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Meeting	Economy & Place Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	15 January 2020
Present	Councillors S Barnes (Chair), Daubeney (Vice-Chair), Baker, Douglas, Hook, K Taylor and Mason (Substitute for Cllr Pearson)
Apologies	Councillor Pearson

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#### **41. Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, that they might have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

#### **42. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2019 be updated to include an amendment to minute 38 and be brought back for approval at the next meeting on 12 February 2020.

#### **43. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

#### **44. Overview Report on Economy and Place Sickness and Workloads**

Members considered a report that updated them on the wellbeing of staff within the Economy and Place (E&P) Directorate. The report included updated management information, staff survey results and information on ongoing activities to support the wellbeing of staff and reduction of staff absence levels. The report also considered any correlation between the staff survey results and absence figures and suggests areas where the committee may wish to scrutinise further.

The Corporate Director Economy and Place and Head of HR were in attendance to present the report. The Corporate Director highlighted a number of points:

- Regarding the average sickness absence per full time equivalent post (fte), fleet made up over 50% of the workforce and there was a constant downward trend for sickness absence levels over the year.
- Within the E&P Directorate the short term absence levels were different for manual workers than for office based members of staff.
- The response rate in pulse survey 3 was under the average response rate. The survey undertaken was not adequate in that format and there is to be a different survey method for future surveys. Subsequent work would be undertaken with regard to workload and stress and the majority of those responses were in Planning, Public Protection and Transport. The work demand in these areas were uncontrollable, customer expectations were rising and often the professional decisions were subject to further challenge through appeals which often added further pressure and work demand.
- The correlation between absence data and staff survey responses was explained.
- There needed to a positive and proactive approach to the workforce.

A request was made for the addition of a column in the table showing the average sickness days per fte for non-directly employed CYC staff and the Head of HR undertook to see if this was possible.

In response to Member questions, the Corporate Director Economy and Place and Head of HR explained that:

- With regard to manager training on staff absence, 80% of managers had received face-to-face training on the day one absence management.
- Concerning the sickness absence rates for office based and manual staff, health and safety in terms of public realm operations was a highest priority.
- The pulse surveys were last undertaken on April/May 2019 and there were plans to rerun them in 2020.
- Staff had not been engaged about responding to the surveys. However, other engagement activities had been undertaken, for example through the use of ipads. It could not be determined if there had been better engagement as different questions had been used in the different activities. The Chair suggested that the same questions needed to be used in the surveys in order to understand the perspective of the current workforce.

- Following staff feedback investment was made in equipment, for example through the investment of in cab technology in the refuse collection vehicles.
- It was acknowledged that there was sometimes a sense of haste in council communications to residents and the council strived to achieve better communications with residents. The quality of correspondence to residents would be considered and Members were asked to inform officers if they were not receiving copies of letters sent to residents regarding items such as road resurfacing.
- Feedback on the day one absence providers would be given to the Customer and Corporate Services Management Scrutiny Committee.
- The services on offer to employees such as the osteopath service and employee assistance scheme was noted. Staff had been consulted on what areas of support they would like through workforce sessions by the public health teams.
- 80% of the CYC workforce were directly employed by CYC and this was increasing. The figures in the report related to permanent CYC employees and it was confirmed that non-directly employed staff did not have access to the facilities available to directly employed staff.
- Staff usually returned to work on the day they were fit to return unless there was a specific reason, for example a referral to occupational health or making reasonable adjustments for their return.
- With regard to workload being manageable and the effect of this on staff, work was being undertaken to address this for example the introduction of workflow planning by the Head of Planning. This was next being introduced to the highways regulatory service. Where feedback had been given on workload and workflow, officers had examined where improvements could be made.

The Corporate Director Economy and Place and Head of HR were thanked for their report.

**Resolved:** That the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee receive a further report on staff sickness absence and staff response in the staff survey at the earliest opportunity when the next round of feedback had been received.

**Reason:** To inform the Committee of absence figures in the E&P directorate and the staff's response in the staff survey.

#### **45. Scoping report on in-work poverty including Employers' Charter and Living Hours**

Members considered a report that presented a request by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) to undertake a review into elements of poverty in the city which fall within the Economy and Place Policy and Scrutiny Committee's remit, as part of a corporate review of poverty in York. The Scrutiny Officer outlined the report noting the proposed remit and timescales. The Corporate Director Economy and Place suggested that an Employers' Charter could be examined as part of the Economic Strategy as a recommendation to the Executive. He was asked and explained the timeline for the Economic Strategy.

Members discussed the review on in work poverty and it was:

Resolved: That;

- i. The Committee undertake a review on in-work poverty including Employers' Charter and Living Hours
- ii. A task group (made up of Cllrs Douglas, Daubeney and Hook) be formed to further examine the remit of the review with the attendance of the Chair at the first task group meeting.

Reason: To provide a corporate, cross-party response to poverty in the city.

#### **46. Work Plan 2019-20**

Members considered the committee's work plan for the remainder of the 2019-20 municipal year.

Following discussion, Members agreed a number of changes to the work plan and it was:

Resolved: That the work plan be updated to include the following items:

##### Wednesday 12 February 2020

1. Overview Report on Economic Strategy including attendance of Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning.
2. Bi-Annual Update report from the Managing Director of Make It York.
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Finance and Performance Monitoring Report (slipped from December)
4. Pre-Decision Report on EV Charging Strategy
5. Pre-Decision Report on Fleet Strategy.
6. Work Plan 2019-20

Wednesday 11 March 2020

1. CYC Flood Defences Action Plan – Biannual Report
2. Update report on Guildhall Project
3. Update report on Planning Enforcement.
4. Update report on In-Work Poverty Scrutiny review.
5. Update report on Apprenticeships Scrutiny review
6. Work Plan 2019-20

Wednesday 15 April 2020

1. Update Report on Highways (content to be informed by Cllr Taylor).
2. Work Plan 2019-20

Reason: To follow up on the decisions made at this meeting and to keep the work plan updated.

Cllr S Barnes, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.07 pm].

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