



Rochford District
Council

REPORT TITLE:	WORKFORCE OVERVIEW 2022-23 AND 2023-24
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF PAID SERVICE AND CEO, JONATHAN STEPHENSON

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an organisational overview of workforce information and data in respect of Rochford District Council (RDC).

The report provides information with regard to resource levels (by Directorate) and provides an overview of the health of the organisation, using data available to include regional and national benchmarking.

This report includes data up to 31 October 2023.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The organisation structure is split across 9 directorates which are each overseen by a Director as part of the OneTeam strategic partnership with Brentwood Borough Council (BBC).
- 1.2 The current head count for Rochford employees is 157.
- 1.3 The current FTE is 143 for 2023-24. In 2022-23 the FTE was 140.4.
- 1.4 Appendix 1, provides details of the employee numbers (FTE & Headcount) within each directorate and service areas, employed directly by Rochford District Council.

2.0 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TURNOVER 2022/23 AND 2023/24**2022-23 Overview**

- 2.1 In 2022-23, 43 vacancies became vacant, or newly created, and advertised.
- 2.2 25 positions were recruited to directly following a single advertising campaign. 10 vacancies were recruited to following multiple recruitment campaigns.
- 2.3 22 positions were recruited externally.
- 2.4 In 2022/23, 28 officers left the organisation.
- 2.5 Reasons for leaving the organisation 2022/23.

Reason for leaving	Number of staff	Percentage of leavers
Resignation	18	64%
Retirement	6	21%
End of fixed term contract	1	4%
Redundancy	2	7%
TUPE	1	4%

- 2.6 The turnover rate for 2022/23 was approximately 18%. This was a higher turnover rate than a typical year due to a higher level of retirements and resignations. Out of the 18 resignations, 6 officers left to progress their careers at other Local Authorities and only 2 are known to be leaving to work for the private sector. Further resignations were for reasons of relocating and caring responsibilities. This is likely to be an outcome of the Covid pandemic and changes to people's personal lives.

2023/24 Overview

- 2.7 In 2023/24, 25 vacancies have become vacant, or newly created, and advertised.
- 2.8 19 positions have been recruited to directly following a single advertising campaign.
- 2.9 16 positions have been recruited externally.
- 2.10 In 2023/24, 8 officers have left the organisation.
- 2.11 Reasons for leaving the organisation 2023/24.

Reason for leaving	Number of staff	Percentage of leavers
Resignation	7	87.5%
Retirement	1	12.5%

- 2.12 The turnover rate for 2023/24 (as at 31 October 2023) is currently at 5%. This is the figure up to 31 October, 7/10 of the year. If the turnover follows this

average, the overall number of leavers could increase to 14 leavers, 9% turnover, significantly lower than 2022/23.

3.0 SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 3.1 All employee sickness absence is reported via our Human Resources system, iTrent, by Line Managers.
- 3.2 All employees have a return-to-work meeting upon return from any period of absence.
- 3.3 Sickness triggers are met when absences reach the following:
- 7 days or more over 3 separate occurrences (short term)
 - 5 separate occurrences (short term)
 - 4 weeks or more (long term)

Short Term Sickness

Definition: Short term absence: up to and including 20 days/one calendar month (in working days).

- 3.4 In 2022/23, the number of working days lost to short term absences was 457 (3.25*). This places RDC in the higher quartile of the mean for all local authority districts in the East of England from data currently available (3.5, Table 1) through the national LGA Benchmarking data base “LG Inform”. The highest number of days lost for short term sickness in 2022/23 was 104 days for COVID followed by anxiety/stress depression/other psychiatric illnesses at 74 days.

**Formula -Short term sickness Absence (FTE days per employee) is calculated by taking the total number (457) of days absence (short term) over the financial year and dividing by the average number of FTE (140.4) over the financial year*

3.5 Table 1 – LGA Benchmarking - Short Term Sickness

Short term sickness absence - FTE (from 2019/20 to 2021/22) for England			
Period	Sickness absence, short term (FTE)		
	Days per FTE		
	Minimum for All local authority districts in East	Mean for All local authority districts in East	Maximum for All local authority districts in East
2019/20 ↕	no value ↕	no value ↕	no value ↕
2020/21	1.4	2.1	4.3
2021/22	3.4	4.4	6.2

Source:
Local Government Association

- 3.6 In 2023/24, the number of working days lost to short term absence is currently 256 (1.79*) up to 31 October, 7/12 of the year. If the next 5 months follows this average, from the last 7 months, the overall amount of time lost from short term sickness could increase to 438 days (3.06*).

Long Term Sickness

Definition -Long-term absence: over 20 days/more than one calendar month (in working days).

- 3.7 In 2022/23, the number of working days lost to long term absence was 730 (5.1**). This places RDC in the higher quartile of the mean for all local authority districts in the East of England from data currently available (3.8, Table 2). This information has been gained through the national LGA Benchmarking database “LG Inform”. 2022/23 saw 15 members of staff being absent on long term sickness. The highest number of days lost for long term sickness in 2022/23 was 167.5 days from Benign & Malignant Tumours - Cancers followed by Other Known Causes and Heart – Cardiac at 96 and 92 days. All officers have been supported through the Sickness Absence policy and 13 members of staff have now returned to work.

***Formula -Long term sickness Absence (FTE days per employee) is calculated by taking the total number of days absence (long term) over financial year and dividing by the average number of FTE (143) over the financial year*

3.8 Table 2 - LGA Benchmarking - Long Term Sickness

Long term sickness absence - FTE (from 2019/20 to 2021/22) for England			
Period	Sickness absence, long term (FTE)		
	Days per FTE		
	Minimum for All local authority districts in East	Mean for All local authority districts in East	Maximum for All local authority districts in East
2019/20	no value	no value	no value
2020/21	1.2	3.2	5.9
2021/22	2.4	4.4	8.3

Source:
Local Government Association

- 3.9 In 2023/24, the number of working days lost to long term absence is 667, affecting 12 officers. The highest number of days lost for long term sickness so far in 2023/24 is from anxiety/stress depression/other psychiatric illnesses at 334 days, affecting 5 officers, 4 of whom have since returned to work. 215 days is from cardiac & circulatory as the second highest impacting 3 officers. There are currently 6 officers absent due to long term sickness and all are being supported through the sickness absence policy.

4.0 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

- 4.1 All employees have access to an Employee Assistance Programme. The programme is hosted by Sodexo, via Care First. It is a confidential service though data is shared regularly to demonstrate the usage of the programme by RDC staff.
- 4.2 In 2022 (January-December), data shows that the service was used on 8 occasions and in 2023 (January-September), the service has been used on 4 occasions so far this year.

5.0 ADDITIONAL EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

- 5.1 Occupational Health is available to all staff. This is mostly used to support sickness absence and facilitating return to the workplace; however, it is also used outside of the sickness process when required to support employees.
- 5.2 17 officers employed by both RDC and BBC are qualified Mental Health First Aiders and are available to support and signpost employees when needed.
- 5.3 Online sessions have been held for all employees focusing on change and resilience.
- 5.4 In person Quarterly Staff Briefings have been held over the last 18 months providing an update on the OneTeam partnership, accommodation, strategic and departmental updates.
- 5.5 The annual staff survey was undertaken in February and results shared with all employees. 31% of the workforce responded across both RDC and BBC with 4 key themes emerging: communication, resources, workloads and OneTeam. Regular updates are shared regarding these themes, as highlighted in Appendix 3.
- 5.6 Pulse surveys are being introduced, with the first being launched by the end of this month. This will focus on the 4 key themes, as mentioned in 5.5.
- 5.7 OneYou conversation were launched this year across both organisations as part of the OneTeam integration. Good feedback has been received from both employees and Line Managers and will assist in developing these employee/manager discussions moving forward.
- 5.8 The organisation encourages the use of Able Futures (<https://able-futures.co.uk/>), and time is also provided for employees to attend sessions they provide. This is a confidential programme run by the DWP providing workplace mental health support.
- 5.9 A number of other wellbeing initiatives are available to all staff, including winter flu jabs and eye tests.
- 5.10 Employee Benefits are available to all RDC officers via Sodexo; however, the staff offer is currently under review to include salary sacrifice offers of electric vehicles and other goods (if applicable).

6.0 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 CLT hold monthly informal workplace 'Tea and Talk' sessions which employees are encouraged to attend.
- 6.2 All employees are given the opportunity to shape the agenda in advance of Quarterly Staff Briefings, submit questions in advance, and ask questions during each session. The sessions are promoted as two way sessions with the opportunity for employees to gain corporate information, but also to

participate in the briefings by asking questions and commenting on the information gained.

- 6.3 All staff are encouraged to work from the office/place 2-3 days per week and meet with work colleagues and CLT. This is part of the organisational principles agreed by all employees post COVID. Unfortunately, the current office accommodation does not lend itself to organisational collaboration.
- 6.4 Staff are encouraged to join the 'Staff Voice' Group to engage with projects and events across both organisations.
- 6.5 Weekly corporate newsletters are sent to all staff and copied to all Members to provide weekly updates, celebrate successes and provide information on key corporate activities.
- 6.6 The inaugural OneTeam Annual Staff Conference was held in June 2023. Following employee feedback and the success of this first event this will be an annual event for all employees.
- 6.7 Health and wellbeing initiatives are offered to all staff, including organised lunchtime walks, social events, book swaps.
- 6.8 OneYou conversations are encouraged monthly and encourage conversations around wellbeing,

7.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 A programme designed for '*Aspiring Managers*' has recently been launched for the third year running. This course is aimed at new managers and employees aspiring to be a manager. The opportunity is offered to staff who complete an application form for selection. This is for staff from both RDC and BBC. In 2023, RDC had 9 applications and 5 were selected.
- 7.2 Senior employees and managers are encouraged to apply for the District Council Network National Staff Development Programme which is held annually. The programme runs for 12 months with 1 employee being selected to represent RDC on the programme each year.
- 7.3 CLT support a number of other external development programmes as sponsors to our employees who are successful in gaining a place on these national programmes, such as *Solace Springboard Leadership Programme*, *Amplify Development*, *Leading Greater Essex* run by Essex County Council Programme managed by Solace.
- 7.4 The OneYou conversations encourage employees to express their development needs and ambitions, so they are captured and considered as part of the annual organisational development needs of the organisation.
- 7.5 There is also service area specific training and development, e.g., Professional Qualifications. Examples are in Planning, Human Resources and Finance.

- 7.6 Apprenticeship schemes are available for both apprentices employed and existing staff. Currently 3 apprenticeships are underway.

8.0 REWARD AND RECOGNITION

- 8.1 The “Golden Ticket” scheme is available to all Rochford employees. This is a scheme that enables recognition for excellent work and behaviours to be celebrated. A small financial reward, by the way of a gift voucher, is provided to the employee.
- 8.2 Long Service Awards celebrate service at 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years by way of a certificate and financial reward are provided to employees. In 2023, 2 x 10 year service, 8 x 20 year service and 1 x 40 year service awards have been celebrated. In 2025, 5 x 10 year service, 6 x 20 year service, 1 x 30 year and 4 x 40 year service awards are expected.
- 8.3 Currently there is an attendance bonus for maintaining 100% attendance during a 6 month period for which staff may qualify to receive an award or additional annual leave.
- 8.4 5 additional days annual leave is gained following 5 years’ service.
- 8.5 All of the above are due to be reviewed in line with the OneTeam partnership to ensure consistency across the partnership for all employees.

REPORT AUTHOR:	Name:	Zoe Saward
	Title:	Acting Service Manager, People & OD
	Phone:	07736940386
	Email:	zoe.saward@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Directorate and Service Area Overview by Headcount and FTE

Appendix 2 CLT One Team Structure

Appendix 3 Staff Survey themes, implementations and future plans.

Appendix 1- Directorate and Service Area Overview by Headcount and FTE**Resources** (Tim Willis, Interim Director of Resources and S151 Officer)

Resources	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Procurement	1	0.8
Finance	8	6.8
Revenues & Benefits	24	21.7
Total	33	29

People & Governance (Shared currently between Nichola Mann and Claire Mayhew, on a secondment basis, Director of People & Governance)

People & Governance	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Democratic & Corporate Services including Civics	9	6.8
Elections	2	1.8
FOI	1	0.6
Human Resources	2	2
Total	14	11.3

Assets & Investments (Phoebe Barnes, Director of Assets & Investments)

Assets & Investments	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Asset Management	8	6.4
Health & Safety	1	0.6
Leisure	5	5
Parking	4	3.6
Total	18	15.7

Customer & Data Insight (Sarah Bennett, Director of Customer & Data Insight)

Customer & Data Insight	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Customer Services	15	13.3
IT	5	5
Total	20	18.3

Policy & Transformation (Greg Campbell, Director of Policy and Transformation)

Policy & Transformation	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Communications	1	1
Digital	4	4
Total	5	5

Housing (Lauren Stretch, Director of Housing)

Housing	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Housing Options	9	9
Allocations	1	0.86
Community Engagement	1	1
Total	11	10.86

Communities & Health (Tracey Lilley, Director of Communities & Health)

Communities & Health	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Emergency Planning	1	0.5
Environmental Health	7	7
Licensing	2	2
Partnerships	1	1
Total	11	10.5

Environment (Marcus Hotten, Director of Environment)

Environment	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Climate Change	2	2
Building Control	3	3
Open Spaces including Cemetery	15	14.6
Street Scene	4	3.5
Total	24	23.1

Place (Phil Drane, Director of Place)

Place	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Economic Development	1	0.9
Strategic Planning	3	3
Technical Support	3	2.8
Development Management	9	7.4
Enforcement	2	2
Total	18	16.1

Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)

Total CLT resources within the OneTeam Partnership with Brentwood Borough Council that are shared 1 CEO, 2 Strategic Directors, 9 Directors.

Corporate Leadership	Headcount	FTE (full-time equivalent)
Director	2	2
Strategic Director	1	1
Total	3	3

Appendix 2 CLT Structure



Appendix 3 Staff Survey themes, implementations and future plans.

Theme	What was already in place	What has been done	What's coming	What you can do
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Newsletter by CEO Member of CLT attends BBC's ELT Meeting Staff briefings OneTeam Voice Employee Engagement Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly update on the Intranet highlighting the discussions and actions that take place at CLT Additional updates on key themes such as OneTeam and Human Resources CLT Tea and Talks Greg Campbell regular walk arounds at both Brentwood Town Hall and South Street to discuss OneTeam Staff Conference More visibility of CLT at both locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed version of the weekly newsletter by CEO and update for those employees who don't have access to emails Director's consistently participating in regular team meetings with their Services Member of CLT to attend RDC's ELT/Middle Managers meeting 'One You' Conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time to read the weekly newsletters and other updates Attend and participate in staff briefings, tea and talks and future staff conferences Actively ask questions that can come via the range of communication channels to encourage two way communication Put forward suggestions of over ways you feel communication could improve Participate in future staff surveys
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to discuss concerns around resources with Line Managers as individuals or as a team IT Help Desk to log issues Service Reviews have taken place for some Services, which have looked at resources required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent approach to Service Plans to ensure there is clear direction of objectives for the coming year, linking these to the corporate priorities Service Reviews continuing as per the roadmap Issues related to printers have been identified and resolved Joint IT Service Desk was launched in June 2023 A focus on document retention spring clean at South Street and Warley Depot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'One You' Conversations Work continues in exploring options for relocating South Street Offices and Warley Depot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engage in your 'One You' Conversations with your line managers and discuss if you feel resource issues are having an impact on you being able to deliver on your outcomes Continue to log any issues you are having via the joint IT Service Desk Raise any resources concerns as they become apparent and do not wait. Consider solutions you may have to these with your line manager

Workloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to discuss concerns around workloads with Line Managers as individuals or as a team • Service Reviews have taken place for some Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Reviews continuing as per the roadmap • Consistent approach to Service Plans to ensure there is a clear direction set for the coming year, linking these to the corporate priorities and minimising changing priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'One You' Conversations to ensure you have a clear set of objectives that link to the service plan and wider corporate objectives. Also providing the opportunity to create that space to have a two way conversation to discuss concerns you may have with workloads and what support or solutions can be explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engage in your 'One You' Conversations with your line managers and discuss if you're your workload is having an impact on you being able to deliver on your outcomes • Raise any workload concerns as they become apparent and do not wait. Consider solutions you may have to these with your line manager
OneTeam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Newsletter by CEO • Member of CLT attends BBC's ELT Meeting • Staff briefings • OneTeam Voice Employee Engagement Group • Creation of OneTeam Values by the OneTeam Voice Employee Engagement Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussed area on the OneTeam Intranet, with regular updates • Resilience and Change lunch and learn sessions held via teams • CLT Tea and Talks • Greg Campbell organises regular walk arounds at both Brentwood Town Hall and South Street to discuss OneTeam • Staff Conference – launching and embedding the One Team values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussed area on the OneTeam Intranet with regards to health & wellbeing with a hub of information that can be viewed and accessed. A review of health & wellbeing across OneTeam • Review of the lunch and learn sessions and also gathering the information from 'One You' Conversations to explore what further training or resources may be required • OneTeam Voice Employee Engagement Group to pick up on the behaviours that sit behind the values and suggestions within the survey and how these can be explored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to read the weekly newsletters and other updates on the Intranet • Attend and participate in the walk arounds, staff briefings, tea and talks and future staff conferences • Actively ask questions and raise concerns so that there is an open and transparent dialogue • Get involved in the OneTeam Voice Employee Engagement Group • Participate in future staff surveys

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date