

Report to: **Personnel Committee**



Date of Meeting: 15th April 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

People Data Report

Report summary:

This report provides key data on the workforce, to support policy decision making and an overview of workforce matters.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the Committee note the content of the report.

Reason for recommendation:

To support policy decision making and an overview of workforce matters.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☒ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- ☐ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information [211130 People Data Proposals Report for Personnel Cttee FINAL.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ A supported and engaged community
 - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
 - ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
 - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
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Report in full

1. This report provides a regular update on key people data, as agreed by Committee in November 2021, and aims to inform policy decisions and to provide an overview of workforce matters. Analysis is summarised below, with the full data at Appendix 1.
2. The latest report reflects the data available from the HR system up to the end of February 2025 unless otherwise stated.
3. Particular areas to note from the people data are:
 - 3.1 Headcount has decreased by 6 from 566 in October to 560 at the end of February 2025 and is at the lowest level since June 24 when it was 553, we continue to remain within budgeted FTE.
 - 3.2 Market supplement numbers have reduced by 1 since the last reporting period in October 2024, from 23 to 22. We have recently completed the annual market supplement review, and it is anticipated that Market Supplements will remain at or around this level for the next financial year. Market Supplements are for specific roles where recruitment and retention is challenging because market forces dictate salary levels. Market Supplements are subject to annual review.
 - 3.3 Vacancies recruiting and not recruiting are at 29 compared to 32 in October. 2 of these are 2 new apprenticeships that we are recruiting for in Executive Support to assist our Senior Leadership Team. Appointments have been made to 5 of these vacancies and have either since started or start dates have been agreed in the forthcoming weeks. Interviews are scheduled for a further 8 posts and we are awaiting decisions, so in effect there are only 13 vacancies where there is currently no potential outcome. When considering the overall vacancy number against headcount, vacancies have decreased from 5.65% in October to 5.17% and is significantly lower than the highest level of 10.49% reported in October 2022.
 - 3.4 The average time taken to fill vacancies fluctuates over time and has slightly increased since the last reporting period from 61.85 days to 67.83 days in February 2025. Some of this increase may be attributed to the Christmas break when recruitment tends to pause. Benchmarking data indicates that c100 days is around the average time taken by organisations to fill posts. As previously reported, we have reviewed the recruitment process to streamline and have encouraged managers to deal with vacancies much earlier which has had a positive impact.
 - 3.5 The number of agency workers has increased by 1 when it was 24 in October 2024 compared to 25 in February 25. The increase is due to backfilling for permanent employee who is currently absent through ill health. Overall, the number of agency workers have reduced significantly over the last 12 months due to permanent recruitment of posts that were being backfilled whilst active recruitment took place.

- 3.6 As previously reported in October, the voluntary turnover rate had begun to increase. The cumulative voluntary turnover rate at the end of February 2025 was 11.56% and at this point is higher than the end of 2023/24 year outcome of 8.89% and is forecast to be 12.61% at the end of March 25. Up to the end of February 25 we have had 52 voluntary leavers. A detailed analysis will be provided within the end of year people data annual report and will most likely highlight that observations so far include the main reasons include career moves, with 14 accepting a post elsewhere and 6 for career advancement, while 4 have left during a formal process. Notably only 1 has left for a better salary and 1 mentioned poor working relationships. The forecast for non-voluntary turnover has increased from 1.27% since October to 2.13% this is due to 4 dismissals and 3 end of fixed term contracts.
- 3.7 The current forecast for the end of year 2024/25 average number of days lost per FTE is similar to the 10.05 days outcome which was reported at the end of 2023/24 and is higher than our absence target of 8.5 days. Benchmarking data suggests that comparable councils are also experiencing similar levels, further analysis and benchmarking will be undertaken for the full annual leave report. The report is expected to highlight that biggest factor contributing to the current absence levels are the number of long term cases (more than 2 months) of which there were 19 to date, 6 of which are still absent. The most common reason for long term absence is currently showing as "Other Muscular Skeletal issues". If long term cases were extrapolated from the overall absence levels, our absence would be less than 8.5 days at around 6 days.
- 3.8 Of note with regard to sickness absence, is the following:
- Cold/Flu is still the most cited reason for short term absence, followed by phased returns.
 - Covid related absence has returned to similar low level patterns previously reported since the spike in July 2024 of 67.27 days and the spike in June the previous year when it was 50.52 days. There was no Covid absence reported in February which is the first time since we have been monitoring this. We can hypothesise that Covid is more prevalent in the summer months than in winter, although Cold and Flu may be masking this.
 - The absence reason Personal stress has replaced "other muscular skeletal issues" which was the top reason for medium term absence previously. Hospital treatment has now emerged into the top 3 replacing the previous "stomach, kidney, liver and digestion".
 - As has previously been reported, cases of medium- and long-term absence because of personal stress, anxiety and fatigue remain a feature and we continue to promote the wide range of mental health support available through the Council's Happy Healthy Here offer. We are also pro-actively offering regular updates and one to ones with senior leaders to alleviate concerns that may emerge as a result of Local Government Re-organisation about job security and the impact this might have on their mental health.

- Finance have seen an increase in their absence levels mostly due to 3 cases of long term absence, these cases are being actively managed and supported.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications in the recommendations.

Legal implications:

There are no specific legal implications requiring comment.