey. In the meantime contingency measures have been put in place to better manage the customer journey. Implementation of some key work to support the service following relocation has been delayed. These include:-

- Completing a scanning project to digitise the most regularly requested records and to improve processing efficiency. Once this is in place this will allow easier and quicker access to records;
- specifying and developing a new electronic diary and on-line forms, and it is anticipated that this will be in place before the end of March

3.4 **Land and Property Search Service (formerly Local Land Charges and Street Registry)**

Members’ attention are drawn to the following performance areas: -

3.4.1 **Changes to Land Registry** As reported in the 2018 Scrutiny report there is considerable uncertainty caused by the Land Registry’s proposed takeover of part of the service. The Land Registry (LR), through the Infrastructure Act 2015 is set to take over responsibility for the Local Land Charges register (and searches). This is a national project and will involve the LR taking a copy of the register held by every local authority in England and Wales. A phased approach will be followed and this commenced in August 2018 and is aimed to be completed by Autumn 2023. Notification will be sent to the Chief Executive when the LR wish to commence the transfer. Until this point, there is no way of knowing where Leeds will be in this process. The search of the Local Land Charges Register (LLC1) will become the responsibility of LR and anyone wishing to carry one out will need to visit the LR web site (rather than LCC). The income the council will lose will be approximately £250K. The national project will aim to standardise LLC1 search reports, create a national fee and speed up search turnarounds. Unfortunately, it is believed that the project, whilst benefitting citizens nationally, will lead to higher fees and increased turnarounds for the people of Leeds. The council, along with the LGA and others, raised these concerns during the consultation period but changes have not subsequently been made

3.4.2 **Local Authority Searches** The service provides local authority searches ie ‘the local search’ (LLC1 and Con29), which is a key component of the conveyancing process. Approximately 75% of searches relate to residential properties (the remainder to commercial sites and land). These searches are usually done at the end of the entire process so a quick turnaround is vital to ensure solicitors can complete sales.

Staff have continued to work efficiently to ensure high quality service provision. The service has a target to process 90% of searches within 3 working days, and has achieved processing 99.8% of local searches within an average of 2 working days throughout the first 3 quarters of 2018/19. In 2017/18 it achieved 99.9%

Year	Number of Local Search requests	% Turnaround in 3 days
2017/18	11217	99.97
2018/19 (to end of Qtr 3)	6825	99.98

- 3.4.3 **Street Gazetteer** The service also has to submit street gazetteer information on a monthly basis to GeoPlace. A Gold standard was retained, having also been achieved in 2017/18 (Silver, Bronze, At National Standard and Below National Standard being other awards). The Local Highway Authority (LCC) is responsible for maintaining the National Street Gazetteer (NSG) by producing and maintaining Local Street Gazetteer (LSG) data and Additional Street Data (ASD). This data is used nationally in England and Wales to form a consistent national dataset with local Government and other organisations. The information is required under the New Roads and Street Works Act legislation and involves updated information being submitted monthly to Geoplace. Work is done to maintain the accuracy of the information to maintain a 'Gold Standard' – this being the top of 5 tiers of accuracy. Failing to maintain this standard would result in poor quality information being available for Leeds, and potential issues with Contractors, Statutory Undertakers and other interested bodies.
- 3.4.4 **Service Improvement** The key aims of service improvement is to streamline working processes, allow staff to undertake all functions i.e. local land charges and street registry and free up resources for other projects e.g. historic documentation digitisation, and preparation for the transfer of the Local Land Charges Register [to Land Registry] at some point within the next few years.

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 This is an information report and as such does not need to be consulted on with the public. However all performance information is published on the council's website and is available to the public.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 This is an information report and not a decision so it is not necessary to conduct an equality impact assessment. However, some of the data provided will link to wider issues of equality and diversity and cohesion and integration, and there may be occasions when Scrutiny Board members will want to look more closely at these issues, and may request further information to inform their investigations.

4.3 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This report provides an update on progress in delivering the council priorities in line with the council's performance management framework.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 There are no specific resource implications from this report, although some performance indicators relate to financial and other value for money aspects.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 All performance information is publicly available and is published on the council website. This report is an information update providing Scrutiny with a summary of performance for the strategic priorities within its remit and as such is not subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 There is a comprehensive risk management process in the Council to monitor and manage key risks. This links closely with performance management.

5 Conclusions

5.1 This report provides a summary of performance against the strategic priorities for the council and city related to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources).

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are recommended to: -

- Note the most recent performance information in this report and the issues which have been highlighted and consider if they wish to undertake further scrutiny work to support improvement over the coming year in any of these areas; and
- Consider if there is further detail in any of the areas which Scrutiny would like to be further developed in the next performance report.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 Best Council Plan 2018 – 21.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 11th February 2019

Subject: Business Rates Appeals

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. In view of its significance and building on the work undertaken by the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board last year, issues surrounding the Business Rates regime has remained a key area of interest to the Scrutiny Board.

2. This year, the Board has already received a general update report on current Business Rates issues as part of its November 2018 meeting and continued to acknowledge the impact that the Business Rates regime has on the functionality of the Local Authority as part of its recent consideration of the Council's initial 2019/20 budget proposals.

3. In particular, the Board noted the risk factors associated with potential settlement costs of business rates appeal cases and the corresponding need to make provision for these variances in the budget each year. This volatility presents a significant challenge for medium-term financial planning and contributes to uncertainty and service risk, particularly when coupled with the substantial proportion of the budget being targeted to vulnerable people.

4. Although it has been acknowledged that Leeds City Council, as a billing authority, has no role in setting the Rateable Value (RV) of properties in the city or in the appeals process when an RV is challenged by the ratepayer, the Scrutiny Board agreed to use today's meeting to continue discussions around ways of addressing local authority exposure to appeals risk and volatility.

5. To help inform the Board's discussion, the following information has been provided:
- Appendix 1 – An extract from the report presented to the Scrutiny Board in November 2018 (updated to 31/12/19) detailing factors linked to the continuing volatility of business rates income, including the appeals process.
 - Appendix 2 – A briefing paper on the reduction in appeals numbers in 2018/19 and the incidence of the cost of appeals provisions since 2013/14.
6. Representatives from the Council's Financial Services and Business Rates Team will be attending today's meeting to contribute to the Board's discussion on this matter.

Recommendations

7. The Scrutiny Board is asked to note the content of this report and determine what, if any, further information it wishes to receive or action it wishes to undertake.

Background documents¹

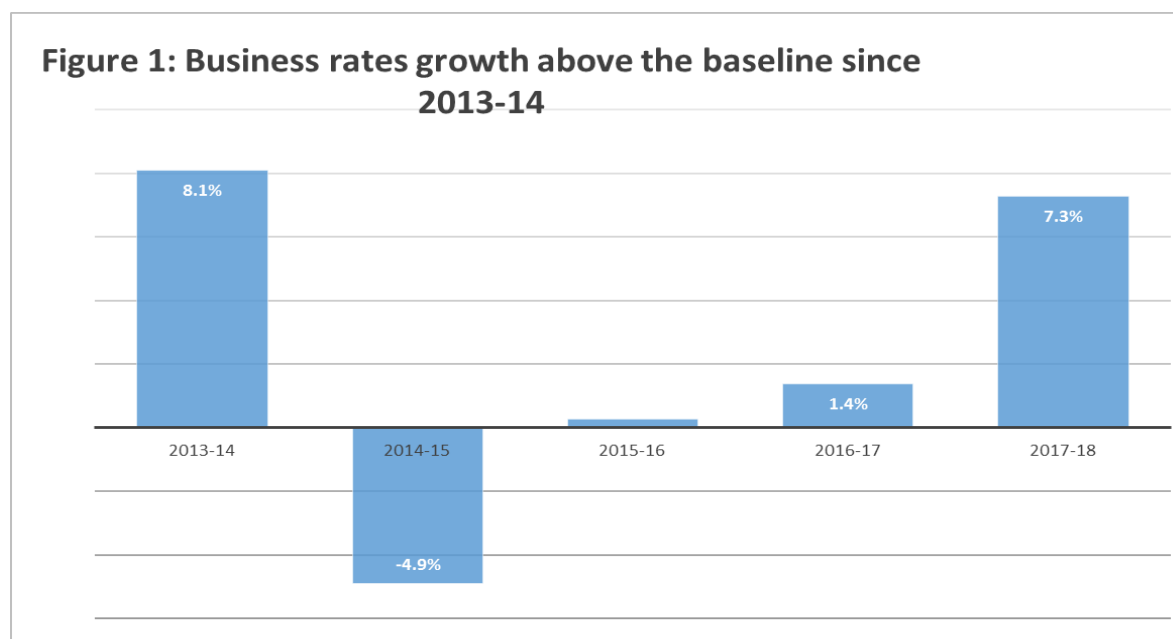
8. None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix 1: The continuing volatility of business rates income – updated to 31/12/18

Introduction

1. The key difference between business rates income and grant income is its uncertainty. Although business rates income in Leeds has included growth above the baseline in every year since the beginning of the retention scheme except 2014/15, from year to year the income has been very volatile (see **Figure 1** below). This volatility has presented a significant challenge for medium-term financial planning.



2. The volatility of business rates income is mainly caused by a series of factors that are largely outside the control of local authorities including: -
 - Ratepayers' appeals to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) against their Rateable Value (see **paragraph 3** below).
 - The national economic environment affecting local growth, 'Empty Rates Relief' and non-collection of income (see **paragraph 9** below).
 - Decisions about valuation methods elsewhere in the country that affect similar classes of properties locally (see **paragraph 13** below).
 - Policy decisions by central government that affect business rates income (see **paragraph 17** below).
 - Legal decisions affecting matters other than Rateable Value (see **paragraph 19** below).

**Appendix 1: The continuing volatility of business rates income
– updated to 31/12/18**

Ratepayers’ appeals against Rateable Value

3. Ratepayers have a right to lodge appeals against the valuation given to their property by the VOA, usually because they believe the original value to be wrong or following a material change in the property or local area. The result of an appeal can be backdated to the beginning of the relevant ratings list.
4. Leeds City Council, along with all other billing authorities, have no right to present evidence at an appeal or have any other part in the decision-making process, but must meet its share of any cost, including any backdated refund.
5. The cost of successful appeals has varied significantly from year to year since the introduction of business rates retention in 2013/14 (see **Table 1** below). The total cost incurred in year includes costs relating to the current year and also costs arising in the current year but relating to a previous year. The Council has been able to smooth the costs to some extent with the use of provisions, but their inherent volatility has made forecasting the level of provisions required particularly difficult. The provision we make is a cost to the General Fund and can impact on our revenue position in the year it is set.

**Table 1: The total cost of appeals and Valuation Officer Reports to
Leeds City Council as at 31 December 2018**

Year	Cost (£)	Share	Total cost to Leeds (£)
2013/14	12,948,390	49%	6,344,711
2014/15	29,070,661	49%	14,244,624
2015/16	39,061,572	49%	19,140,170
2016/17	21,947,570	49%	10,754,310
2017/18	32,623,545	49%	15,985,537
2018/19	6,618,340	99%	6,552,156
TOTAL	142,270,078		73,021,508

6. There were a large number of appeals lodged against the 2010 ratings list. By 31st December 2018 there were 21,171 individual appeals affecting approximately 13,061 businesses in Leeds, and 6,330 resulting in reductions to Rateable Value. 1,466

Appendix 1: The continuing volatility of business rates income – updated to 31/12/18

appeals remain outstanding, and 9 are still outstanding against the 2005 list. Further details about the settlement of appeals in 2018/19 are given in **Appendix 2** to the main report, along with the incidence of the creation and use of provisions since 2013/14.

The Government, after significant pressure from local government, has made a number of changes to the appeals system to try and reduce this volume of appeals and help local authorities manage the costs, with varying degrees of success, including: -

- In 2016 the Government made statutory provision to allow the VOA to release more information about individual appeals to billing authorities. However, the VOA, part of HMRC, take a very restrictive view of this power and the information remains minimal.
- During the lifetime of the 2010 ratings list, a ratepayer could simply lodge an appeal against their Rateable Value without giving any substantive argument. Local government argued this led to many speculative appeals and a lot of small alterations to the list which were cumulatively having a significant impact on local authority budgets. The Government has reformed the process with a new system coming into force for the 2017 list called 'Check, Challenge, Appeal'. Under this system ratepayers have to put forward a suggested alternative Rateable Value for their property, and give arguments why this Rateable Value should apply. There are also strict rules about when new evidence can be submitted to the process and strict deadlines for each stage of appeals process. Although it is too early to be certain, this appears to have had a significant impact on the volume of appeals, and it is hoped it will greatly reduce delays. However a new portal, allowing ratings agents to lodge appeals on behalf of multiple clients, is to come online in the Autumn of 2018, which may at least partially reverse this trend.
- The Government has discussed with local government the possibility of centralising the cost of some appeals known as 'tone of the list' appeals. These are appeals that result in reductions of Rateable Value stretching back to the beginning of the current ratings list and, under the proposals, would be assumed to be as the result of an error in the original valuation by the VOA which local authorities should not have to fund. If such a system had been in force during the 2010 ratings list it is estimated that, of the 6,330 appeals that resulted in a reduction to Rateable Value, 3,300 would have been funded by a central fund. It should be noted, however, that this central fund would be funded by a top-slice from the funding available to local authorities through the Settlement process and careful analysis is required to see if the savings from not having to meet the costs of 'tone of the list' appeals locally are outweighed by the reduction in Settlement funding.

**Appendix 1: The continuing volatility of business rates income
– updated to 31/12/18**

7. With the introduction of the 2017 ratings list there appears to have been a much reduced level of appeals compared to the 2010 list (see **Table 2** below for a comparison of the volume of appeals at the same stage in the life of the two lists). A number of explanations have been put forward for this difference including: -

- The 2010 ratings was set at a date (1st April 2008) at the height of the commercial property boom, but came into force once the financial crisis had happened, encouraging ratepayers to appeal their high valuations.
- The 2017 ratings is simply more accurate than the 2010 ratings list.
- The new Check, Challenge, Appeal system has deterred speculative appeals from ratepayers and ratings agents.

**Table 2: Comparison of the number of appeals
after 18 months of the 2010 list and the 2017 list**

	No. of appeals after 18 months (in Leeds)
2010 ratings list	5,804
2017 ratings list	1,243

There remain a number of risks in assuming this situation will continue. As mentioned in **paragraph 6** above, a new portal for ratings agents to lodge appeals is being launched this Autumn and there have been a number of problems with the introduction of the new appeals system for the 2017 ratings list which, when resolved, could see a return to a higher level of appeals being received by the VOA.

8. Taking into account all the uncertainties about appeals, Leeds City Council at 31st December 2018 holds provisions against losses from appeals of £17.19m, and estimate maintaining the required level of provisions will cost the Council’s General Fund £9.04m in 2018/19.

The National Economic Environment

9. The national economic environment affects the ability of local authorities to generate growth in their area as demand for new premises reduces during an economic downturn, and yet most of the levers that can improve the national economic climate are held by central government.

10. Economic downturns also increase Empty Rate Relief. Although full business rates (known as ‘Empty Rates’) have to be paid by a landlord after a property is empty for 3

Appendix 1: The continuing volatility of business rates income – updated to 31/12/18

months (6 months for industrial properties), there are an increased number of business failures during a downturn, and relief can be claimed indefinitely by a company in administration. In 2013/14, the first year of the business rates retention scheme and still feeling the effects of the financial crisis, in real terms Empty Rate Relief reduced business rates by £22.61m in Leeds. In 2018/19 it will reduce business rates income by £19.50m and has been reducing for a number of years.

11. Finally there is an increased level of written-off debts during a downturn as it becomes clear that it is not economical to collect money owed for business rates. During the last financial crisis the provisions for non-collection held by Leeds City Council increased from 1% of net amounts billed to 1.2%, although it has returned to 99% collection since. If 1.2% had to be applied to provisions again in 2018/19 it would cost the authority an additional £1.75m.
12. Leeds City Council currently hold bad debt provisions of £6.85m on 31st March 2018 for all as yet uncollected amounts, with the estimated cost to the General Fund of maintaining the required level of provisions being £3.65m in 2018/19.

Valuation Officer Reports

13. Weekly the Council receives notices from the VOA instructing the Revenues department to increase, or reduce, a property's Rateable Value. These can be in response to a billing authority report to the VOA about a change to a property (usually resulting in an increase), a change encountered by VOA inspectors or a change in valuation practice outside the Leeds area but affecting a class of property locally and about which the Council has no prior notice.
14. In Leeds, billing authority reports to the VOA, usually as a result of visits by Council inspectors, increased business rates by approximately £7.27m in 2017/18, with the Council's share of that income being £3.56m.
15. The most recent example of action in an area outside of Leeds affecting properties within the Leeds area was the reduction of Rateable Value, by around 50%, of all purpose-built medical centres in 2015. The reductions were backdated to 1st April 2010 because the method of valuation was changed and this cost Leeds City Council an estimated £7.5m.
16. The future cost of Valuation Officer Reports cannot be estimated reliably from year to year and therefore it is impossible for the Council to hold any provisions for these losses using proper accounting practices. However, taking this uncertainty into account, we currently estimate that Valuation Officer Reports will cost Leeds City Council's General Fund £0.68m in 2018/19.

Appendix 1: The continuing volatility of business rates income – updated to 31/12/18

Central Government policy decisions that affect business rates income

17. Local government usually receives compensation for Government policy decisions that directly affect business rates income. For example Government recently mandated a series of reliefs that were to be given by billing authorities to help businesses transition to the new 2017 ratings list. The Government meets the cost of lost income to authorities through a grant. The Government also changed the rate by which the multiplier increases from the Retail Prices Index (RPI) to the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and pays the losses this causes to councils through a grant.
18. However there are other policies that have affected business rates income that are not compensated for. For example, when a school is controlled by a local authority it must pay 100% of business rates but an Academy School can claim 80% Mandatory Charity Relief (along with private schools). As the number of Academies increases, this reduces income to the local authority for which there is no compensation.

Legal decisions affecting matters other than Rateable Value

19. In recent years there have been a number of legal decisions that have affected matters other than Rateable Value and yet have a direct impact on local authorities' business rates income and challenge long-held general practice.
20. For example, in 2016/17 a case was taken to the Court Appeal arguing that an office covering two floors in an office block, but separated by a common staircase should be treated as two separate properties rather than one (the 'Mazaars' case). This has had a significant impact on some authorities' business rates income where a single property becoming two separate properties has resulted in both becoming entitled to Small Business Rates Relief. In Leeds it was estimated that this change of practice would have little direct effect on our Revenues, because our properties tend to have high values and therefore Small Business Rates Relief is not an issue, and also in some cases two separate properties generated more income than a single property. However the Government has since introduced legislation to override the decision of the Court of Appeal, but only where it adversely affects the ratepayer. This will have an adverse effect on the Council's income.
21. There is also a legal case being brought by a number of Foundation Hospital Trusts arguing that they should be treated in a manner similar to Academies and receive 80% Mandatory Charity Relief backdated to 1st April 2010. Legal advice has been sought by CIPFA and stated that the argument put forward by the hospitals should not be successful and therefore, following proper accounting practice, no provisions have been made. However if the case is successful it is estimated this could cost Leeds City Council as much as £5.43m, with an ongoing cost of approximately £0.75m a year.

Appendix 2: The reduction in appeals numbers in 2018/19 and the incidence of the cost of appeals provisions since 2013/14

1. Introduction

1.1. After the meeting of Scrutiny Board (Resources and Strategy) in November 2018 the Board requested an update on the following information: -

- The continued reduction in the number of appeals against the 2010 ratings list in 2018/19.
- The incidence of the cost of appeals since the beginning of the Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS) in 2013/14.

1.2. This note will present that information.

2. The reduction in the number of appeals of appeals in 2018/19

2.1. **Table 1** below shows the reduction in appeals against the 2010 ratings list in 2018/19.

Table 1: Appeals against the 2005 and 2010 Ratings Lists settled in Leeds in 2018/19

Month	Appeals Outstanding	New Appeals lodged	Other changes	Appeals settled resulting in a change to RV	Appeals settled leading to no change in RV	Appeals Outstanding
April	2,628	6	1	-37	-50	2,548
May	2,548	4	4	-54	-89	2,413
June	2,413	4	29	-54	-89	2,303
July	2,303	5	1	-32	-167	2,110
August	2,110	2	2	-15	-83	2,016
September	2,016	8	0	-31	-150	1,843
October	1,843	0	7	-40	-103	1,707
November	1,707	0	-1	-14	-25	1,667
December	1,667	0	-9	-51	-132	1,475
Total	2,628	29	34	-328	-888	1,475

3. The incidence of the cost of appeals provisions since 2013/14

3.1. Provisions for losses must be created, according to proper accounting practices, when: -

- An event occurs that, on the balance of probabilities, is likely to cause a cost to an organisation and:
- The organisation can make a reliable estimate of the cost.

Appendix 2: The reduction in appeals numbers in 2018/19 and the incidence of the cost of appeals provisions since 2013/14

3.2. Leeds City Council therefore makes a provision for appeals against Rateable Value (RV) when it becomes aware of an appeal that it believes will result in reduction to RV in the city. This is when an appeal first causes a cost to the Council. **Table 2** below shows the incidence of the creation of provisions for appeals since the beginning of the Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS).

Table 2: The annual creation of new provisions for appeals

Year	Opening provisions	Appeals charged to provisions	New provisions created	Closing provisions	Leeds share of cost of new provisions
2013/14	0	0	-23,095,265	-23,095,265	-11,316,680
2014/15	-23,095,265	22,589,093	-40,966,799	-41,472,971	-20,073,732
2015/16	-41,472,971	32,731,184	-14,489,053	-23,230,840	-7,099,636
2016/17	-23,230,840	15,010,426	-14,737,620	-22,958,034	-7,221,434
2017/18	-22,958,034	20,894,661	-10,470,249	-12,533,622	-5,130,422
2018/19	-12,533,622	4,537,472	-9,192,002	-17,188,152	-9,100,082
Total	0	95,762,836	-112,950,988	-17,188,152	-59,941,985

3.3. In 2014/15 the high level of the cost of provisions was caused by the statutory deadline ratepayers faced on 31st March 2015 to lodge an appeal and be able to backdate those appeals to the beginning of the 2010 ratings list. Approximately 4,450 appeals were lodged in Leeds in the 2 months just before that deadline.

3.4. The less dramatic increase in costs to Leeds share in 2018/19 is due to increased retention in that year, i.e. Leeds share is 99% rather than 49% in that year. Also the Council became aware that appeals against the separate valuation of bank ATMs in supermarkets was likely to be successful after a decision in the Court of Appeal, contrary to previous advice. Additional provisions of approximately £5m had to be created.



Report author:
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Report of the Director of Resources & Housing

Report to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Date: 11th February 2019

Subject: Employee Health and Wellbeing

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of Main Issues

The health and wellbeing of employees in any organisation is important due to the impact on productivity, engagement, sickness absence, presenteeism and innovation. The moral aspect is also important, no more so than in a local authority whose workforce can also be its citizens. The Chief Executive recognises this and has recently made 'Healthy Organisation' one of Leeds City Council's key ambitions within the Best Council Plan and challenged all directors and their direct reports to play a pro-active role as Wellbeing Champions.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board note this report as an overview of employee health and wellbeing and provides any comment.

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the papers provided to Scrutiny Board in January 2018 relating to employee health and wellbeing, especially in light of the Chief Executive's recent commitment to creating an 'Enterprising, Efficient and **Healthy** organisation'.
- 1.2 The report includes: a position statement on attendance; details of the work undertaken throughout 2018 to improve the health and wellbeing of Leeds City Council employees; and a summary of interventions planned for 2019.
- 1.3 The previous reports are attached as Appendix A to this report, as it is noted that many new Elected Members took office in May 2018.

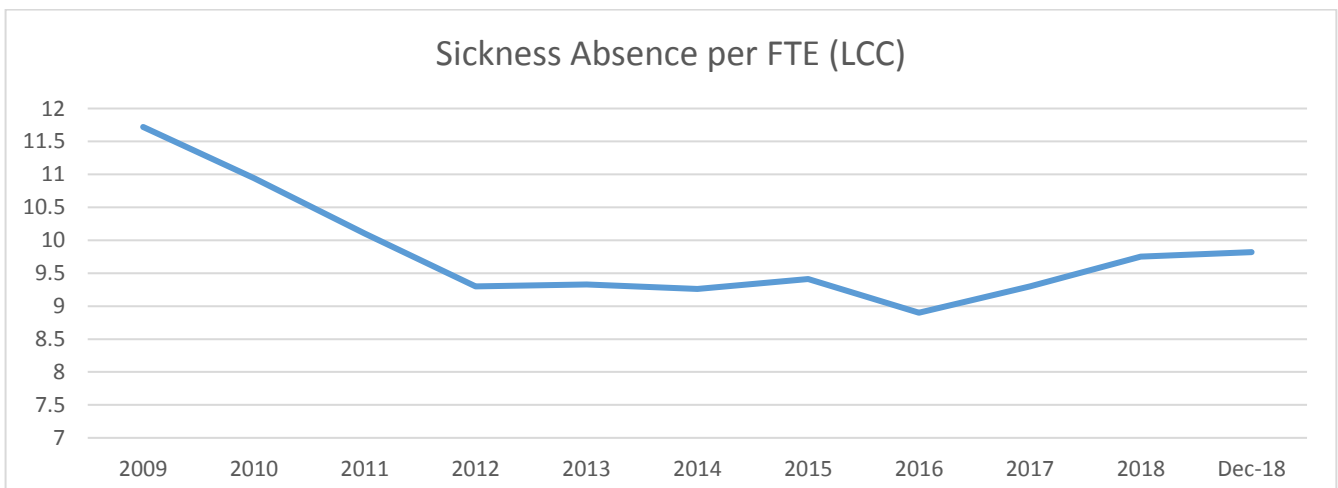
2. Background Information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council formally introduced a three year Employee Wellbeing Strategy in 2016, which has since been extended to 2021 by the council's senior leadership team. This was after a review illustrated that the strategy was becoming much better known amongst the workforce and the agreed actions were having a positive impact. The key priorities of: mental wellbeing; physical health; healthy lifestyles; and a culture of wellbeing, were also found to be still relevant.
- 2.2 At the council's Leadership Conference on 16th October 2018, the Chief Executive announced that he wanted everyone to focus on creating a 'healthy organisation' and prioritised this alongside other long-standing ambitions. This was reinforced by the design of new interventions and 'invest to save' funding.
- 2.3 Sickness absence has remained a challenge, but the early signs are that targeted work in certain services has started to impact positively on attendance.

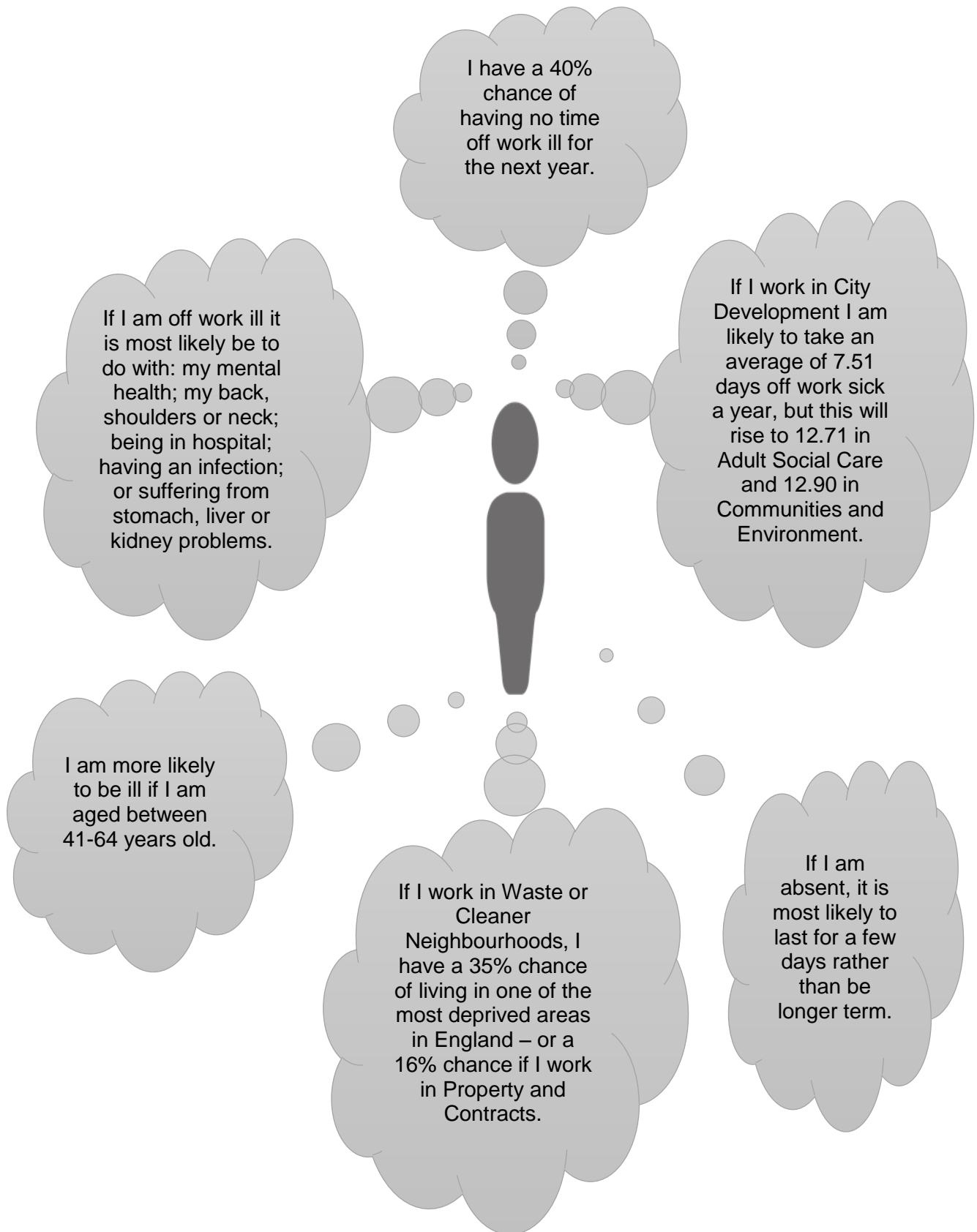
3. Main Issues

3.1 Sickness Absence in Leeds City Council

- 3.1.1 Figure 1, below, illustrates the sickness absence trend in LCC from 2009 to December 2018. The current trajectory shows a plateauing of the sharp rise indicated between 2016 and 2018.



3.1.2 The infographic, below, illustrates the possible experiences of a Leeds City Council employee based on their age, where they live and where they work – based on current council statistics.



3.1.3 Targeted approach to reducing sickness absence

One example of a more targeted and bespoke approach to reducing sickness absence in services was in Housing Management, where interventions have included:

<p>Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher training on Improving Attendance Policy; • Difficult Conversations training delivered at Housing Leadership Team meeting and Housing Managers Away Day; • Occupational Health briefing was delivered at a Housing Managers meeting by an Occupational Health Adviser to ensure we are getting the best from Occupational Health referrals; • Managers encouraged to attend Stress Awareness Training; • Let's Talk Stress session – promoted in weekly publication Housing Leeds Matters and a number of Housing Officers/Assistants attended; • HR use coaching style to support managers with improving attendance in their teams; • An aspiration to have a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) in every housing office – currently 9 people have been trained. This role is being promoted in Housing Leeds Matters and the Chief Officer and other Senior Managers will be trained to be MHFAs to show their commitment to this role. • Managers are being coached on how to hold effective return to work meetings by HR Officers.
<p>Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 People Plans launched May 2018: <i>Employee Engagement; Employee Development; Equality & Inclusion; Health, Safety and Wellbeing.</i> • 64 employees have volunteered to become People Champions to support the service to deliver these improvement plans. These people are key in establishing how people are feeling and contributing to the Wellbeing Plan. Each People Champion has driven forward initiatives in their own teams. Stories/ideas shared with all colleagues in weekly bulletin; • The 4 People Plans clearly interlink and have all had a positive effect on employee wellbeing. An interim engagement survey has just been completed to obtain feedback from staff on the 4 People Plans; • Attendance case review meetings are held monthly to help managers with improving attendance; • An 'Outstanding Triggers' report is shared with managers every month to ensure meetings are held in a timely manner; • The Chief Officer holds regular sickness challenge meetings with managers. Best practice is shared and the key message is embedded of "how people are feeling and how we are supporting each other given the frontline challenging job we do"; • Wellbeing is on all Management Team agendas;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sickness figures shared with managers every month and hot spot areas identified.
Peer Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff attended the Healthy Minds Event in October 2018; People Champions regularly share initiatives to improve wellbeing; All staff networks are regularly promoted in Housing Leeds Matters weekly publication and attendance is encouraged; Housing have set up their own regular Mindfulness sessions –offshoot of Healthy Minds Group; A Carers Event set up specifically for Housing.
Health Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service is working with Public Health - over 35 sessions were held across the city where Housing employees had their blood pressure checked and were given advice or signposted to their GP if necessary.

The early signs are that this work is starting to have a positive impact:

Sickness Levels in Housing Management		
2016/17	2017/18	Dec 2018
12.57	11.30	11.20

3.2 Employee Health and Wellbeing Interventions

3.2.1 The previous papers, submitted to Scrutiny Board in 2018, provided a lot of detail in terms of the support offered to all staff to enhance wellbeing and improve attendance. These will not be repeated here (see Appendix 1), but work undertaken since then is summarised below.

Priority 1: A Culture of Wellbeing

- ✓ The Chief Executive and his Leadership Team have committed to making a 'Healthy Workplace' as one of the council's key ambitions.
- ✓ The Chief Executive has charged all Directors and their direct reports to become 'Wellbeing Champions' for their services and to recruit more Champions from amongst their workforce.
- ✓ HR are working with the Communications Team to design a poster campaign. This will inform all staff of what is available and how to access it. HR are also working with the Insite team to ensure we use our internal website in the best way possible to support this campaign and beyond.
- ✓ The Disabled Staff Network has been relaunched to become a Disability and Wellbeing Network. There is a detailed action plan for the organisation to improve the experience of disabled colleagues and the Council is working with an external partner to enable it to sign up to Disability Confident Level 3.
- ✓ A Supporting Colleagues at Work Charter is being developed together with key stakeholders. An engagement event was held in June 2018 and the process for encouraging Wellbeing Conversations between a manager and their team members is being trialled in certain services.

- ✓ Funding has been made available to allow every service in the council access a small amount of money to start something that will improve the health and wellbeing of their staff.
- ✓ The in-house Occupational Health Service has started to become more pro-active to help prevent ill health and enhance wellbeing, rather than just responding to sickness absence referrals.

Priority 2: Mental Wellbeing

- ✓ More collaboration between Public Health, Mindful Employer, Mental Health Services in Adult Social Care, Human Resources and the Peer Support Group, Healthy Minds.
- ✓ LCC HR is leading on a collaboration between all health and care providers across Leeds relating to Mental Health First Aid Training.
- ✓ LCC HR has seconded a Mental Health First Aid Trainer, with the target of training a minimum of 500 staff to become Mental Health First Aiders.
- ✓ Large and small events took place as part of World Mental Health Day in October.
- ✓ Funding has been secured to trial a scheme whereby an employee calling in sick with a mental health related issue will be contacted as soon as possible by an independent mental health specialist to offer support. This will hopefully also reduce the length of absence.
- ✓ A joint working group with the Trade unions and HR has been established to try and reduce mental health related absence in targeted services. This involves working with services at a local level to develop action plans based on their own needs.
- ✓ A new Employee Assistance Programme is currently out for tender. This will not only build on the successful self-referral for counselling, but require a much more pro-active approach from the provider in terms of marketing and increasing awareness.
- ✓ An event for all Head teachers in Leeds was held on 16th November 2018 to promote the 'Headspace' programme which provides Head teachers with peer group and professional support to help maintain their mental wellbeing.
- ✓ IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) is also working with LCC with a view to delivering free mental health training for council employees.

Priority 3: Physical Health

- ✓ Funding has been secured to trial a scheme whereby an employee calling in sick with a musculo-skeletal disorder will be contacted as soon as possible by an independent Physiotherapist to offer support. This will hopefully also reduce the length of absence.
- ✓ Work is underway to look at the impact of work on an ageing workforce and how this can be planned for in the future in terms of job design.
- ✓ Pro-active work was undertaken within services for a Back Care Awareness Week, including the Physiotherapists.

Priority 4: Healthy Lifestyles

- ✓ Work has been undertaken, through an externally funded project, to carry out targeted blood pressure testing in council buildings and workplaces. Certain groups of staff were prioritised in year one to ensure the best use of a limited resource e.g. those who may not access healthcare routinely. The project is now moving into year 2 and will allow a broader scope on who (and where) testing can take place.
- ✓ Whilst free flu vaccinations have been offered to staff in caring roles for the past few years, this year it has been extended to council staff working with members of the public in customer hubs.

- ✓ Healthy Weight – work is ongoing to support the health and wellbeing of staff by increasing knowledge and understanding of unhealthy weight.
- ✓ Active travel initiatives to support physical exercise.

4. Future Developments and next steps

- 4.1 The previous report for Scrutiny Board listed a number of future actions, all of which are now well underway or complete.
- 4.2 The approach for 2019-2020 will be to ensure there is a well-publicised wellbeing offer for all staff, whilst recognising the need to take a bespoke approach to meet the needs of certain services and staff.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1 No work around this agenda, especially the desired culture change, can be successful without meaningful consultation and partnership working with a variety of stakeholders, within and external to LCC. Within LCC key stakeholders will be Trade Unions, service managers, Public Health, Elected Members and CLT.

6. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 6.1 The link between sickness absence/ill health and certain protected characteristics was discussed in the earlier report. Any interventions and strategies will be designed to address specific needs and to try and ensure that there is no adverse impact on specific groups.

7. Council Policies and Best Council Plan

- 7.1 Most employment policies could have a direct or indirect impact on health, wellbeing and attendance and the previous report illustrated those policies that have and are about to be revised/developed.
- 7.2 Leeds City Council will continue to have a unique role to play across the city as inward investment increases, at the same time as it has some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This health inequality can be addressed through employers and those who provide services – LCC has enormous influence here.

8. Resources and Value for Money

- 8.1 The previous report considered the costs of absenteeism and presenteeism. It is pleased to note that funding has since been made available to invest in projects to improve wellbeing and reduce sickness absence.

9. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 9.1 In managing attendance there is a legal duty to comply with employment law. Also relevant here is compliance with the Equality Act and Health and Safety legislation.
- 9.2 All employment information relating to sickness absence is managed in accordance with Data Protection legislation.
- 9.3 Nothing in the report would be subject to call-in.

10. Risk Management

10.1 Improving attendance and employee health and wellbeing is one of the key council risks. This is due to the costs of sickness absence, the impact of presenteeism, reputation and potential for legal challenge. This report and the previous reports are intended to explain how these risks are managed both now and in the future. Health and Safety is also on the Corporate Risk Register and, as it's a standing risk, an annual assurance report is usually prepared on it.

11.0 Conclusions

11.1 Reducing sickness absence continues to be challenging, but this is being tackled in relevant services through a basket of interventions which include: training, procedural change, culture change, a bespoke and enhanced wellbeing offer and appropriate challenge.

11.2 The Chief Executive has committed to an ambition of a healthy organisation and challenged his senior leaders to play a pro-active role in this. This has been backed with invest to save funding.

11.3 The cross-council and service-specific wellbeing offer continues to develop and become better known.

11.4 The council recognises its city wide role as an exemplar employer, provider of services and an influencer. This is recognised in the work to become a Disability Confident Level 3 Leader and the project involving the Health and Care workforce across Leeds.

12.0 Recommendations

12.1 It is recommended that the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board note this report as an overview of employee health and wellbeing.

12.2 Comments regarding the content of this report are welcomed.

13.0 Background documents¹

13.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Report of the Director of Resources & Housing**Report to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)****Date: 18th January 2018****Subject: Employee Health and Wellbeing: Sickness Absence and Positive Intervention**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of Main Issues

Reducing sickness absence is important for any organisation. There is the obvious burden on financial resources and productivity, the impact on engagement and the duty to manage health and safety and provide good employment practices. It is even more important to a local authority who also have a wider duty to help improve public health and reduce worklessness.

To tackle this issue, four things need to be considered:

- i. The data e.g. sickness absence statistics, Engagement Survey, Staff Network Surveys, Health and Safety and Occupational Health information.
- ii. The employment framework to allow for attendance management.
- iii. A strategy and interventions to improve employee health and wellbeing.
- iv. Sustainable improvement through wider engagement and cultural change.

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This report aims to provide Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board with information relating to sickness absence and includes: trends; context; main causes and the services most affected.
- 1.2 It will also provide an overview of the Employee Wellbeing Strategy and the interventions, both existing and planned, to support employees and bring about sustainable improvement.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 An estimated 137.3 million working days were lost due to sickness or injury in the UK in 2016. Since 2003, however, there has been a general decline in the number of days lost, particularly during the economic downturn.
- 2.2 The ONS report (2017) indicated a number of factors that influence a higher rate of sickness absence:
 - **Demographics and Geography** – female and older workers have higher rates of absence and Yorkshire and Humber has the joint second largest absence rates in England;
 - **Health Conditions** – smokers and those with long-term health conditions have higher absence rates;
 - **Type of Employment** – a higher absence rate is found amongst those working: in the public sector, in larger organisations, part-time hours, in front-line services; and those working in care and leisure.
- 2.3 All of these factors are, of course, relevant to the public sector workforce – especially Leeds City Council which still delivers most of its services in-house. They can also help to explain the oft-cited differences between the higher rates of absence in the public sector and lower rates in private organisations. This was also confirmed in a survey by the Health and Safety Executive in 2010 which standardised sickness absence rates by age, gender and size of organisation. It revealed that differences between private and public sector absence rates were very modest, with public sector employees taking an average of 0.3 days a year more than their private sector counterparts.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Sickness Absence Trend in Leeds City Council

- 3.1.1 Figure 1 below illustrates the overall downward trend of sickness absence since 2009, although there has recently been a slight upward trend again since a 10 year low in 2016.

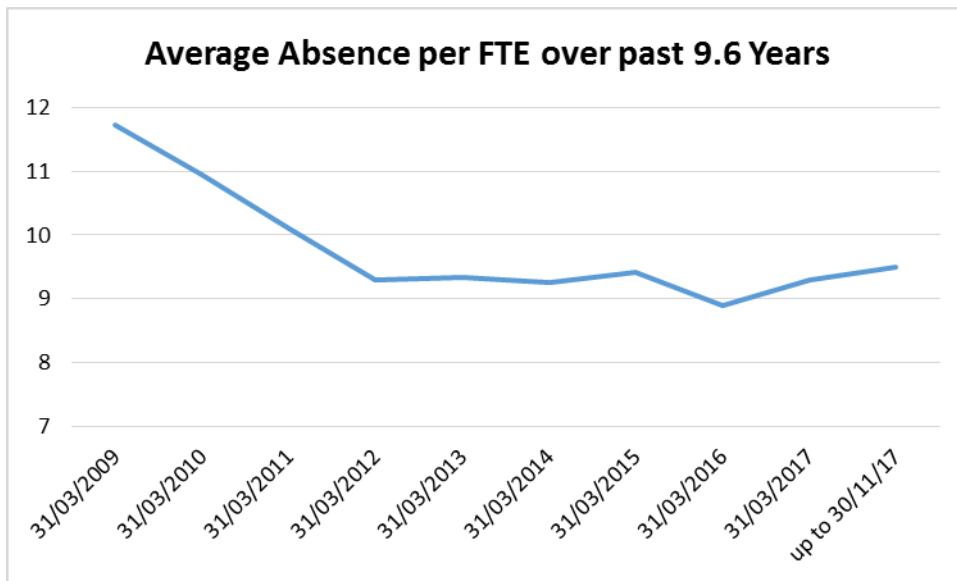


Fig 1

3.1.2 Figure 2 below illustrates the breakdown of sickness absence per directorate.

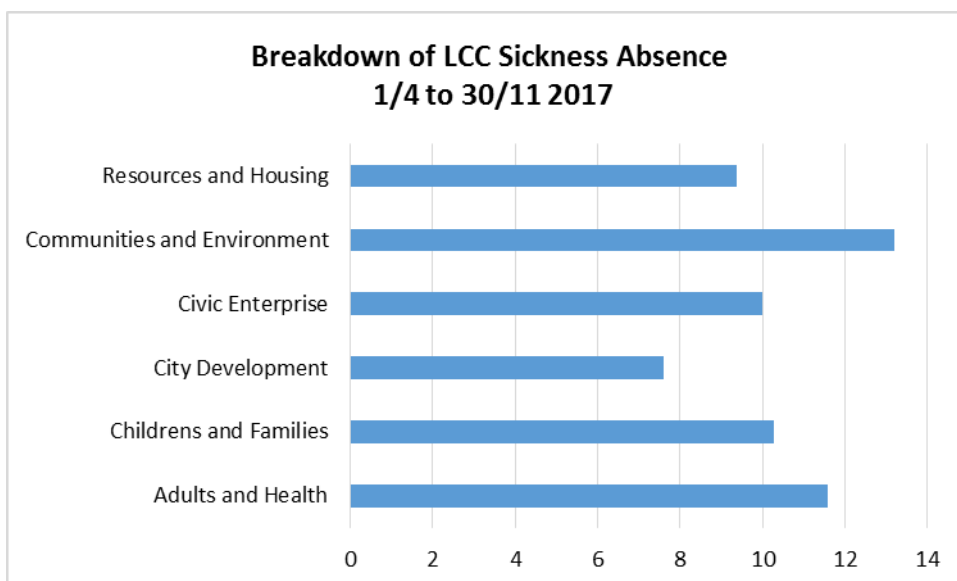


Fig 2

3.1.3 As each Directorate is made up of a variety of different services, it is perhaps more useful to consider those individual service areas with the highest levels of sickness absence, which can be seen in Figure 3 below. In line with the research discussed in Section 2, this information is not unexpected with these services being a combination of front-line, manual, caring roles and roles exposed to workplace hazards e.g. manual handling and violence and aggression.

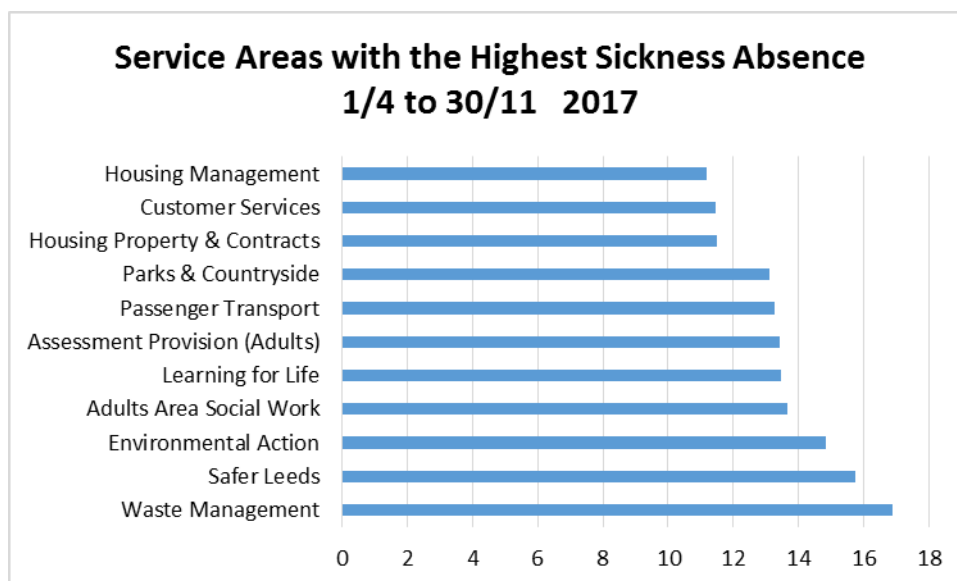


Fig 3

3.1.4 Long-term sickness (absence over 4 weeks) accounts for more than twice the number of overall days lost as short-term absence. Over the past year the number of employees on long term sick each month has remained largely static at approximately 400 employees.

3.1.5 Figure 4 below illustrates the main causes of sickness absence as a percentage of overall absence.

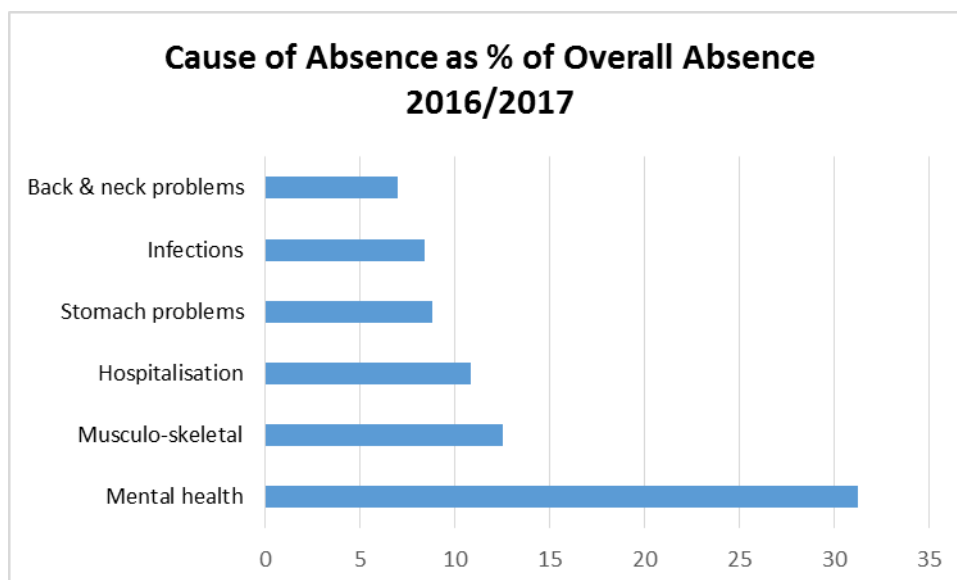


Fig 4

3.1.6 The highest cause of absence is mental health, which is made up of various categories including stress, anxiety, and depression. Stress is the largest recorded category under mental health at approximately 45%. As a percentage of overall absence, mental health is most significant in Children's and Families (43%) and Adults and Health (34%). Again this is in-line with the national picture where social work is cited as 'involving competing demands, uncertainty and complexity on a daily basis – all of which can increase pressure on people working in this field.'

- 3.1.7 The second highest cause are musculo-skeletal disorders, which is even more significant when you add the related 'back and neck problems' category.
- 3.1.8 In 2016/17 152 employees were referred to stage 3 hearings under the Managing/Improving Attendance policy, this is 20% increase on the 2015/16 figure of 119 employees.
- 3.1.9 Leeds City Council, like most other local authorities, has had to reduce its workforce over the past few years, as the organisation continues to face significant financial challenges. Trade Union colleagues voiced a concern about the impact of a reducing workforce on those who remain and therefore sickness absence. FTE numbers in frontline services have, however, been largely maintained whilst the number of employees in support services have reduced. Support services traditionally have less sickness absence than frontline services, due to the factors already discussed.

3.2 Employee Health and Wellbeing Interventions

- 3.2.1 Workplace health involves promoting and influencing the health and wellbeing of staff and includes managing sickness absence and 'presenteeism' (a person physically at work, but unproductive). It also includes action to address health and safety risks. The latest LGA Survey (2017) cites research that demonstrates a return on investment of between £2 and £10, for every £1 spent on Employee Wellbeing Programmes.
- 3.2.2 **Managing Attendance:** there has been a lot of work over recent years to improve employment policies, guidance and training to provide a robust framework within which to manage attendance. This has included:
- a) A new **Improving Attendance Policy and Procedure** was introduced in October 2016 and was supported by HR delivering a half day improving attendance briefing and a half day mock attendance meeting. The challenge for 2017/18 is to find a way to deliver "just in time" training for managers so they feel as confident as they do when they leave the training room in the real life situation 3 months later.
 - b) **Mediation:** In Autumn 2016 a further 12 internal mediators (18 in total) were appointed and trained. They have successfully completed 35 mediations. Mediation has been shown to help resolve issues between staff members which could have resulted in a period of sickness absence (N.B. 'relationships' and 'support' are two of the stressors identified by the HSE).
 - c) There is an on-going review of **Special Leave** provisions, which will provide further clarity and help for carers.
 - d) **Attendance Casework:** good quality, timely and effective casework is essential to enhancing employee and service performance. A range of employment policies (disciplinary, performance, attendance, grievance and probationary) have all now been reviewed and revised to make them more streamlined and

easy to use. All 'health and safety' policies are also being reviewed. The Casework and Attendance HR team are also working more closely with the BSC Attendance Monitoring Team in terms of the end to end process. This will bring efficiencies that will enable more resources to be redirected to preventative work.

3.2.3 Employee Wellbeing: an Employee Wellbeing Strategy was launched in 2016 to help all employees improve their health and wellbeing. It is intended that everyone will have: a choice of options to improve their health and wellbeing; an understanding of how to use the information and support provided; the awareness to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing; and the confidence to talk honestly about health issues at work.

The current priorities are: mental wellbeing; physical health; healthy lifestyles; and improving the culture of wellbeing. This, coupled with the 8 key health and safety priorities agreed by CLT and Executive Board, aims to achieve a number of things:

- To address the main causes of sickness absence and help reduce presenteesim;
- To promote health and wellbeing among our workforce and contribute to our outward facing public health responsibilities through the workplace setting;
- To keep people well and in work, to contribute to our responsibilities to address worklessness in the city;
- To be an exemplar of good employment practice and an employer of choice for people with certain protected characteristics e.g. disability.

3.2.4 Examples of Specific Interventions

a)	Mindful Employer – LCC signed the Charter for Employers who are Positive about Mental Health in 2011, which has led to specific improvements in the support provided for managers and staff.
b)	Staff Networks – HR works closely with staff networks, particularly the Disabled Staff Network in relation to attendance issues. HR also founded the Healthy Minds Group, which is extremely active on mental health issues and is now led by a senior manager outside of HR.
c)	Training – over 500 managers have been trained on mental health and stress through courses delivered by HR. A practical awareness session was also organised by Healthy Minds and HR for managers in the services most affected by mental health absence.
d)	Employee Assistance Programme – this is currently delivered by HELP and in 2016/17 they took 1190 calls from LCC employees and, from these, 593 referrals for counselling were made. 49% of contacts described their issues as related to home, 21% related to work and 30 % to a combination of both.

	During 2016/17 employees were able to self-refer for face-to-face counselling. This has been widely welcomed and increased the uptake, especially for those employees who may not have felt confident to discuss their issues with a manager.
e)	Direct Referrals into Physiotherapy – LCC works with Yorkshire Physiotherapy to provide access to physiotherapy treatment. This helps to keep people at work or reduce the length of potential sickness absence. The specialists also offer advice on improving ergonomics in work undertaken by services.
f)	Changing the Workplace – thousands of LCC staff have either been through or are about to go through ‘new ways of working’, often moving to new workplaces. This has the potential to affect an individual’s physical or mental health. The programme has now shifted emphasis to place people at the heart of it and delivering a joined up approach to health, safety, wellbeing and inclusion.
g)	Occupational Health – the council continues to employ Occupational Health Practitioners who help managers to identify the impact of work on an employee’s health or the impact their health has on their work. This is invaluable in ensuring the individual receives the correct support. They also undertake health surveillance for employees working in certain hazardous roles.
h)	Health and Safety – this can impact on sickness absence directly through poor practices leading to chronic or acute health conditions or injuries, or indirectly as feeling safe at work impacts on how valued and engaged someone is. The Council’s Health and Safety Policy is signed by both the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, demonstrating the commitment of CLT and Executive Board.
i)	Schools – it is recognised that schools can sometimes be a challenging environment in which to work. Much support is provided e.g. assisting staff in managing pupils with challenging behaviour and a wellbeing programme for Heads and their Deputies.
j)	Healthy Lifestyles – work is on-going with Public Health to promote campaigns such as ‘get active’ and ‘One You’. We have also embarked on a ‘Blood Pressure Project’ within the council where there is scope and funding to test 7,600 staff.
k)	Men’s Health – it is proven that men do not talk about health concerns, especially mental health, and also visit their GP less frequently than women. This is especially true amongst manual workers. Over the past few years there has been a specific programme targeting men out on site at various times of the day – to give them information and practical advice. This has been well received and thousands of men have been seen.
l)	Promotion – we have a network of over 100 Wellbeing Champions embedded in services who promote messages about health and wellbeing.
m)	Cancer in the Workplace – a package for managers and staff has recently been launched to support people with cancer at work.
n)	Flu Immunisation – it is recognised that some of our employees are

	exposed to certain infections like flu because of the nature of their work e.g. carers. LCC offers a free flu vaccination for these employees.
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4. Future Developments and next steps

- 4.1 It is recognised that sustained improvement in health, wellbeing and attendance will only be achieved through wider engagement and culture change. Some of the plans to help influence this during 2017 – 2019 include:

Planned Actions for 2017 - 2019	
1.	Acting on areas from the recent Engagement Survey which may impact on health, wellbeing and attendance.
2.	Working with Trade Union colleagues as part of a joint Wellbeing Group to look at strategies to reduce stress related absence.
3.	Developing and implementing a 'Supporting Staff at Work Policy' which will require managers to hold a structured 'wellbeing conversation' with their members of staff at least twice as year linked to appraisals. The policy will provide a host of guidance and advice on both mental and physical health.
4.	Improving awareness of managers and staff through a blended learning offer to cover all aspects of supporting staff at work and also in relation to the Social Model of Disability.
5.	Continuing to trial the 'Wellbeing Conversation' pro-forma as part of changing the Workplace moves.
6.	Procuring a new Employee Assistance Programme to meet current needs and exploring a different approach to increase awareness.
7.	Building on the new Employee Benefits Package launched in December and explore opportunities for using this to engage with all staff about health and wellbeing.
8.	Implementing a new policy for addressing violence, aggression and abuse faced by some LCC employees and procure a corporate approach to improving the protection of lone workers.
9.	Working with the Disabled Staff Network to implement the proposed approach to 'Improving the Experience of Disabled Staff in LCC'. A draft action plan will be discussed and shaped with the Network in January 2018.
10.	Considering the findings and recommendations of Leeds University who conducted research into how to improve employee resilience.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1 No work around this agenda, especially the desired culture change, can be successful without meaningful consultation and partnership working with a variety of stakeholders, within and external to LCC. Within LCC key stakeholders will be Trade Unions, service managers, Public Health, Elected Members and CLT.

6. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 6.1 The link between sickness absence/ill health and certain protected characteristics has been discussed earlier in this report e.g. gender, age and disability. Any interventions and strategies will be designed to address specific needs and to try and ensure that there is no adverse impact on specific groups.

7. Council Policies and City Priorities

- 7.1 Most employment policies could have a direct or indirect impact on health, wellbeing and attendance and this report has illustrated those policies that have and are about to be revised/developed.
- 7.2 LCC is a major employer in the city and has an externally facing role in improving public health and wellbeing and addressing worklessness etc and using the council as a workplace setting for intervention is sensible. This is notwithstanding LCC's imperative to be an exemplar employer and the best city council.

8. Resources and Value for Money

- 8.1 Earlier in the report the return on investment of expenditure on health and wellbeing was highlighted. Sickness absence and presenteeism also costs a significant amount of money and loss of productivity.

9. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 9.1 In managing attendance there is a legal duty to comply with employment law. Also relevant here is compliance with the Equality Act and Health and Safety legislation.
- 9.2 All employment information relating to sickness absence is managed in accordance with Data Protection legislation.
- 9.3 Nothing in the report would be subject to call-in.

10. Risk Management

- 10.1 Improving attendance and employee health and wellbeing is one of the key council risks. This is due to the costs of sickness absence, the impact of presenteeism, reputation and potential for legal challenge. This report is intended to explain how these risks are managed both now and in the future. Health and Safety is also on the Corporate Risk Register and as it's a standing risk an annual assurance report is usually prepared on it.

11.0 Conclusions

- 11.1 There is a national context of falling sickness absence over, at least, the past decade.
- 11.2 Despite a slight increase in LCC over the past couple of years, the overall trend over the decade has been downwards – but this needs to be watched carefully.

- 11.3 There are common factors that influence a high level of sickness absence in organisations and these are all present in most local authorities, especially LCC e.g. size, age, geography, demographics, type of work.
- 11.4 Mental health is the main cause of sickness absence in the council.
- 11.5 There is a well-established approach to both managing attendance and improving employee health and wellbeing in LCC and this is constantly evolving to meet current demands.
- 11.6 The key to sustained improvement is through wider engagement and cultural change and plans for 2017 – 2019 have been outlined in the report.

12.0 Recommendations

- 12.1 It is recommended that the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board note this report as an overview of sickness absence and employee wellbeing.
- 12.2 Comments regarding the content of this report are welcomed.
- 12.3 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board should also note that a Health and Safety Report will also be submitted in due course.

Follow-up Information for Scrutiny Board (Resources and Strategy)

1. Background

A report on 'Employee Health and Wellbeing: Sickness Absence and Positive Intervention' was presented to Scrutiny Board (Resources and Strategy) on 18th January 2018. The report prompted further questions from the Elected Members present that required further research. This information is set out below.

2. Further Information Requested

a) How LCC compares with other organisations in terms of sickness absence levels.

i. Comparison with regional local authorities:

Figure 1 below illustrates the days lost to sickness absence amongst responding Yorkshire and Humber local authorities in 2016/17.

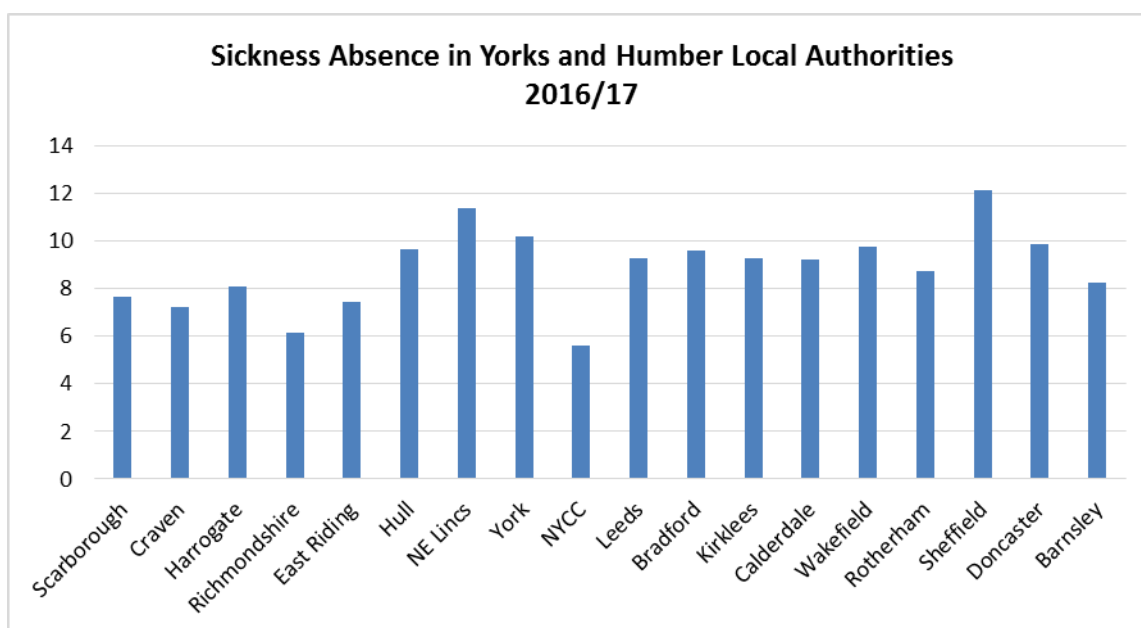


Figure 1

By comparison, local authorities in Greater Manchester reported an average sickness absence of 11.03 in 2015/16 with a range from 9.0 days up to 12.5. The average days lost to sickness in Yorkshire and Humber in 2016/17 was 8.9, with Leeds at 9.31.

ii. Comparison with core cities:

Figure 2 below illustrates sickness absence in Core City local authorities from 2015/16 – which is the last information currently held. N.B. data was not provided by Glasgow and Newcastle.

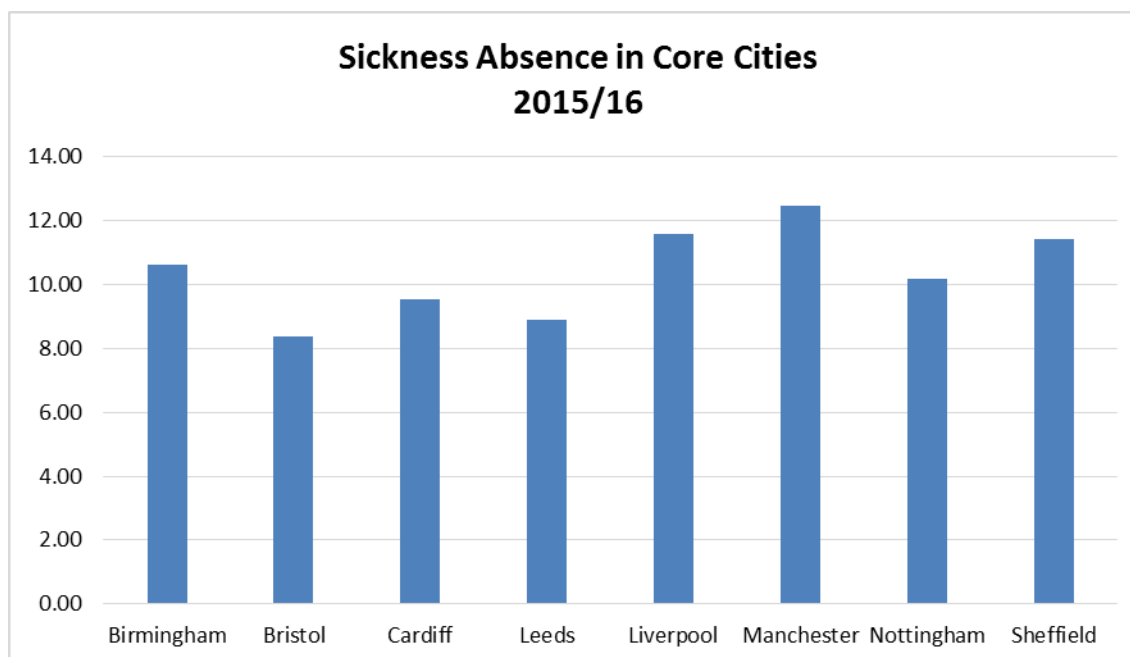


Figure 2

iii. Comparison with the private sector and other factors:

A survey in 2016 by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development found that the average number of days lost across all sectors was 6.3. The average in the private sector was 5.2, whilst it was 8.5 in the public sector.

This survey also evidenced some of the other factors referred to in the original Scrutiny Board Report i.e. manual workers in all sectors had 2.1 days more sickness absence on average a year and larger organisations saw more sickness absence – this ranged from 4.0 days in organisations with less than 50 employees to 9.4 in those with over 5,000 employees.

The original report cited a piece of research that showed public and private sector differences as 0.3 days, when standardised for these factors.

b) Numbers of employees leaving LCC or reviewed at the final stage of the Improving Attendance Policy due to ill health.

Table 1 below illustrates the outcomes of employees leaving LCC on health grounds or being reviewed at the final stage of the Improving Attendance Policy.

Outcome	No.
Dismissed on grounds of ill health capability	42
Dismissed on grounds of ill health retirement	44
De-escalated to Stage 2 of Policy after Stage 3 review	12
Re-deployed through medical re-deployment	7
Currently in review period at Stage 3	3
Total	108

Table 1

c) Calculation of figures presented in the original report

In the previous report some 'year to date' information was presented i.e. from 1/4/17 to 30/11 and this caused some confusion.

Normally average sickness absence is calculated based on the previous 12 months' absence within a team / service / directorate and equated to a full time equivalent employee within that area. The changes in directorates and structures from April 2017 meant however that, in most areas, it isn't possible to get a full 12 months absence data, therefore the absence was based on the period from 1/4/17 to date and pro-rata'd to make it up to 12 months. So, for example, in Waste, from 1/4/17 to 30/11/17 the actual average absence per full time equivalent for that period is 11.24. As this is for an 8 month period the figure is pro-rata'd to give a 12 month equivalent ($11.24 / 8 \text{ (months)} \times 12 = 16.87$).

d) Further analysis of Children's and Families

One Member asked why only one Children's and Families service (Learning for Life) featured in the top 11 services with the highest absence, when the Directorate as a whole had the third highest absence level.

The Directorate consists of three main areas and two of them break down into a number of services. The pro rata sickness absence, as of December 2017, in each area and service can be seen in Table 2 below. It can be seen that the service in the 'top 11' with the lowest absence had 11.0 days absence per FTE and the only service in Children's and Families higher than this was 'Learning for Life'.

Main service area	Sickness Absence per FTE
Partnerships	10.05
Active Schools	0.00
Childrens' Workforce Development	3.84
Commissioning and Market Management	8.01
Complex Needs	8.51
Partnership Development and Business Support	5.76
Traded Services	1.33
Safeguarding and Targeted Services	10.91
Childrens Social Work Services	10.33
Early Help Services	10.23
Integrated Safeguarding Unit	6.75
Learning for Life	13.18
Local Safeguarding Children Board	3.58
Complex Needs	0.00
Learning and Improvement	5.83

Table 2

e) Breakdown of the causes of sickness absence in Waste Services

As requested, Figure 3 below illustrates the breakdown of causes of sickness absence in Waste Services.

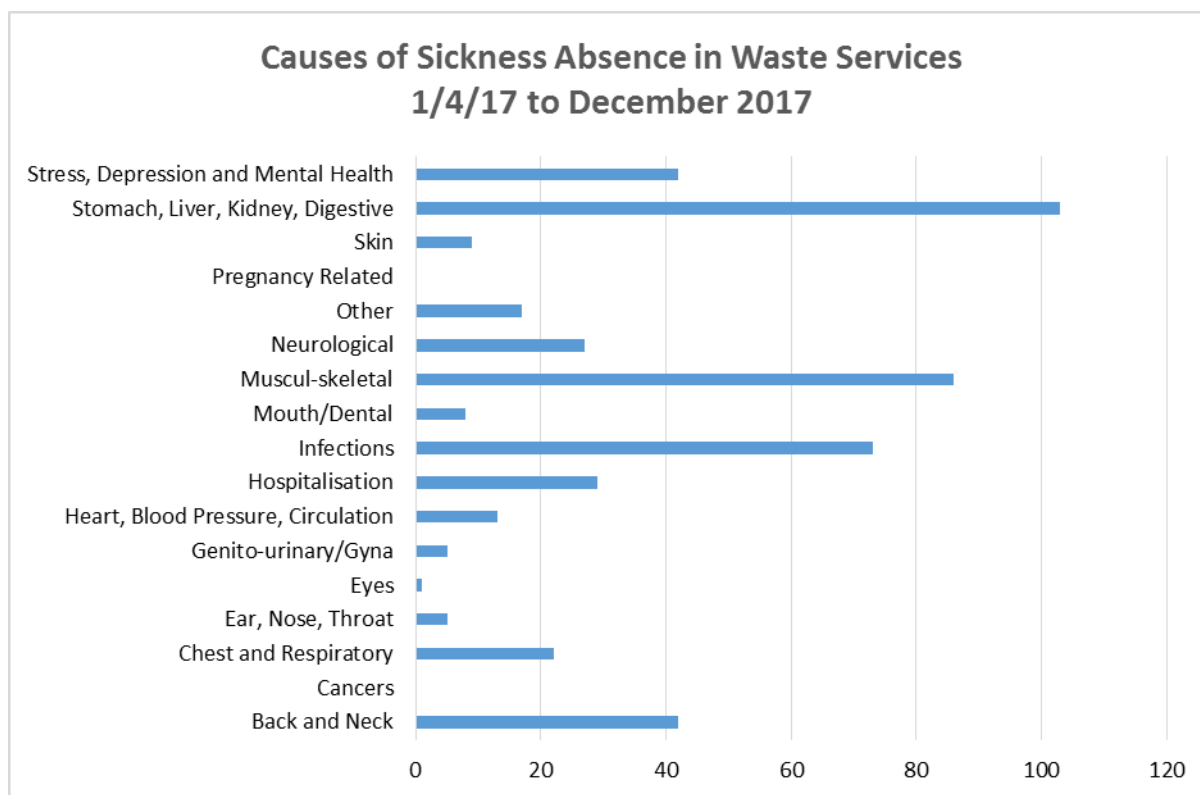


Figure 3

When 'back and neck' and 'musculo-skeletal' are considered together, this forms the largest cause of sickness absence, closely followed by 'stomach, kidney, liver and digestive'.

As mentioned during the meeting there have been a number of initiatives targeted at Waste including: bespoke manual handling training; Men's Health awareness sessions covering mental health, cancers, healthy lifestyle and hand hygiene. A grant funded blood pressure project will also shortly be taking place in Waste.

Further Comments

It is hoped that this paper answers the questions raised at Scrutiny Board (Resources and Strategy) which required further research. Please let me know if any further information is required or you have any comments.

Improving attendance and wellbeing remains a key priority and Human Resources will continue to work with key stakeholders to develop and deliver a range of strategies to address this issue.

**Author: Chris Ingham, Head of Health and Safety, Human Resources,
(Tel: 07891275274)**

On behalf of: Neil Evans, Director of Resources and Housing

Date: 23rd January 2018.

Report of the Director of Resources & Housing

Report to the Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources)

Date: 11th February 2019

Subject: Update – Staff Survey

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report provides a summary of the proposals for the Council's Staff Survey which is due to launch in Spring 2019.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board note this update and comments are welcomed.

1.0 Purpose of this report

1.1 The report provides an outline of an updated Staff Survey approach to specifically improve the uptake in front line services where employees do not have access to a computer as part of their everyday roles.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Staff Survey has been running in its current format for four years providing year on year comparison of engagement with questions centred around the Council's values.

2.2 Some of the main highlights from the 2017 results are as follows:

- We increased our overall engagement score from 7.51 to 7.54 out of 10.
- The overall response rate is high and comparable to previous years with a slight decrease of 3.1% on the previous year.
- Some new questions have been added this year; improved scores on 21 questions and reduced scores on 5 questions.
- 90%+ of staff agree that they have clear expectations, are trusted to do their jobs, and get help and support from colleagues. 89.5% of staff agree they are making a difference to the people of Leeds.

3.0 Main issues

3.1 Staff Survey and Engagement

3.1.1 We know that there is no 'one-size' fits all approach to employee engagement, and no single model for getting it right. All services continue to work hard to make the everyday employee experience better, with activity cutting across the key areas for improvement agreed by CLT in February 2018:

- Improving the quality and value of appraisals across the Council.
- Giving everyone a say and influence at work, especially those in front line teams.
- Tackling increased workloads and burnout, with everyone doing their fair share.
- Tacking areas of poor management (Fairness, consistency, values and behaviour).
- Looking at the money pressures that people are facing and the things that will help.
- Improving IT systems and equipment.

3.1.2 The recent refresh of our Organisational Development Strategy has enabled us to update our key messages around culture change, responding to the six priority areas (above) falling out of the 2017 Staff Survey feedback. Feedback from previous Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Meetings has also identified that the areas for improvement above are key to creating a 'can do' high performance workplace.

3.1.3 It is the continued efforts of all services on the ground, putting people at the centre of what we do, that makes the difference.

3.1.4 There is a focus on how we can improve the employee experience. In part this can be achieved by encouraging staff to take a greater concern in the welfare of their colleagues, whether as peers or managers. In 2019 there will be a focus on the healthy organisation with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy being extended until 2021.

3.1.5 To develop the initiatives above, it is really important for us to understand how staff feel about working for Leeds City Council.

3.1.6 We have recognised that the current methods for engaging staff with online access are successful, with around two thirds of these staff taking part (65% in 2017).

However, engaging front line staff has been more of a challenge and response rates were closer to 1 in 4 (26% in 2017), with some services engaging to a much lesser extent than others. In order to change this we will agree a bespoke approach for each front-line service looking at staff culture, preferences and local work practices to determine the best way to engage staff. Some examples include:

- Providing the option for staff to use a web-link to complete the survey via smartphones or tablets.
- Supporting teams by providing access to IT equipment if required.
- Attending staff events to support teams to complete the survey.

3.2 The 2019 Staff Survey

3.2.1 The way forward (outlined below) for the 2019 Staff Survey has been refreshed through consultation with teams, trade unions and staff networks.

3.2.2 Feedback and suggestions from previous Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board Meetings regarding how we can reach out to front line staff has also been taken into account when refreshing this approach.

Frequency of the survey	We conduct the survey every other year , giving the opportunity for further engagement to fill gaps and explore themes in between.
Questions	We keep the questions largely the same to allow comparison, with a few changes to avoid duplication. Links to the OD strategy and how we measure its success. Some amendment to the open question to constrain responses.
On-line staff	We will email a personalised link to the online survey , which has been shown to generate a high response rate.
Front line services/low IT access	We will take bespoke approaches per service to meet staff preferences, culture and local work practices, with paper as default. Access via personal devices through social media, text messages and apps will also be on offer, with tablets and laptops being made available where required.
Reporting and follow up	HR and IPS will offer advice and support around development of action plans, follow-up and communication of findings. Levels of response will be considered, including by demographic group - further engagement (pulse surveys, focus etc.) will be carried out to fill gaps and explore themes. Instead of creating individual reports at a service level, it is proposed that a dashboard is created , which enables managers to select a full report for their Service. Figures could be compared between Services or at Directorate or LCC level and further information, such as response rates, could be included. Where response numbers are low and results less statistically robust, the reports would be displayed, however managers would see a warning. Only where response numbers are unreasonably low would reports not be displayed.

4.0 Consultation and Engagement

4.1 This way forward is based on the 2017 Staff Survey results and consultation with services, staff networks, leadership teams, staff, trade union colleagues and feedback from Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board meetings.

5.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

5.1 Our Staff Survey and feedback from services, staff networks, leadership teams, staff and trade union colleagues give a valuable insight into the real work experiences of different staff groups and employees. We use the results from the staff survey to improve the employee experience and become a more inclusive workplace.

5.2 The Council have a legal duty to eliminate any forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

5.3 The bespoke approaches for staff who do not have access to a computer will meet staff preferences and should further increase the response rates for those staff who are off-line.

6.0 Council Policies and Best Council Plan

6.1 The Council's values are at the heart of what we do and how we work to achieve the priorities outlined in the Best Council Plan.

6.2 A 'can do', high performing, inclusive workforce is key to delivering the Best Council Plan through increased customer trust and confidence and improved service delivery and outcomes.

6.3 This report recommends that there remains a place for the Staff Survey as part of our culture change work, but that we update our approach and bespoke our methods where it makes sense to do so.

7.0 Resources and Value for Money

7.1 The Staff Survey allows us to improve the employee experience, increase engagement and maximise our investment in staffing.

8.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

8.1 This is not applicable as shown in the content of the report.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 Engaging front line staff has been a challenge and response rates were closer to 1 in 4 (26% in 2017), with some services engaging to a much lesser extent than others. Using bespoke approaches for front line staff should improve the uptake in front line services where employees do not have access to a computer as part of their everyday roles.

10.0 Conclusions

10.1 This report highlights the way forward for the 2019 Staff Survey.

11.0 Recommendations

11.1 It is recommended that the Resources and Housing Scrutiny Board note this update on the proposals for the 2019 Staff Survey and comments and feedback are welcomed.

12. Background documents¹

12.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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Report author: Angela Brogden
Tel: 0113 378 86661

Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 11th February 2019

Subject: The management and financial implications of void properties in Council ownership - draft Statement of the Scrutiny Board

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. During July 2018, the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board considered the Council's 2017/18 Financial Outturn Report and agreed to undertake further scrutiny surrounding the management and financial implications of void properties in Council ownership.
2. The Board decided to consider this matter via a working group meeting, which took place on 29th October 2018. An invitation was extended to all Board Members and the Head of Asset Management and Head of Responsive Repairs, Voids & Corporate Property Management contributed to the working group's meeting.
3. It was agreed that the findings of the working group would inform a formal Statement setting out the Scrutiny Board's conclusions and proposed recommendations surrounding this matter. A draft of the Scrutiny Board's Statement will therefore be made available in readiness for today's meeting for formal consideration and agreement by the Board.

Recommendations

4. The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and agree its formal Statement in relation to its review of the management and financial implications of void properties in Council ownership.

Background papers¹

5. None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 11th February 2019

Subject: Work Schedule

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1 Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Scrutiny Board’s work schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

2 Main issues

2.1 At its initial meeting in June 2018, the Scrutiny Board discussed a range of matters for possible inclusion within the overall work schedule for 2018/19. Linked to this, the Principal Scrutiny Adviser was requested to work with the Chair to incorporate the areas of work agreed by the Scrutiny Board into its work schedule for the forthcoming year.

2.2 The latest iteration of the work schedule is attached as Appendix 1 for consideration and agreement of the Scrutiny Board – subject to any identified and agreed amendments.

2.3 Executive Board minutes from the meeting held on 14th January 2019 are also attached as Appendix 2. The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and note the Executive Board minutes, insofar as they relate to the remit of the Scrutiny Board; and identify any matter where specific scrutiny activity may be warranted, and therefore subsequently incorporated into the work schedule.

Developing the work schedule

2.4 The work schedule should not be considered a fixed and rigid schedule, it should be recognised as something that can be adapted and changed to reflect any new and emerging issues throughout the year; and also reflect any timetable issues that might occur from time to time.

2.5 However, when considering any developments and/or modifications to the work schedule, effort should be undertaken to:

- Avoid unnecessary duplication by having a full appreciation of any existing forums already having oversight of, or monitoring a particular issue.
- Ensure any Scrutiny undertaken has clarity and focus of purpose and will add value and can be delivered within an agreed time frame.
- Avoid pure “information items” except where that information is being received as part of a policy/scrutiny review.
- Seek advice about available resources and relevant timings, taking into consideration the workload across the Scrutiny Boards and the type of Scrutiny taking place.
- Build in sufficient flexibility to enable the consideration of urgent matters that may arise during the year.

2.6 In addition, in order to deliver the work schedule, the Board may need to take a flexible approach and undertake activities outside the formal schedule of meetings – such as working groups and site visits, where deemed appropriate. This flexible approach may also require additional formal meetings of the Scrutiny Board.

Developments since the previous Scrutiny Board meeting

2.7 There have been no significant developments to report since the last meeting.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to consider the matters outlined in this report and agree (or amend) the overall work schedule (as presented at Appendix 1) as the basis for the Board’s work for the remainder of 2018/19.

4. Background papers¹

4.1 None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council’s website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.



Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2018/2019 Municipal Year

June	July	August
Meeting Agenda for 18th June 2018	Meeting Agenda for 16th July 2018	No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.
Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference and Sources of Work (DB) Performance Update (PM)	Financial Performance – 2017/18 Outturn (PM) Financial Health Monitoring 2018/19 (PM) Treasury Management – 2017/18 Outturn (PM)	
Working Group Meetings		
		Scrutiny Inquiry – Embracing Digital Technology Solutions - drafting terms of reference – 1 st August 2018 at 10.30 am
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2018/2019 Municipal Year

September	October	November
Meeting Agenda for 10th September 2018	No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled	Meeting Agenda for 12th November 2018.
Draft Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy (PDS) Civic Enterprise Leeds – performance update (PM) Medium Term Financial Strategy (PM) Annual Corporate Risk Management Report (PM) Scrutiny Inquiry – Embracing Digital Technology Solutions – Agreeing terms of reference (PSR)		Business Rates – position update (PSR) Effective Procurement – Update (PM) Devolution – Update (PSR)
Working Group Meetings		
	Session 1 Inquiry Session – Embracing Digital Technology Solutions (PSR) – 22/10/18 The management and financial implications of council owned void properties (PSR) – 29/10/18	
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2018/2019 Municipal Year

December	January	February
No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.	Meeting Agenda for 21st January 2019	Meeting Agenda for 11th February 2019
	Performance report (PM) Financial Health Monitoring (PSR) 2019/20 Initial Budget Proposals (PDS) Best Council Plan Refresh – Initial Proposals (PDS)	Electoral, Registrars and Licensing – Update (PM) HR - Employee Engagement Survey (PDS) HR – Health and Wellbeing Update (PM) Business Rates Appeals (PSR) The management and financial implications of council owned void properties – Draft Scrutiny Board Statement (PSR)
Working Group Meetings		
Session 2 Inquiry Session – Embracing Digital Technology Solutions (PSR) – 11/12/18 Maximising the Apprenticeship Levy in terms of workforce development (PSR) – 14/12/18		Emergency Planning and the Council's position in light of recent national reviews (PSR) – 28/02/19 @ 10.30 am
Site Visits		

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Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response



Scrutiny Board (Strategy & Resources) Work Schedule for 2018/2019 Municipal Year

March	April	May
No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.	Meeting Agenda for 1st April 2019	No Scrutiny Board meeting scheduled.
	<p>New Procurement Strategy – Update (PDS)</p> <p>Leeds Culture Strategy/Leeds 2023 Developments – Update position (PSR)</p> <p>Embracing Digital Technology Solutions – Draft Inquiry Report (PSR)</p> <p>Emergency Planning and the Council’s position in light of recent national reviews – Working Group Summary/Draft Statement of the Scrutiny Board (PSR)</p> <p>Maximising the Apprenticeship Levy in terms of workforce development – Working Group Summary/Draft Statement of the Scrutiny Board (PSR)</p>	
Working Group Meetings		
Site Visits		

Scrutiny Work Items Key:

PSR	Policy/Service Review	RT	Recommendation Tracking	DB	Development Briefings
PDS	Pre-decision Scrutiny	PM	Performance Monitoring	C	Consultation Response

EXECUTIVE BOARD

MONDAY, 14TH JANUARY, 2019

PRESENT: Councillor J Blake in the Chair

Councillors A Carter, R Charlwood,
D Coupar, S Golton, J Lewis, R Lewis,
J Pryor and M Rafique

APOLOGIES: Councillor L Mulherin

140 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no information designated as being exempt from publication or confidential considered at this meeting.

141 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda, however, prior to the meeting, Board Members were in receipt of supplementary information regarding agenda item 5 ('Site Allocations Plan Update: Main Modifications Consultation') as follows:

- Appendix 3 to the submitted report which provided the Sustainability Appraisal of the Inspectors' recommended potential Main Modifications;
- An updated version of 'Table 1', as included within Appendix 2 to the submitted report;
- Corrections to figures within the submitted covering report; and
- A proposed additional recommendation to the covering report.

(Minute No. 143 refers).

142 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared during the meeting.

REGENERATION, TRANSPORT AND PLANNING

143 Site Allocations Plan Update: Main Modifications Consultation

Further to Minute No. 115, 13th December 2017, the Director of City Development submitted a report which provided an update on the current position regarding Leeds' Site Allocations Plan (SAP), presented details of the Inspectors' recommended potential Main Modifications to the SAP and which sought approval to a 6 week consultation period in respect of those Main Modifications.

Prior to the meeting, Board Members had received for their consideration, supplementary information in the form of:

- Appendix 3 to the submitted report, which was the Sustainability Appraisal document of the Inspectors' recommended potential Main Modifications;

- An updated version of ‘Table 1’, as detailed within Appendix 2 to the submitted report;
- A proposed additional recommendation for inclusion into the covering report; and
- Corrections to figures within the submitted covering report, as follows:

Page 2 of the covering report: para 4, line 11 (change 3,970 to 4,070)
Page 6 of the covering report: para 3.1, bullet 6 (change 36 to 34 and change 792 homes to 1,850 homes and change 1,090 homes to 2,314 homes)
Page 9 of the covering report: para 3.23, MX2-39 amend 792 to 1,850 and amend the total from 825 to 1,883
Page 10 of the covering report: para 3.33, HG2-124 amend 1,090 to 2,314 and amend total from 1,296 to 2,519 .

In presenting the submitted report, the Executive Member provided an update regarding the SAPs current position, the key aspects of the Inspector’s Main Modifications and he also extended his thanks to all who had been involved in progressing the SAP to this advanced stage. Members then briefly discussed the nature and extent of the Inspectors’ recommended Main Modifications to the SAP.

In considering the submitted report, Members noted that the matter had been considered by Development Plan Panel on 10th January 2019, which had recommended that Executive Board approve that the Inspectors’ recommended schedule of Main Modifications were subject to a 6 week public consultation period.

Members noted that, subject to the Board approving the consultation process, the period of public consultation would run from 21st January to 4th March 2019. Responding to an enquiry, the Board also received further information on the next steps of the SAP approval process, with it being noted that following the consultation exercise, the Inspectors’ Final Report together with the SAP recommended by the Inspector for adoption, was to be submitted to Executive Board and then to full Council, with it currently proposed for the SAP to be submitted to Council for the purposes of formal adoption in approximately June / July 2019.

In highlighting the importance for the SAP to continue to be progressed without delay and in acknowledging the key benefits of having a SAP adopted, it was noted that the scheduling of additional meetings of Executive Board and Council may be considered to facilitate its adoption, if required.

In reiterating the importance of the SAP continuing to be progressed without delay, Members also emphasised the separate but key role played by the Core Strategy Selective Review (CSSR), and the relationship that this has to the SAP, with the benefits of a robust position in terms of housing land supply being highlighted.

Also in relation to timescales, responding to a Member's comments on the reference within the submitted Appendix 2 regarding a review of the SAP to be commenced following the adoption of the CSSR and to be submitted no later than 31st December 2021, officers undertook that, subject to the outcome of the CSSR and any other factors which could potentially affect the process, every effort would be made for that review to be undertaken and submitted to the Secretary of State at the earliest opportunity, and in advance of 31st December 2021, with Members agreeing that at the appropriate time, a cross-party discussion be held with the aim of agreeing an indicative timeframe regarding the future review of the SAP.

Members also noted the national discussion, via the Local Government Association, regarding the factors affecting the efficient development of sites where planning permission had already been granted, with Members highlighting the need to keep pursuing this agenda, as appropriate.

RESOLVED – That having considered and noted the submitted cover report and Appendices 1-3, which included corrections to several figures within the covering report (as detailed above); the addition of a recommendation to the covering report (as referenced in resolution (b) below); Appendix 3 (Sustainability Appraisal of the Inspectors' Main Modifications) and an updated 'Table 1' within Appendix 2:-

- (a) Approval be given for the Schedule of the Inspectors' Main Modifications (as attached as Appendix 2 to the submitted report) and the Sustainability Appraisal of the Main Modifications (as attached as Appendix 3 to the submitted report), to be the subject of a 6 week period of public consultation; and
- (b) For the purposes of accuracy, delegation be granted to the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for 'Regeneration, Transport and Planning' and with the agreement of the Planning Inspectors, to make any factual and other minor changes to the Main Modifications prior to consultation.

(The matters referred to within this minute, given that they were decisions being made in accordance with the Budget & Policy Framework Procedure Rules, were not eligible for Call In, as Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 5.1.2 states that the power to Call In decisions does not extend to those decisions being made in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules)

DATE OF PUBLICATION: WEDNESDAY, 16TH JANUARY 2019

LAST DATE FOR CALL IN OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS: NOT APPLICABLE

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