

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 24th October, 2019.

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chairman); Councillors G.D.D. Carroll, G.A. Cox, R. Crowley, V.P. Driscoll, G. John, Dr. I.J. Johnson, Ms. S. Sivagnanam and J.W. Thomas.

412 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor O. Griffiths (Vice-Chairman).

413 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

The following Councillors declared an interest in Agenda Item Nos. 4 and 5 Reshaping Services: Update on Implementation and Reshaping Services: Town and Community Council Engagement in Operating Local Services and Assets in that they had a dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak and vote on matters in relation to Reshaping Services in view of the fact they were Members of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and also Town and Community Councillors:

M.R. Wilson (Chairman);
G.A. Cox;
R. Crowley;
V.P. Driscoll;
G. John; and
Dr. I.J. Johnson.

414 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2019/20 TO 2022/23 (REF) –

Cabinet had considered the report on 7th October, 2019 and had resolved that the Plan be referred to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration with any comments made by the Committee to be taken into account as part of the final budget proposals for 2020/21. The purpose of the Medium Term Financial Plan was to link the Council's strategic planning process with the budget process and to ensure consistency between them. It was a mechanism that attempted to match future predicted resources and expenditure, identify potential shortfalls and provide the financial framework for the next three years.

The Section 151 Officer, in presenting the report, advised that there was currently no indication as to what the allocation from Welsh Government was likely to be and as a result of the uncertainty the Plan had been modelled on a range of Welsh Government settlements and Council Tax increases. The matching exercise indicated that if there was a cash neutral or 1% reduction in the settlement from Welsh Government and if there was a 4.9% increase in Council Tax for each year of

the Plan, there remained between 10.470m and £14.986m of savings to be identified for the three years of the Plan. If the Council Tax was to be increased to and maintained at the Welsh average, with a cash neutral or 1% reduction in the settlement from Welsh Government, there remained between £3.747m and £8.263m of savings to be identified for the three years of the Plan. It being noted that this was after the Council had already planned for £748k of savings (excluding schools) for the same period.

In commenting on the report, a Member queried whether the new developments that were taking place across the Vale had been taken into account for Council Tax purposes, with the Head of Service advising that the Council Tax figures were based on current numbers.

Having regard to the discussions in relation to Council Tax, the Head of Service advised that the Department had devised a spreadsheet comparing how a percentage change in Council Tax would impact on the Council Tax due from homes in different Bands in the Vale. The Chairman requested that copies of the information be emailed to all Members of the Council.

A Member queried how the predicted cost pressures had been arrived at, particularly if a Council Tax increase would not be required to be as high as had been calculated. The Head of Service, in response, advised that the school demographic growth was based on funding levels per pupil and the placement budget for Learning and Skills was looking at the cohort of children going through the system now. Cost pressures were updated on an annual basis. The Member was also concerned about the potential of increasing Council Tax having regard to the significant number of reserves available as the Council Tax rise would increase the pressure on rate payers. It was however noted that all the figures referred to had been discussed by the Scrutiny Committees with all departments having had to justify their cost pressure requests. The Council was also currently looking at all its services and realigning them or restructuring where appropriate. Consideration was being given to non-statutory and statutory services which was undertaken on an annual basis, it being noted that it was not practical to get rid of all non-statutory services due to the knock on effect they had, for example referring to leisure services, although not a statutory service it assisted with the Health and Wellbeing agenda.

The Chairman also considered that the Council should be looking at other investment strategy opportunities, recognising that value for money was important for Council Tax payers and also noting that the demographics were having an effect on the whole of the Vale of Glamorgan. In referring to the Digital Strategy, he queried what progress the Council was currently making, being subsequently advised that Microsoft Office 365 was currently being rolled out within the Council. The Department was also focusing on space with desk occupancy sensors having been purchased to provide data in order that informed decisions could be made. The sensors had been used within the Dock Offices and the data so far received was due to be analysed shortly. The initiative was currently being rolled out on the third floor of the Civic Offices.

Having regard to discussions at the meeting and the contents of the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T Cabinet be requested to consider the demographic growth within the Vale of Glamorgan and its impact on resources and to consider further investment opportunities for the future of the Council.

Reason for recommendation

Having regard to the discussions at the meeting and the contents contained within the report.

415 RESHAPING SERVICES: UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION (REF) –

The report provided Cabinet with an update on the progress of the Reshaping Services programme with the recommendation that the report be referred to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee to afford the opportunity to consider the progress being made on the programme as the lead Committee for the programme.

Appendix A to the report provided details of the most recent (July 2019) All Projects Summary Highlight Report, with the report being structured as follows:

- Financial Summaries: These summarised the various projects underway within individual Directorates and Council staff responsible as project sponsor and project manager. Details of the financial savings / income target for each year and the programme overall were also provided.
- Activity Reports: For each project (or area of supporting activity) an update was provided to the Programme Board for the period. The Programme Board considered the update in the context of the financial target set and established a RAG status.
- Programme Risk and Issue Log: The log summarised the programme level risks and issues identified by the Programme Board, with an assessment of probability (risks only) and impact, along with the actions taken to manage, mitigate or reduce each.
- Appendix A Corporate Workstream Projects Savings Allocations: Where certain corporate (or 'Council-wide') projects were being delivered across multiple service areas, savings targets were established at service area level. This enabled monitoring to be undertaken at a detailed level, with appropriate remedial action to be identified and undertaken in areas where targets were not forecast to be met.

The Head of Service, in presenting the report, referred to the need to consider good practice that had already taken place, referring by way of an example to the library service, and to utilise the lessons learned from that project for future projects.

Having regard to the new “catering truck” that had been purchased for the Catering Service, the Head of Service advised that a detailed report would be presented to Cabinet in due course but that the business case had been carefully developed and was consistent with the Income Generation Strategy of the Council, with any surplus to be reinvested into the service. All Members took the opportunity to thank the Head of Service for the report, advising that it was imperative that updates were presented on a regular basis to Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee. It was therefore subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Reshaping Services: Update on Implementation be noted.
- (2) T H A T regular progress updates continue to be provided to the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Reshaping Services programme.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents contained therein.
- (2) In order that the Scrutiny Committee can monitor the programme on a regular basis.

416 RESHAPING SERVICES: TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT IN OPERATING LOCAL SERVICES AND ASSETS (REF) –

Throughout the Reshaping Services programme the Council had engaged with Town and Community Councils with work to date being primarily focused on developing relationships and an understanding of the capacity, appetite and desire of Town and Community Councils to take a greater role in the provision of localised services and the operation of local assets that may be valued by local residents. However, where the Vale of Glamorgan Council may not be able to, or be the most appropriate body to continue such services in the future, the discussions had continued. As a result, an event was held in July 2019 to consider the issues, which was well attended by Town and Community Councils.

The report to Cabinet set out a series of proposals for consideration that met the aim of the Reshaping Services strategy, which was to protect priority services wherever possible. The proposals concentrated on an initial phase of assets (public conveniences and allotments) and services (grass cutting) as a means of developing pragmatic proposals for the coming financial year.

At the Cabinet meeting on 7th October, the Managing Director and the Director of Environment and Housing Services had stated that it was important that Town and Community Councils knew what the Vale of Glamorgan Council intended to progress around the Reshaping Services agenda with the report being able to provide information so that Town and Community Councils could plan more effectively and set their own budgets accordingly.

In considering the report it was noted that the Community Asset Transfer guidance process was a vehicle to encourage community groups, Town and Community Councils to consider opportunities and set out the process for the submission of Expression of Interest, however it was noted that this was not the only vehicle as long leases or even trial pilots could be considered. Following the Town and Community Council event that had been held in July 2019, a further event would be arranged before the end of the current financial year. It was accepted that as a Council, the information relating to what services it may not be able to provide due to resourcing issues was shared, with discussions to take place of how some services could be continued within communities if Town and Community Councils wished to do so. Other considerations to take into account the Chairman listed for example were TUPE considerations, the transferring of assets by lease or any other way, the use of the Charter with Town and Community Councils and the Council's own view in relation to what type of strategic assets it would wish to retain.

The Head of Human Resources, who was present at the meeting, advised that any TUPE arrangements would be considered within the TUPE process, also highlighting other considerations like the ACAS service and COT 3.

Having regard to legal advice in relation to the engagement of Town and Community Councils in operating local services and assets, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that One Voice Wales could provide assistance to Town and Community Councils on this matter and condition surveys would accompany any transfer. All these considerations would be made when Town and Community Councils had put forward any suggestions for discussion.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T Cabinet be urged to progress discussions with Town and Community Councils.
- (2) T H A T TUPE arrangements, the Council's view on strategic arrangements, any legal advice required, setting up a fund to assist with the transfer of assets be considered by Cabinet when discussing matters with Town and Community Councils and that progress on the agenda be urged in view of impending budgetary discussions within the Vale and the Town and Community Councils' budgetary processes themselves.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To ensure that momentum is maintained.
- (2) That various aspects outlined above are considered during the process.

417 REVENUE MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL TO 31ST AUGUST 2019 (MD) –

In considering the report it was noted that some services were anticipating adverse variances by year end and would not achieve their savings target in the full year. The Learning and Skills Directorate, had been requested to look at ways of mitigating a projected overspend of £538k, with this being after a planned draw down from reserves of £136k. Schools' budgets were expected to balance but there was an adverse variance on the Strategy, Culture Community Learning and Resources services of £32k. For Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing, a net adverse variance of £568k was projected. The key emerging challenge for schools in this area was the increasing number of children and young people who were displaying very complex social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The major concern for Social Services in relation to Children and Young People Services was the continuing pressure on the children's placements budget given the complexities of the children currently being supported and the high cost placements some of the children required to meet their needs. Work however continued to ensure that children we placed in the most appropriate and cost effective placements, however in the context of the complexity of need and the national challenges in identifying placements, it was projected that the budget could overspend by around £1.5m in the year.

For Adult Services the pressure on the Community Care Packages budget had been reassessed with a projected net overspend at year end of around £700k. The service continued to be affected by the pressures of continued demographic growth, an increase in the cost of service provision and the Community Care Packages budget would have to achieve further savings in the year.

For Environment and Housing, within the Waste Collection Service it was anticipated that there would be an adverse variance of around £650k as there was still pressure on employee and transport budgets due to downtime involved in travelling to Cardiff to dispose of waste.

The Neighbourhood Services and Transport Service was projecting an adverse variance of £1.520m with plans for saving £932k for 2019/20 already being underway. Due to the popularity of the Barry Island resort there was currently a pressure of around £100k on the staffing budget with additional resources having to be utilised to maintain the expected cleanliness standards of the beach and promenade. Although efforts had been made over previous years to turn a high percentage of street lighting to LED, there had been significant increases to the cost of energy, with a projected adverse variance against the street lighting energy budget.

Under the Directorate of Managing Director and Resources, although the forecast for Countryside, Economic Development and Tourism and Events Functions showed a balanced budget at year end, there remained concern over the long-established income targets for car parking charges and commercial opportunities within the

Countryside Division, as these historic savings targets would be difficult to achieve if charges were not implemented.

The Section 151 Officer advised that all Directorates were working hard to bring their budgets in line in order to balance their budgets, however the Council may have to draw down on its reserves.

In recognising that the issues affecting Social Services were also a national picture, Members suggested that Welsh Government be lobbied by the WLGA and that Cabinet hold discussions with the WLGA in this regard. A Member queried whether, having regard to the cost of out of county placements, some could be brought back into the boundary and schooled at Ysgol y Deri, however the Head of Service stated that many of the complex needs of the out of county placements were higher than what Ysgol y Deri could provide.

Having regard to the savings targets not yet met, in referring to traffic management issues, the Section 151 Officer advised that she would forward the details to all Members for their information.

In recognising the amount of reserves that the Council currently had, Councillor J.W. Thomas, former Leader of the Council, stated that he had in previous years been criticised for increasing the size of the reserves, but considered that to have been a good strategy now when the Council was considering drawing down on its reserves.

The Chairman of the Committee queried what discussions were currently ongoing with health colleagues, in particular having regard to demographics and in relation to children with complex needs. The Section 151 Officer confirmed that ongoing discussions were held with the Health Service with the Council ensuring that the Health Service picked up their share of any costs.

In considering the issues surrounding waste collection, the Chairman also asked whether further efforts could be made with shop owners and companies in order to discuss with manufacturers the production of the amount of plastic in the first instance.

It was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the position with regard to the 2019/20 revenue budget be noted.
- (2) T H A T Cabinet be requested to discuss with the WLGA further lobbying of Welsh Government regarding funding for Local Authorities.
- (3) T H A T discussions take place with retailers and manufacturers regarding the amount of plastic produced and options for reduction.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) Having regard to the contents within the report.

(2&3) Having regard to discussions at the meeting.

418 CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2019 TO 31ST AUGUST 2019 (MD) –

The Committee considered the progress on the 2019/20 Capital Programme for the period 1st April to 31st August, 2019 and having regard to the requested changes to the Capital Programme as outlined within the report. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the financial progress on the Capital Programme as at 31st August, 2019. A Member queried whether all the works that had been programmed had been completed within schools over the summer period, with all schemes being completed.

Having regard to the Penarth Heights Sustainable Transport expenditure, the Chairman asked that further information on this aspect be forwarded to Members of the Committee.

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the progress made on the 2019/20 Capital Programme be noted.

(2) T H A T the use of delegated authority in relation to the following be noted:

- St, Andrew's Primary New Demountable – Include a new £230k scheme into the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by S106 monies;
- Wick Pavilion – Include a new £30k scheme into the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by S106 monies;
- Ogmere by Sea / St. Brides Major Sustainable Transport Improvements – Increase this scheme by £50k to be funded by S106 monies;
- Welsh Water Bonvilston Improvements – Include a new £1.049m scheme into the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by S106 monies.

(3) T H A T the use of Emergency Powers in relation to the following be noted:

- Barry Leisure Centre Dry Changing Rooms – Include a new £100k scheme into the 2019/20 Capital Programme to be funded from the Building Fund.

(4) T H A T the following changes to the 2019/20 Capital Programme be noted:

- Jenner Park Primary Electrical Rewire – Vire the £70k budget to the Jenner Park Primary Rewire Key Stage 2 first floor scheme;
- Ysgol Bro Morgannwg Renew Sewage Pumps – Vire the £91k budget to the Band B Ysgol Bro Morgannwg scheme;

- Holton Primary Boiler Renewal – Vire £10k to the Education Asset Renewal Contingency Budget;
- St. Joseph's Primary Classroom Refurbishment – Amalgamate this scheme and the St. Joseph's Nursery and Early Intervention Base scheme and change the name of this scheme to 'St. Joseph's Nursery, EIB and Key Stage 1 Remodelling';
- Ysgol Pen Y Garth Pitched Roof Renewal – Vire the £65k budget to the Ysgol Pen Y Garth Roof Renewal Phase 2 scheme;
- Disabled Access Improvement – Vire the £17k budget to the Disability Access scheme;
- Catering Trailer – Increase this scheme by £24k to be funded from the Catering reserve;
- Flying Start Family Centre Window Improvements – Include a new scheme of £28k into the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by Flying Start grant;
- Local Transport Fund Barry Docks Interchange – Include a new £85k scheme into the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by Local Transport Fund grant;
- Improve Pedestrian Movement along Treharne Road – Reduce the 2019/20 Capital Programme by £20k;
- Maendy Pedestrian Sustainable Transport Improvements – Change the name of this scheme to Ystradowen Sustainable Transport Improvements;
- Sports Wales Grant – Include a new scheme of £35.9k into the 2019/20 Capital Programme to be funded by a grant from Sports Wales;
- Building Stronger Communities Fund Old Hall Community Gardens – Include a new scheme of £26,726 into the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by a Stronger Communities revenue contribution;
- Economic Stimulus within Local Authorities Grant – Include a new £769k scheme into the 2019/20 Capital Programme funded by a grant from Welsh Government;
- Dochdwy Road Public Open Space – Increase budget by £1k to be funded from S106 monies;
- Hood Road Goods Shed Land Payment – Include a new scheme into the Capital Programme by £62,370 to be funded from capital receipts;
- High Street / Broad Street Traffic Management – Remove scheme from the Capital Programme;
- Grange Play Area – Increase this budget by £4k, to be funded by S106 monies;
- Murch Play Area – Increase this budget by £8k, to be funded by S106 monies;
- Twyn Yr Odyn Play Area – Increase this budget by £4.5k, to be funded by S106 monies;
- Civic Offices Fire Stopping Works – increase the Capital Programme by £35,000 to be funded by a policy budget revenue contribution.

(5) T H A T the delegated authority granted to the Head of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Managing Director, the Leader and the Head of Finance, to allocate the Welsh Government "Economic Stimulus within Local Authorities" grant funding to individual schemes be noted.

(6) T H A T the delegated authority granted to the Head of Regeneration and Planning, in consultation with the Managing Director, the Head of Finance and the Leader, to tender for any works required and award tenders for the schemes identified under Recommendation (5) above be noted.

(7) T H A T the delegated authority granted to the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services to execute contracts with the successful tenderer(s) for the schemes awarded under Recommendation (6) above be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To advise Committee of the progress on the Capital Programme.
- (2) To advise Committee of the use of Delegated Authority.
- (3) To advise Committee of the use of Emergency Powers.
- (4) To allow schemes to proceed in the current financial year.
- (5-7) To enable the funding available in 2019/2020 to be spent in full.

419 OTHER MUSCULOSKELETAL ABSENCE 2018/19 AND 2019/20 (MD) –

The Scrutiny Committee, having previously considered sickness absence on a six monthly basis, requested to receive a report on Other Musculoskeletal absences to consider the matter in more detail.

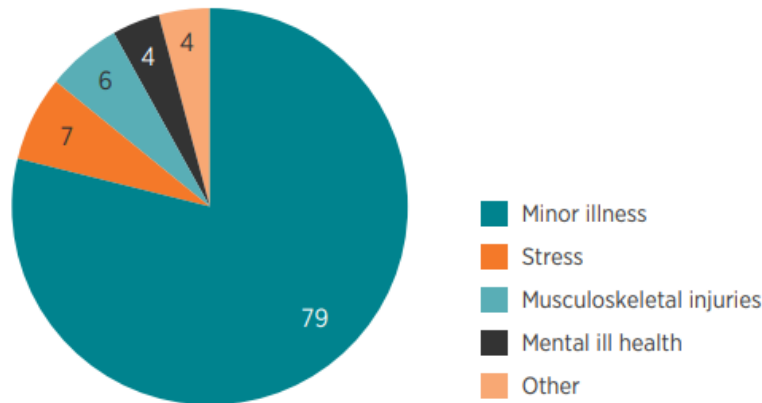
The sickness absence rate for Other Musculoskeletal absences was referred to as:

Long Term Sick	4,382.04
Short Term Sick	1,264.13

and which could be seen from the table at paragraph 4.1 of the report, the sickness related to Other Musculoskeletal equated to 16.8% of all sickness absence.

The following table from the CIPD report showed the most common causes of short-term absence and it was worth noting that Musculoskeletal injuries included back injuries.

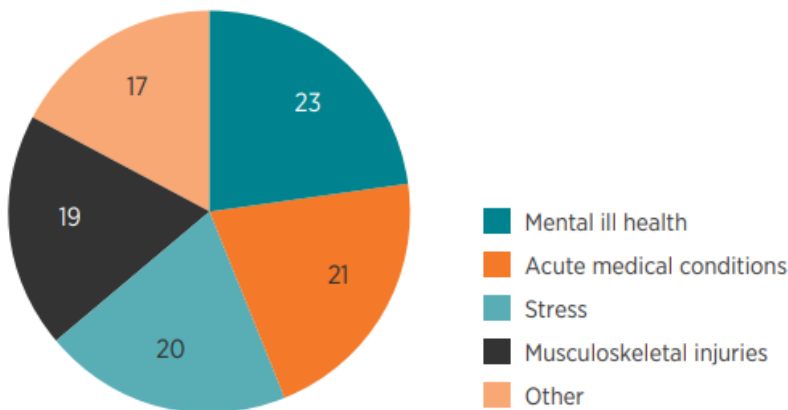
Figure 17: The most common cause of short-term absence (%)



Base: 719

The most common reasons for Long-term absence were reported as below:

Figure 20: The most common cause of long-term absence (% of respondents)



Base: 654

A summary of musculoskeletal absence levels within each Directorate for the first five months of **2018/19** was provided as below:

Directorate	Long Term Sick	Short Term Sick	Grand Total	% of overall absence
Directorate of Environment and Housing Services	389.05	162.64	551.69	19%
Directorate of Resources Learning and Development	63.35	46.55	109.90	11%
Schools	421.34	229.28	650.62	14%
Learning and Skills	39.12	33.82	72.94	7%
Social Services	422.68	95.67	518.35	18%
TOTAL	1335.54	567.96	1903.5	15%

The following shows a summary of musculoskeletal absence levels within each Directorate for the first five months of **2019/20**:

Directorate	Long Term Sick	Short Term Sick	Grand Total	% of overall absence
Directorate of Environment and Housing Services	479.65	174.74	654.39	18%
Directorate of Resources Learning and Development	14.00	14.16	28.16	3%
Schools	727.46	142.10	869.56	17%
Learning and Skills	160.39	13.50	173.89	13%
Social Services	941.90	74.44	1016.34	27%
TOTAL	2323.4	418.94	2742.34	18%

Overall there had been an increase in Other Musculoskeletal absence, increasing from 15% to 18% during the first five months of 2019/20.

The Operational Manager advised that the largest increase in the level of Other Musculoskeletal absence was within the Social Services Directorate, increasing from 18% to 27% of their absences. Further analysis of this indicated that the highest increase was within Adult Services. Due to Data Protection the Council was unable to show this data in the report as due to the low numbers of cases, there was a risk of identifying individuals. The information would therefore be shared with the Directorates' Management Team to enable a review of the reasons behind this increase to be undertaken.

The management of sickness absence continued to be a high priority for the Council and an important "Corporate Health" indicator. The continued hard work and support from Corporate Management Team, HR, Managers and Trade Unions would be important to maintain the Council's positive absence management record.

The five top reasons for absence for each Directorate for 2018/19 are shown in the following table:

Environment and Housing Services	Learning and Skills	Resources	Social Services	Schools
Other Musculoskeletal 1539 (19%)	Viral Infection 706 (27%)	Viral Infection 540 (23%)	Stress Non Work Related 1,752 (25%)	Stress Non Work Related 3,097 (23%)
Stress Non Work Related 1,525 (19%)	Operations and Recovery 435 (17%)	Stress Non Work Related 497 (21%)	Other Musculoskeletal 1475 (21%)	Viral Infection 2,781 (20%)
Viral Infection	Stress Non Work Related	Operations and Recovery	Viral Infection	Operations and Recovery

1,080 (13%)	425 (16%)	385 (17%)	1,053 (15%)	2,270 (17%)
Operations and Recovery	Other Musculoskeletal	Other Musculoskeletal	Operations and Recovery	Other Musculoskeletal
1,004 (13%)	336 (13%)	300 (13%)	703 (10%)	1997 (15%)
Back Problems	Stress Work Related	Stomach Ailments	Stomach Ailments	Stomach Ailments
806 (10%)	243 (9%)	139 (6%)	499 (7%)	1,066 (8%)

During consideration of the report, the Head of Service for Human Resources and OD, following her recent appointment in the Vale, stated that she would be looking to set up a working group to consider trend analysis and she had asked Social Services colleagues if they would be part of the group to consider the wellbeing objectives.

Following a query from a Member as to whether the Department considered the musculoskeletal injuries to be work related, the Operational Manager for Human Resources advised that that information regarding work and non-work related was not available in detail, however age profile analyses had been undertaken.

Having regard to the process for medical checks, a Member queried what these were in relation to long term absences, with the Operational Manager advising that after four weeks sickness a referral was made to Occupational Health unless sickness was due to stress, when a referral was made almost instantly.

Having regard to paragraphs 4.7 and the breakdown of sickness in relation to teachers, Members queried what teaching roles they were and also queried whether the Council was considering having any kind of compact contract with organisations/ medical professions or Memoranda of Understanding in order to ensure that Occupational Health referrals etc. were undertaken in the first instance. In response the Head of Human Resources and OD stated that a further report could be brought to the Committee on the matter as there were also capacity issues during the summer holidays and at half terms there had been limited availability of doctors with the suggestion that a peripatetic doctor be employed for such periods.

In noting there was a dedicated training facility for manual handling at the BSC, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T arrangements be made for Members of the Scrutiny Committee to undertake a visit to the BSC.
- (2) T H A T the sickness absence figures in relation to musculoskeletal absences be noted.
- (3) T H A T further information be brought to the Scrutiny Committee as appropriate in relation to arrangements being made for further assistance with occupational health referrals.

Reason for recommendations

(1-3) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.