

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – 22 October 2018

INFORMATION BULLETIN – STAFF TURNOVER AND WELFARE

At the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny meeting, held on 14th June 2018, when the Staff Turnover and Welfare Information Bulletin was considered, it was resolved:

1. That a report be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October with comparison general data for the Planning Department and one other department on sickness and absences for a period of three years up to the end of June 2018 and that the comparison be for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and four other rural district authorities.
2. That the report forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October includes details on vacancies in Babergh and Mid Suffolk Planning Department.
3. That the report forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October includes detailed information relating to planning staff, who have left within three months of joining the Council, and reasons for leaving the post if available.

This information bulletin is in response to the Committee request in June and each of the points resolved are addressed with the information below.

1. Babergh and Mid Suffolk Planning Department Sickness Absence Data compared against Babergh and Mid Suffolk Tenancy Services and another combined District Councils. NB: only 18 months' worth of data is available owing to a change in the payroll system.

Planning (including Strategic Planning & Growth and Sustainable Planning)					
Period	Sickness days lost	Number of employees	Sickness days lost per employee	Full time Equivalent (FTE)	Average days lost per FTE
Jan-Dec (2017)	258	72	3.6	61.4	4.2
Jan-Sep (2018)	209	69	3.0	57.4	3.6
Housing (Tenancy Services)					
Period	Sickness days lost	Number of employees	Sickness days lost per employee	Full time Equivalent (FTE)	Average days lost per FTE
Jan-Dec (2017)	334	24	13.9	19.6	17.0
Jan-Sep (2018)	309	43	7.2	26.9	11.5
Two (combined) rural district councils					
Period	Sickness days lost	Number of employees	Sickness days lost per employee	Full time Equivalent (FTE)	Average days lost per FTE
2017/18	759	98	7.74	90.9	8.3
2018/19	291	97	3.0	90.7	3.2

(to date)					
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Conclusion:

The data presented indicates that Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Planning Department is no worse than another combined district councils' Planning Department. The Planning Department's absence data is better when compared to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Tenancy Services Department. We will be investigating the detail of the Housing Tenancy Services Department's sickness absence as part of an absence management project. The increase in staff numbers in Tenancy Services is due to a management restructure and not an increase in total staffing across Housing.

2. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Planning Department Vacancies as at September 2018

Development Management

Planning Technician (Grade 3)	Fixed Term (2 years)	1 vacancy
Senior Planning Officer (Grade 5)	Permanent	3 vacancies
Business Practice Manager (Grade 6)	Permanent	1 vacancy
Admin & Technical Support (Grade 2)	Permanent	2 vacancies
Admin & Technical Support (Grade 3)	Permanent	2 vacancies

Strategic Planning

Senior Spatial Planning Policy Officer (Grade 6)	Permanent	1 vacancy
Spatial Planning Policy Officer (Career Grade 4/5)	Permanent	1 vacancy
Spatial Planning Officer – Infrastructure (Grade 5)	Permanent	1 vacancy
Admin & Technical Support – GIS and Planning Policy (Grade 4)	Fixed term (12 Months)	1 vacancy

There is a national shortage of planning professionals and we have needed to re-advertise for these roles. This stems from the financial crash of 2008 when graduates chose not to enter the profession. Owing to the shortage of experienced planning officers they can dictate terms and conditions. Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have introduced a market forces policy to allow more flexibility to recruit, specifically in this area.

We are now seeing an increase in qualified staff, however there is still a shortage at grade 5, who are typically more experienced staff.

3. Planning staff, who have left within three months of joining the Council, and reasons for leaving the post if available.

Since November 2016 there have been no members of the Planning Team who have left the councils within three months of joining.