

BUSINESS EFFICIENCY SCRUTINY PANEL	Agenda Item No. 4
8 JANUARY 2009	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director – Strategic Resources

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FEEDBACK AND UPDATE REPORT

1. PURPOSE

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

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Panel notes the information provided in respect of the Council's levels of sickness compared to other authorities.


3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Use of Agency Staff – Sickness Rates in Comparison to Other Authorities

During the Panel's consideration of the feedback and update report on 20 November 2008, members requested further information in relation to the Council's sickness levels compared to other councils.

- 3.2 Officers have now provided the following information:

Comparative Sickness rates up until 2007/8 were measured under Best Value Performance Indicator 12. The long term trend in comparison to all unitary authorities was as follows:

BVPI12 Number of working days per employee lost to sickness	Actual 02/03	Actual 03/04	Actual 04/05	Actual 05/06	Actual 06/07	Target 07/08	Actual 07/08	Unitary Average 06/07	Unitary Upper Quartile 06/07	Comments \ Movement
	10.00	10.40	8.58	9.36	8.99	8.58	9.24	9.60	8.70	Above Average Performance 

Comparable rates for 2007/08 are expected to be published by the Audit Commission shortly.

In general Peterborough's performance in recent years on this measure has been in the upper quartile of performers or above average performance [i.e. lower sickness rates]. These results include sickness rates of all council employees and includes all Schools. There is no staff sickness measure in the new National Indicator set, however PI5 from the Audit Commission's 'Value for Money in Corporate Services' is very similar to BVPI12 and is being closely monitored on a monthly basis. It is planned to benchmark this against other Authorities in our family group and possibly via a wider VFM benchmarking scheme.

There is a lower rate of sickness reported by Schools as opposed to Directorates, though School sickness levels have risen in many schools and this has offset the fact that in 07/08 a reduction in overall sickness was achieved by the Council Directorates.

Monthly sickness levels are monitored excluding schools and PCAE because of payroll data that is not directly available, and to focus on HR's main direct sphere of influence. Sickness for these staff is currently project to be 11.44 days per employee, against 11.23 days per employee for these staff last year. This is based on months so far, and can improve or worsen in the remaining four months. Improvements in Occupational Health have been occurring, but additional investment is still under discussion and there are upwards pressure, e.g. on stress absence as a result of the restructuring \ savings agenda.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

The Council also takes part each year in the CIPD Annual Survey of Absence Management. The 2008 report puts average Local Government days per employee at 10.1 days per employee against 8.5 days the previous year. Factors relating to comparative levels include size of organisation with smaller organisations generally having less days per employee. Absence also varies by geographic area with East Anglia having approximately 30% higher sickness levels than the UK in general.

Summary

Against this background the performance of Peterborough City Council can be seen to be relatively good, but it continues to be a priority to make further progress on sickness levels to further improve staff wellbeing and reduce costs.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 3.1 That the Panel notes the report.

4. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

Minutes of the meeting of the Business Efficiency Scrutiny Panel held on