

Derbyshire County Council

Cabinet

09 September 2014

**Report of the Director of Public Health and the Strategic Director of
Economy, Transport, Environment and Economic Regeneration**

HEALTHY WORKPLACES (Health and Communities)

1. Purpose of the report:

To seek approval from Cabinet for the development of a healthy workplaces approach, the adoption of a Derbyshire Healthy Workforce Charter and the recruitment of two staff to implement the work.

2. Information and analysis:

- 2.1 The positive impact that work can have on health and wellbeing has been well documented. As part of the transfer of responsibilities for public health to the council, guidance identifies workplace health as an important contributor to the health of the population and a means of tackling health inequalities. Evidence shows that in general, being in work is good for an individual's health and wellbeing. The former service to provide workplace health was decommissioned due to under performance.
- 2.2 Ill-health and worklessness have an impact not just on the individual but also on the families and children. Parental low income is associated with poorer health outcomes for children as well as the number of children living in poverty.
- 2.3 Research indicates that more than 90% of people with common health conditions could be helped to return to work if basic principles of good healthcare and workplace management principles were followed.
- 2.4 In 2007/08, PricewaterhouseCoopers carried out a review of the evidence base on workplace wellbeing. They argued that the ageing population, rises in chronic illness and the increasing cost of ill health to the employer were all justification for the adoption of workplace health and wellbeing programmes. This is backed up by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development who state that '*the business case for promoting and supporting employee health and wellbeing is becoming increasingly clear. Employers can gain significant benefits in reducing employee turnover and increasing the productivity and engagement of employees.*'

- 2.5 Promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace can also aid staff recruitment and retention, as well as helping to maintain the health of staff as they age; 50% of the working population is predicted to be 50+ by 2024. Encouraging staff to be healthy and active can reduce sickness absence by 20-30% and this can deliver significant benefits to the economy as a whole and particularly to local, small businesses where productivity is critical to survival.
- 2.6 The inclusion of sickness absence as an indicator in the national Public Health outcomes framework highlights employee health and well-being as an increasingly important health issue.
- 2.7 The current Derbyshire JSNA highlights the link between employment and health and states there is a strong link between employment and enhanced quality of life, including evidenced benefits for health and wellbeing and financial benefits. Evidence also shows that for an employer, the return on investment in wellbeing programmes outweighs the costs of provision.
- 2.8 The initiative will contribute to the overall achievement of the priorities set out under the five key pledges of the Council Plan, specifically the priorities around 'a Derbyshire that works' and 'a healthy Derbyshire'. Adopting a Healthy Workplaces approach will also support delivery of the Council's statutory duties relating to Public Health and Trading Standards.
- 2.9 The initiative will act as a further mechanism in delivering the priorities of the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan and the recently approved Derbyshire Economic Strategy Statement which set out the long term ambitions for economic growth and associated priorities to increase productivity.
- 2.10 It is proposed the Healthy Workplaces approach will target small to medium sized businesses that are either located in disadvantaged areas or have a high percentage of low paid, low skilled manual or retail staff (or both) and carrying a higher burden of ill-health. This would fit with public health priorities of addressing health inequalities, as well as those in other strategies such as the Derbyshire Economic Strategy Statement.
- 2.11 For the approach to be fully effective, it is essential that work is developed in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses and the relevant departments in the eight district and borough councils who have a statutory duty to advise on health and safety in the workplace.
- 2.12 The approach has been discussed with the Chamber of Commerce who are fully supportive of the Healthy Workplaces proposal and see it

as an opportunity to work with employers to reduce staff absenteeism. The issue of workplace health was highlighted in the May edition of the Chamber's newsletter 'In Business'.

2.13 As a member of the Chamber there are a range of Chamber platforms that can be utilised to promote the project's aims and objectives. These include:

- Making use of the Chamber's HR Forum as a Speaker opportunity
- Speaking opportunities at Chamber events
- Use a Snap Poll amongst the HR Forum or Quarterly Economic Survey to ask questions to identify potential participants
- Work with the Chamber's PR Team to identify/showcase best-practice/Workplace Champions;
- In Business magazine / Members' Briefing / www.thebusinessadvice.co.uk / Friday eshot

2.14 Contacts with local businesses will be obtained through Trading Standards 'Better Business for All' initiative and Derbyshire Sport's Active Derbyshire scheme as well as the databases held by District and Borough councils and the Chamber. An initial list of potential businesses will be compiled before the workers come into post.

2.15 Subject to Cabinet approval, it is proposed that two permanent staff will be employed within the Public Health service who will be responsible for delivering the Council's Healthy Workplace approach. The posts will be ring-fenced to internal candidates and will be fixed-term until March 2017 to allow for evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach. It is proposed that, subject to satisfactory evaluation consideration is given to the posts becoming permanent. A contribution to the funding of the posts should be discussed with the Chamber during this fixed-term period.

2.16 The staff will liaise with Public Health, Trading Standards, Economic Development, Environmental Services and Communications colleagues, the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and other relevant networks to advise and promote the approach to employers.

2.17 If adopted, the Healthy Workplaces will have the following components:

- Supporting local businesses address the health and wellbeing of their employees. This includes supporting individuals with a health problem remain in, or return to work;
- Developing a Workplace Charter;
- Embedding the healthy workplaces approach across Derbyshire and ensuring strategic coherence across partnerships;
- Raising awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing in the workplace.

2.18 The remit of the two workers will be to advise and support local businesses to put in place sustainable policies and procedures that improve and maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce. This will be achieved through:

- Liaison with the Chamber and District and Boroughs in developing and implementing appropriate strategies for engaging with local employers.
- Engaging with employers and encouraging them to take a positive approach to health and wellbeing and managing sickness absence. This can include:
 - encouraging active travel,
 - health promotion activities,
 - workplace health champions,
 - subsidising gym membership and
 - providing health screening.
- Advising employers and colleagues on the various local and national programmes and organisations that can support health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- Providing advice to employers on supporting employees with health conditions remain in, or return to health.
- Promoting the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Charter to local employers and partner organisations specifically targeting small to medium sized businesses employing mainly routine and manual workers.

2.19 The Workplace Wellbeing Charter is a national initiative and is a statement of intent by employers to demonstrate their commitment to the health of their employees. It is proposed that Derbyshire will base its charter on the national framework adapting it to the needs of small to medium sized businesses.

2.20 The aims of the Charter are to;

- Improve well-being and reduce absenteeism;
- Provide tools to measure and evaluate progress;
- Identify and share good practice and real-life examples;
- Demonstrate that health and wellbeing is a worthwhile investment.

2.21 The development of a Derbyshire Healthy Workplace Charter will provide a formal mechanism to support and recognise employers in Derbyshire investing in the health and wellbeing of their staff. The Charter will also support public health outcomes around sickness absence, mental health, healthy lifestyles as well as complementing the existing Active Workplaces Award. Evaluation will be based on the core components that the workplace adopts and will be reported back.

2.22 If adopted, the Derbyshire Healthy Workplace Charter will be a component in the county-wide Healthy Communities approach and will

be linked specifically to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Public Health Responsibility Deal, Healthy Lifestyles programmes, Active Derbyshire, Better Business for All scheme and other local initiatives.

- 2.23 It will be essential to ensure the importance of Healthy Workplaces is embedded throughout all portfolios in the Council and ensure its contribution to achieving Council priorities is acknowledged.
- 2.24 It is also important to make the case in the implementation of relevant internal and external strategies, for example the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Health Inequalities Strategy, the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan and the Derbyshire Economic Strategy Statement, that a Healthy Workplaces approach is a tangible business support function that can contribute to economic growth, increased productivity and job creation.
- 2.25 In conjunction with the authority's Communications team and in liaison with the Chamber of Commerce a targeted awareness campaign on the benefits of workplace health and wellbeing will be developed as part of the introduction of the Healthy Workplaces approach.
- 2.26 Healthy workplace initiatives are not new and many local authorities have long-standing programmes in place. It is however a new approach in Derbyshire and as such the development and implementation will include building a portfolio of case studies demonstrating good practice that can be shared across the business community. Specific outcomes that will be used to monitor the approach include;
- Number and type of businesses engaged and what form of support is provided
 - Increase in the number of businesses implementing healthy workplace policies
 - Improved conditions in the workplace to support the health and wellbeing of employees
 - Increased awareness amongst employers and employees of the importance of workplace health and wellbeing and the range of interventions can be put in place and sustained over time
 - Number of businesses reporting a reduction in sickness absence
 - Closer integration with the Better Business for All initiative

3. Human Resources considerations:

The new posts have been evaluated on a Grade 10 and will be recruited in accordance with the County Council's usual protocols and will in the first instance be advertised to internal staff only.

4. Financial considerations:

The £138,000 funding for this work was approved by Cabinet on 30th July 2013. The costs for the two Grade 10 posts are £69,876 (including on costs) per annum (whole time equivalents). It is proposed that bringing the service in house will create 25% savings within the public health ring fenced grant. The savings will contribute to the public health resource fund which is supporting wider preventative services across the council that are at risk.

5. Other considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

6. Background Papers:

PricewaterhouseCooper (2008) Building the case for wellness
Dame Carol Black (2008) Improving Health and Changing Lives
The Marmot Review (2010) Fair Society, Healthy Lives; Strategic
Review of Health Inequalities in England 2010
Department of Health (2010) Our Health and Wellbeing Today
Papers in Public Health
Derbyshire Economic Strategy Statement (2014)

7. Key Decision:

No

8. Call-in:

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No

9. Officers' Recommendation:

That Cabinet approve the development of a Healthy Workplace approach including the adoption and implementation of a Derbyshire Healthy Workforce Charter and the creation of two established posts of Public Development Workers, as set out above, to support the implementation of the approach.

Elaine Michel
Director of Public Health

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director of Economy,
Transport, Environment and
Economic Regeneration