CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 17 November 2022
Report Subject	Employment and Workforce mid-year update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets,
Report Author	Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide Members with a review of the organisational workforce data for 2022/23. This report provides details of the following:

- Headcount and Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
- Organisation Age Profile (Non –Schools and Schools)
- Employee Turnover and Stability (Including Redundancies and Early Retirements)
- Attendance
- Equality and Diversity
- Achievements made by Human Resources within the quarter

The report is intended to provide a focus on organisational performance and trends and provides a brief narrative on the overall performance against a number of indicators. A more detailed explanation is provided on an exceptional basis where performance is falling below organisational performance indicators or where there has been a significant movement, either upwards or downwards, in the reported trends. The narrative will include an explanation for the movement in trend and details of any proposed actions to improve or maintain performance.

The performance information is provided for the whole organisation but split to show Schools and Non-Schools data separately.

On a periodic basis, this report will highlight key achievements or projects undertaken in support of the People Strategy and/or Council Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	Members note and provide their comments on the mid-year Workforce Information Report for 2022/23.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT
1.01	**Headcount and Full Time Equivalent (FTE)**
	The headcount and FTE figures during at mid-year shows an increase of 124 FTE across the Council when compared to last year. Non-schools show an increase of 83 FTE, some attributable to the transfer of the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) into the Flintshire Establishment (36 FTE); Schools show an overall increase of 41 FTE.
	During the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022, 70 employees took maternity leave and were backfilled, which also contributes to the increase in headcount when compared to last year.
1.02	**Age Profiling**
	Age profiling the organisation is an important part of understanding the age demographics of our workforce and where we may need to focus attention.
	Understanding our workforce profile, enables the Council to assess supply and potential problem areas within a given service/portfolio and aids succession planning by identifying any skill gaps that may arise. Without an analysis of age profile (and skills profile), no workable long-term planning can be made.
	As of 30 September, the majority of employees across Portfolios and Schools are within the age ranges of 35-44 (23.52%) followed by 25-34 (16.90%), 50-54 (15.32%) and 55–59 (14.43%). Our age profile is consistent with other local authorities.
1.03	**Employee Turnover and Stability (Including Redundancies and Early Retirements)**
	The mid-year cumulative turnover percentage for 2022/23 is 6.71%. This shows an increase when compared to the previous year (5.76%).
	Of the 415 employees that have left during 2022/23, 52% have left voluntarily (218 employees). The largest area of employees leaving voluntarily is within Schools (114 employees), which is part of the natural turnover/cycle we see at the end of each academic year. The second largest area is within Social Services (54 employees).

	Nationally, there are significant workforce pressures across a range of sectors, including public services and specific areas across local authority portfolios. Within Social Services the recruitment and retention of social workers, OT's, domiciliary and children's residential care staff are particularly challenging and locally a specific Task and Finish Group was established to address these challenges. Over the last two years we have been particularly successful at recruiting and growing newly qualified social workers. There is a national progression programme for the first three years of practice for social workers and we have complemented this with a local development programme to nurture and develop practitioners, many of whom will have qualified and commenced their career during the pandemic. The challenge is that we now have a disproportionate number of social workers at the start of their careers who are still undertaking the training, experience and development that will enable them to progress to level 3 social workers who are able to conduct complex and risk-based work including s47 child protection enquiries. The urgent need for retaining and attracting level 3 practitioners and the competitive market pay rate, led to an agreement to pay a market supplement for this cohort of staff in October 2021. The purpose of this temporary award was to help retain existing experienced staff, as opposed to attracting new employees, in a volatile market where all are competing for the same scarce resource. During a recent review of our exit interview process we have identified some improvements which are being actioned and some new initiatives, which are currently being developed, for example, a survey monkey to be sent to all leavers.
1.04	**Attendance** The mid-year cumulative full time equivalent (FTE) days lost for 2022/23 is 5.41, which is a downturn when compared the previous year (4.79). That said, reporting on COVID absence was recorded separately during the previous year(s). The FTE days lost for 2022/23 excluding COVID absence is 4.33. 28% of all absences across the Council are related to mental health, 20% are COVID related, 16% musculoskeletal and 10% due to infections. Attendance continues to be managed very closely, with regular reporting on the number of employees affected by COVID related absences, including those identified as a contact of a positive (index) case who are required to isolate irrespective of whether they are able to attend work (depending on the role occupied, some employees are able to work from home or be temporarily deployed to alternative duties). Managers, Occupational Health and HR work closely in managing attendance, offering additional support, including mindfulness, counselling, stress management courses, stress risk assessments etc. CareFirst is also available to provide additional support.

1.05	**Resource Management (Agency Workers)**
	The cumulative agency expenditure for 2022/23 is £1.52m. The largest agency spend is within Streetscene and Transportation at £737,000. The second largest spend is within Social Services at £442,000.

Streetscene currently have circa 40 agency workers who are going through our on-boarding (clearance process) for various positions such as Chargehand, Streetscene Operative, Waste Collection & Household Recycling Centre Operatives. Further recruitment exercises are planned for the coming weeks which should lead to further reductions in the number of agency workers.

The cumulative 'Off-contract' spend for 2022/23 is £494,000, which equates to 32.50% of the overall agency spend. The main reasons for 'off-contract' spend is where there is a need to fill specialist, hard to fill roles such as Social Workers. Like most authorities, as demand for experienced level 3 social workers outstrips supply, we have had to rely on agencies. There is very high demand for agency staff with the average hourly rate having increased from £36 in 2019 to a current rate of up to £48. This is creating an unsustainable position and financial impact.

There are potential opportunities to recruit appropriately qualified and experienced social care workers from oversees via the Health and Social Care Worker visa launched in mid-2020 to address the workforce challenges faced by the health and social care sector in the UK. An application is in progress for us to become a Home Office approved sponsor.

We are also working collaboratively with neighbours to develop a unified approach to workforce recruitment and retention to limit the opportunities for agency workers to join/leave Council's for more money thus driving up costs. |
| 1.06 | **Equality and Diversity Workforce Monitoring**

It is important to us that we recruit and retain the best workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. We monitor our workforce to find out whether it broadly reflects our local communities and to ensure our practices are free from discrimination, helping us to deliver appropriate and accessible services to all our communities.

The Council collects diversity information on recruitment and the make-up of our workforce to help us meet our obligations under the Single Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Information gathered can, if analysed regularly, help us to identify barriers that prevent access to employment and career development for certain groups of people, and to develop solutions, such as positive action plans or alternative policies and practices. |

1.07	**Specific achievements / initiatives during the reporting period**
	A significant amount of policy to practice training was provided to support the roll out of our new Disciplinary Policy and amended Attendance Management Policy, as follows:
	• 7 Briefing Sessions on the new disciplinary policy with 109 managers participating • 5 full day training sessions resulting in 61 trained Investigating Officers • 3 training sessions resulting in 23 trained Authorised Officers • 2 case administration sessions where we have trained 10 administrators on how to support a disciplinary policy • 7 Attendance Management sessions where we have trained 87 managers and supervisors on the policy

2.00	**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**
2.01	None arising directly from this report.

3.00	**CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT**
3.01	None arising directly from this report.

4.00	**RISK MANAGEMENT**
4.01	None arising directly from this report.

5.00	**APPENDICES**
5.01	None.

6.00	**LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**
6.01	**Contact Officer:** Sharon Carney, Senior Manager, People and Organisational Development. **Telephone:** 01352 702139 **E-mail:** sharon.carney@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
7.01	To be completed once format/content finalised.