

<b>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 10</b>
<b>10 NOVEMBER 2008</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Director of Strategic Resources**

**Report Author** – Louise Tyers, Performance Scrutiny Manager

**Contact Details** – (01733) 452284 or email [louise.tyers@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:louise.tyers@peterborough.gov.uk)

### **FEEDBACK AND UPDATE REPORT**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report provides feedback on items considered or questions asked at previous meetings of Scrutiny Committee. It also provides an update on matters which are of interest to the Committee or where the Committee have asked to be kept informed of progress.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

##### **2.1 Staff Absence due to Stress**

During the Committee's consideration of the Human Resources Key Performance Indicators report on 29 September 2008, Members requested further information on number of staff off sick with stress rather than as a percentage.

The Head of Human Resources has now provided the following response, along with details of current improvement projects in occupational health which should impact on improving stress management:

We have compared below the number of staff absence with stress for the financial year so far with the same period in the previous year. It should be noted that at present sickness levels for 2008 are projected to out-turn at 10.95 days against 11.23 days per employee last year.

It should be noted that 4.34% of staff have had at least one absence recorded as stress so far, down from 6.13% last year. The average number of days have risen somewhat suggesting a reduction in short term absences where stress is stated to be the absence reason.

All directorates have seen some reduction in the number of staff absent with stress in the period with the exception of Legal and Democratic [which has increased] and Chief Executive [which has remained static].

The pattern for stress is of a relatively small percentage of staff to feel stress, but for this to result in a relatively long absence, thus making up the largest single 'slice' of sickness lost reasons. Initiatives do need to consider the high areas of stress absence and reasons for this in seeking improved ways to [a] reduce absences and [b] facilitate a timely return to work.

It is problematic to collect statistical data on the individual causes of stress while clearly this is explored on an individual basis with those affected in order to support a return to work as soon as possible. The 2008 CBI absence survey asked employers for the main causes of long term absence and overall ranked non-work related stress as the top cause for non-manual workers while work related stress came fourth. This would suggest approximately 57% of stress is caused by non-work reasons, but this was a survey of perceptions as hard categorisation of stress absence is not realistic.

A detailed breakdown of the number of staff absence due to stress is attached at Appendix 1.

## Update from Occupational Health regarding Health Initiatives

### Improving the OH service -

- Currently reviewing all forms used in Occupational Health to ensure we are up to date with current legislation and professional guidelines. This will eventually include a review of the current Health Questionnaire.
- Improving lines of communication to managers and HR in order to improve the management of employees on sickness absence.
- Stream lining all processes so that we work "smarter".
- Contract with AXA who provide our OHP service is providing improved reports and advice to managers and HR.

### Boost campaign -

- Working with the Boost team to tackle areas of health that need improving / providing health information.
- Providing mini medicals through PDH to all employees that have been at PCC for 1 year. This service provides each individual with the tools to be able to improve their health and wellbeing.

### New OH referral process -

- The referral form was re written to ensure that all information is captured so that a professional assessment with the OH team can be undertaken and a professional report provided to managers / HR Business Partners (HRBP). All referrals are sent from managers to their HRBP to make sure the quality of the referral is paramount.

### Counselling –

- More in-depth reporting being developed with current provider in order to form a clearer audit trail. Talks have been held with the provider to highlight areas of the service that they need to improve.

## 2.2 Chairman's Use of Special Urgency Powers

Since the last meeting the Chairman has used his special urgency powers on the following occasion:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Reason</b>
28 October 2008	Peterborough Crematorium – Mercury Abatement	This key decision could not be delayed until the expiry of the usual five day waiting period. The decision was required to be taken urgently as any delay would prejudice the Council's interests because of the statutory requirement on the Council to respond to its regulator within a prescribed timescale.

## 2.3 Call-In of an Executive Decision – Appointments to the Greater Peterborough Partnership for the Municipal Year 2008/09

At the meeting of the Committee held on 15 October 2008 it was agreed to call-in and refer back to the Leader his decision in relation to appointments to the Greater Peterborough Partnership for the municipal year 2008/09. The Leader was specifically asked to reconsider the decision by

appointing a non-Conservative Member to the vacant position on the GPP Board.

The Leader reconsidered the decision on 29 October 2008 and the new decision was published on that date. In respect of the specific recommendation made by the Committee, the Leader has now appointed Councillor Sandford to the GPP Board.

## 2.4 Outstanding Actions

At the last meeting of the Committee concern was expressed that a number of decisions made by the Committee at previous meetings had not been implemented. The Performance Scrutiny Manager undertook to review the Committee's previous minutes to establish how many decisions and recommendations had not been implemented.

It has been found that one decision made in March 2007 in relation to off site highway works related to the building of the Voyager School appears not to be implemented.

The Leader had agreed:

- That the Council will arrange for a plan of the minimum levels of lighting required along the school routes.
- That following completion of the lighting works a survey be carried out to confirm lighting levels meet or exceed the minimum levels set.
- The Council should ensure that, out of courtesy, they respond to the proposals, recommendations or requests of external bodies consulted on any proposals, for example Parish councils, in a timely manner, and that in this specific case confirmation be given that a response was made to Bretton Parish Council's submission. If a response has not been made to Bretton Parish Council then one should be provided.
- The Council to work with other agencies to actively seek a reduction in the speed limit along Lincoln Road where children are expected to cross on their travels to and from school, to include either a fixed reduction to 30 miles per hour or the imposition of a variable speed limit.
- That a full review be carried out 12 months after completion of the works referred to in the decision notice, the review to be carried out in conjunction with the Scrutiny Committee if so required.
- To ensure that all appropriate agencies involved in the provision of lighting along school access routes maintain the lighting in good condition and expedite repairs accordingly.

Officers are currently investigating the progress made on this decision and it is recommended that a full response is provided to a future meeting.

## 3. **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the feedback from previous meetings.

## 4. **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Peterborough Crematorium – Mercury Abatement Decision Notice dated 28 October 2008

## 5. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Absence due to Stress

## APPENDIX 1

### Stress Absences

April to August 2008

SERVICE	2008/09		
	Number of Staff	FTE days lost	Average days lost per employee with stress absence
Strategic Growth & Development	2	58.00	29.00
Strategic Housing	6	183.00	30.50
<b>Chief Executive</b>	8	241.00	30.13
Commissioning & Performance	1	55.00	55.00
Family & Communities	30	621.44	20.71
Learning & Skills	11	192.99	17.54
<b>Childrens Services</b>	42	869.42	20.70
Building & Technical	2	28.00	14.00
City Support Services	2	30.54	15.27
Property Design & Maintenance	1	56.22	56.22
S&FS Building Cleaning	2	34.66	17.33
S&FS Cleansing	3	29.00	9.67
S&FS Grounds Maintenance	1	105.00	105.00
S&FS Refuse	4	85.00	21.25
Welfare To Work	3	118.00	39.33
<b>City Services</b>	18	486.42	27.02
City Centre Services	2	70.78	35.39
Environmental & Public Protection	5	112.07	22.41
Libraries & Heritage	2	5.50	2.75
Planning Services	1	9.00	9.00
Sports Services	2	60.00	30.00
Transport & Engineering	2	22.50	11.25
<b>Environment &amp; Community</b>	14	279.84	19.99
Legal Services	6	89.00	14.83
<b>Legal &amp; Democratic</b>	6	89.00	14.83
Business Transformation	1	21.00	21.00
Customer Services	1	41.22	41.22
Human Resources	4	75.30	18.82
Internal Audit	1	7.00	7.00
Revenues & Benefits	2	20.50	10.25
Strategic Finance	1	25.00	25.00
Strategic Property	1	2.00	2.00
<b>Strategic Resources</b>	11	192.01	17.46
<b>Total</b>	99	2,157.70	21.79

April to August 2007

SERVICE	2007/08		
	Number of Staff	FTE days lost	Average days lost per employee with stress absence
Legal & Democratic	3	45.50	15.17
Strategic Growth & Development	1	56.76	56.76
Strategic Housing	7	17.92	2.56
<b>Chief Executive</b>	11	120.18	10.93
Adults	3	93.00	31.00
Childrens Business Support	3	7.24	2.41
Learning & St&ards	9	126.61	14.07
Specialist Services	33	855.23	25.92
Universal Services	7	149.74	21.39
<b>Childrens Services</b>	55	1,231.83	22.40
Building & Technical	2	29.00	14.50
City Support Services	3	59.19	19.73
Property Design & Maintenance	1	0.50	0.50
S&FS Catering	9	25.16	2.80
S&FS Cleansing	5	94.50	18.90
S&FS Grounds Maintenance	3	31.00	10.33
S&FS Refuse	4	45.00	11.25
Welfare To Work	2	95.00	47.50
<b>City Services</b>	29	379.35	13.08
Environmental & Public Protection	4	100.00	25.00
Libraries & Heritage	2	19.11	9.55
Planning Delivery Services	19	72.00	3.79
Sports Services	4	72.43	18.11
Transport & Engineering	6	202.36	33.73
<b>Environment &amp; Community</b>	35	465.90	13.31
Customer Services	5	97.95	19.59
Human Resources	2	123.00	61.50
ICT	5	68.95	13.79
Internal Audit	1	19.00	19.00
Strategic Finance	4	88.19	22.05
SR Directors Office	1	22.30	22.30
<b>Strategic Resources</b>	18	419.38	23.30
<b>Total</b>	148	2,616.64	17.68

August Headcount [for sickness report purposes] 2,283.52

2414.329

Percentage of staff absent with a stress absence 4.34%

6.13%