

## **Review of Staff Sickness Absence – Cover Report**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report presents an interim report detailing the findings to date from a review of staff sickness absence, instigated by the previous Effective Organisation Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 2011. The interim report recommends the continuation of the review in this municipal year.

### **Background to Review**

2. In July 2011, the Effective Organisation Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a scrutiny review on staff sickness, specifically to identify ways of reducing sickness absence levels across the organisation.
3. At a meeting in September 2011, the Committee received a briefing on City of York Council's (CYC) current sickness absence procedures and policies together with statistics and information on actions previously taken. The Committee chose to set up a Task Group to gather information on the potential areas of focus for their review. In January 2012, having considered their findings, the Committee agreed the following objectives for the review:

#### Objectives:

- i. To revise the Council's Absence Management Policy & procedures to ensure they take account of iTrent, are in line with best practice, and written in a more formal assertive language;
- ii. To identify improvements in:
  - a. the provision of Management training
  - b. the induction programme for all new staff

- iii. To explore ways of introducing a change in culture within the workforce moving away from a policy of 'managing absence', towards one of 'encouraging attendance'.
4. It was agreed that the Task Group would continue with the work on the review on the full Committee's behalf. In April 2012 the attached interim report (see Annex A) was presented to the Effective Organisation Overview & Scrutiny Committee, recommending that work on the review be completed in this municipal year.
5. The Effective Organisation agreed the work required to complete the review should be undertaken, in line with that detailed in paragraph 20 of the interim report. However, as that committee has since been amalgamated into this Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee, the interim report is being re-presented for Members consideration of the recommendations there-in.

### **Council Plan 2011-15**

6. The Council Plan recognises that staff are the most important resource of the Council and without them it could not deliver its services and priorities. Ensuring staff receive the proper levels of support in times of illness etc is one way in which staff can be made to feel valued and engaged.

### **Options**

7. Having considered the interim report attached, this Committee may chose to:
  - Conclude the review at this stage and recommend that HR:
    - i) carry out appropriate revisions to CYCs Attendance at Work Policy in line with the review findings to date
    - ii) carry out appropriate consultation on the revised policy and;
    - iii) introduce appropriate management training and new staff induction in line with the review findings to date
  - Progress this review as outlined in the interim report attached
8. If a decision is taken to progress the review, the Committee may choose to carry out the work as a full committee, or set up a Task Group to complete the review on their behalf.

## Associated Implications

9. There are no known implications associated with the recommendation in this report. Implications associated with the introduction of a revised policy will be identified once the work to revise the policy has been completed.

## Risk Management

10. There are no known risks associated with the recommendation below.

## Recommendations

11. Having considered the review findings to date contained within the attached report, Members are recommended to consider whether or not to agree to the continuation of this review.
12. If a decision is taken to continue the review, Members are recommended to:
- i. Set up a Task Group to complete the work on the review and;
  - ii. Revise the Committee's annual workplan for 2012-13 accordingly.

Reason: To progress the work of this Committee in line with agreed Scrutiny procedures and protocols.

## Contact Details

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**Report Approved**  **Date** 12 June 2012

### Wards Affected:

**All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Annex A** – Interim Report from Staff Sickness Absence Scrutiny Review