

REPORT TO: Cabinet Member - Environmental

DATE: 7th April 2010

SUBJECT: **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT
SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT (3rd Quarter - 2009/10)**

WARDS AFFECTED: All

REPORT OF: P Moore
Environmental Protection Director

CONTACT OFFICER: Jim Black
Operational Services Director

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To advise the Cabinet Member – Environmental of the current level of sickness absence within the former Environmental Protection Department, during the period April to December 2009 and the actions taken to reduce such absence in accordance with the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy and targets.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

It is a requirement of the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy that formal reports are made to the appropriate Cabinet Member if the departmental sickness absence rate is in excess of 6%, the Council's target sickness absence rate is 4%.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Cabinet Member - Environmental agrees that appropriate actions are being taken to continue to manage sickness absence within the Environmental & Technical Services and Operational Services Departments

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: Not appropriate

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: N/A

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

None

IMPLICATIONS:**Budget/Policy Framework:**

The effective management of sickness absence is a key objective of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Financial:

None

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009/ 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal:

None

Risk Assessment:

None

Asset Management:

None

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

None

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
3	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People		✓	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

None

BACKGROUND

1. The Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy requires that a formal report is made to the appropriate Cabinet Member if a Department's sickness absence rate exceeds 6% in any monitoring period.
2. For the period 1st April 2009 to 31st December 2009 the total sickness absence rate for the Environmental Protection Department was 6.53%.

Sickness Absence Levels over the monitoring period

3. For the period 1st April 2009 to 31st December 2009 the breakdown of the Department's sickness absence is shown in Annex 1.
4. From Annex 1 it can be seen that the Council's reporting trigger value of 6% was exceeded by the Vehicle Maintenance Section's operational staff (9.60%); the Public Health and Housing Section (8.35%); the Commercial Section (8.11%); the Cleansing Section's operational staff (7.77%); and the Building Cleaning Section's operational staff (5.61%). The Council's target sickness absence rate of below 4% was exceeded by the Transport Section (4.58 %).

5. Looking at these service areas the split between long-term absence (LTA) and short-term absence (STA) was;

Section	LTA (Target 1.8%)	STA (Target 2.2%)	Combined (Target 4%)
Vehicle Maintenance (Ops)	4.86%	4.74%	9.60%
Public Health & Housing	4.13%	4.22%	8.35%
Commercial	6.01%	2.10%	8.11%
Cleansing (Ops)	4.52%	3.25%	7.77%
Building Cleaning (Ops)	5.15%	0.46%	5.61%
Transport	2.62%	1.96%	4.58%

6. In relation to long-term absence, 2 members of staff within the Vehicle Maintenance Section were absent due to sickness for more than 4 weeks, one of these was due to an accident, the other is still a long-term sickness absence. Of the 4 members of staff within the Commercial and Public Health and Housing Sections one person has already retired on ill-health grounds and another is a potential case for ill-health retirement and is currently being assessed for this. The other 2 members of staff have now returned to work.
7. In relation to the Cleansing Section's operational staff, 41 members of staff were absent for more than 4 weeks. Of these 32 have now returned to work, 4 have retired (3 on ill health) and 1 has resigned. 4 members of staff remain on long-term sickness absence.
8. In relation to the Building Cleaning Section's operational staff, 38 members of staff were absent for more than 4 weeks. Of these 28 have now returned to work, 1 has retired on ill health grounds, 2 have resigned, 3 have died and 2 have been dismissed. 2 members of staff remain on long-term sickness absence.
9. The Transport Section has had 1 member of staff absent for more than 4 weeks, during the monitoring period, who has now returned to work.
10. All of the remaining long-term cases will continue to be reviewed and dealt with in accordance with the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy.

11. In relation to short-term sickness absence there are three Sections that have exceeded the target during this monitoring period. The management within each of these sections will continue to review any cases of repeat sickness absence and will apply the control mechanisms contained within Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy where necessary.

Actions taken to monitor and control sickness absence

12. The Environmental Protection Department fully complies with the procedures specified within the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy, including undertaking;
 - 'Back to Work' interviews for all staff following any period of sickness absence;
 - 'Sickness Reviews' where staff have had more than 3 occasions of absence during a rolling 6 month period; or where there is any recurring recognisable pattern of absence;
 - Referrals to Occupational Health for all long-term sickness absence (over 4 weeks) and for any sickness absence for 'stress' (over 2 weeks);
 - Reference to the Sickness Absence Panel (Chief Executive & Personnel Director) for long-term absences, where appropriate.
 - Formal action, including termination of employment, where appropriate.
 - Sickness absence monitoring as a regular item on the Departmental Management Team agenda and for specific Section Management Teams.
13. Whilst this is a further occasion that the Environmental Protection Department has had to report on exceeding the formal reporting trigger value for sickness absence percentages it must be recognised that the impact of the absence control measures taken is not reflected within the statistical reports for a period of 12 'rolling' months.
14. In light of the above information the Cabinet Member – Environmental is asked to agree that appropriate actions are being taken within the Department to manage sickness absence.