

Executive Committee

Wed 3rd Feb
2010
7.00 pm

Committee Room 2
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL


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Ivor Westmore
Committee Support Services**

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Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

The **Agenda List** at the front of the Agenda summarises the issues to be discussed and is followed by the Officers' full supporting **Reports**.

Chair

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting. Generally to one side of the Chair is the Committee Support Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

Running Order

Items will normally be taken in the order printed but, in particular circumstances, the Chair may agree to vary the order.

Refreshments : tea, coffee and water are normally available at meetings - please serve yourself.

Decisions

Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are the democratically elected representatives. They are advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals and do not have a vote.

Members of the Public

Members of the public may, by prior arrangement, speak at meetings of the Council or its Committees. Specific procedures exist for Appeals Hearings or for meetings involving Licence or Planning Applications. For further information on this point, please speak to the Committee Support Officer.

Special Arrangements

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If you discover a fire, inform a member of staff or operate the nearest alarm call point (wall mounted red rectangular box). In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately following the fire exit signs. Officers have been appointed with responsibility to ensure that all visitors are escorted from the building.

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

Do Not re-enter the building until told to do so.

The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.

Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

- Where the item relates or is likely to affect your **registered interests** (what you have declared on the formal Register of Interests)

OR

- Where a decision in relation to the item might reasonably be regarded as affecting **your own** well-being or financial position, or that of your **family**, or your **close associates** more than most other people affected by the issue,

you have a personal interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare the existence, and nature, of your interest and stay**

- The declaration must relate to specific business being decided - a general scattergun approach is not needed
- **Exception** - where interest arises only because of your membership of another **public body**, there is no need to declare unless you **speak** on the matter.
- You **can vote** on the matter.

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

- It is a personal interest **and**
- The item affects your **financial position** (or conveys other benefits), or the position of your **family, close associates** or bodies through which you have a **registered interest** (or relates to the exercise of **regulatory functions** in relation to these groups)

and

- A member of public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably believe the interest was likely to **prejudice** your judgement of the public interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare and Withdraw**

BUT you may make representations to the meeting before withdrawing, **if** the public have similar rights (such as the right to speak at Planning Committee).



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Committee

3rd February 2010

7.00 pm

Committee Room 2 Town Hall

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs: C Gandy (Chair) W Hartnett
M Braley (Vice- N Hicks
Chair) C MacMillan
P Anderson M Shurmer
J Brunner
B Clayton

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|--|---|
| <p>1. Apologies</p> | <p>To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend this meeting.</p> |
| <p>2. Declarations of Interest</p> | <p>To invite Councillors to declare any interests they may have in items on the agenda.</p> |
| <p>3. Leader's Announcements</p> | <p>1. To give notice of any items for future meetings or for the Forward Plan, including any scheduled for this meeting, but now carried forward or deleted; and</p> <p>2 any other relevant announcements.</p> <p>(Oral report)</p> |
| <p>4. Local Development Framework - Office Needs Assessment</p> <p>(Pages 1 - 6)</p> <p>R Bamford, Acting Head of Planning and Building Control</p> | <p>To endorse the Office Needs Assessment which assesses the need to accommodate office requirements in the Town Centre.</p> <p>(Report attached – Appendices available through the internet and in Group Rooms)</p> <p>(Abbey Ward); (Central Ward)</p> |
| <p>5. Water Quality Report</p> <p>(Pages 7 - 12)</p> <p>S Mullins, Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services</p> | <p>To consider the adoption of a policy in relation to water quality in Council owned and managed buildings.</p> <p>(Report attached – Appendices available through the internet and in Group Rooms)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |

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| <p>6. Private Sector Housing Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>(Pages 13 - 18)</p> <p>Head of Strategy and Partnerships</p> | <p>To seek approval of the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>(Report attached – Appendices available through the internet and in Group Rooms)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p> |
| <p>7. Initial Estimates 2010/11 and Forecasts for 2011/12 and 2012/13</p> | <p>To approve the Initial Estimates for 2010/11 and Forecasts for 2011/12 and 2012/13.</p> <p>(Report to follow)</p> <p>(All Wards)</p> |
| <p>8. Former Covered Market - Initial Options Appraisal</p> <p>(Pages 19 - 24)</p> <p>S Mullins, Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services</p> | <p>To consider options for the use of the former covered market.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(Abbey Ward)</p> |
| <p>9. Corporate Sickness Statistics</p> <p>(Pages 25 - 40)</p> <p>E Storer, Head of Human Resources and Communications</p> | <p>To consider the current sickness statistics for the Council.</p> <p>(Report attached)</p> <p>(No Direct Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>10. Minutes / Referrals - Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups etc.</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> | <p>To receive and consider any outstanding minutes or referrals from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Panels, Neighbourhood Groups, etc. since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, other than as detailed in the items above.</p> |

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| 11. Exclusion of the Public | <p>Should it be necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, to consider excluding the public from the meeting in relation to items of business on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, it may be necessary to move the following resolution:</p> <p>“that, under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matter(s) on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs (<i>to be specified</i>) of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended.”</p> |
| 12. Confidential Minutes / Referrals (if any) | To consider confidential matters not dealt with earlier in the evening and not separately listed below (if any). |

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Abbey and Central Wards

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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - OFFICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

(Report of the Acting Head of Planning and Building Control)

1. Summary of Proposals

The report seeks the endorsement of the Office Needs Assessment which has been jointly produced by Officers of the Council and GVA Grimley. The study forms part of the evidence base of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD).

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

the Office Needs Assessment as attached in Appendix A to the report, be endorsed as part of the Council's Local Development Framework Evidence Base.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change/Carbon Management Implications

Financial

- 3.1 This assessment was funded from existing Economic Development Unit budgets. In order to ensure the cost associated with completing this study remained in budget it was necessary for Officers of the Council to carry out elements of the study.

Legal

- 3.2 The Office Needs Assessment forms part of the Core Strategy evidence base. Redditch Borough Council is required, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to produce a Core Strategy DPD. Without a credible and robust evidence base to draw upon the production of a Core Strategy is at risk of being found 'unsound'. The Office Needs Assessment helps to inform policies in the Core Strategy.

Policy

- 3.3 The Office Needs Assessment will feed into the continuing preparation of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy will replace many policies within the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3. It will be the first Development Plan Document (DPD) to be produced as

part of Redditch Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) and forms part of the development plan for the area.

Risk

- 3.4 The Core Strategy requires a credible and robust evidence base to formulate appropriate policies. Without the evidence base to rely on, the delivery of the Core Strategy would be at risk. There are policies in the Core Strategy that rely upon the Office Needs Assessment evidence, therefore not adopting the Office Needs Assessment could put at risk the achievement of a credible Core Strategy.

Climate Change/Carbon Management

- 3.5 During the preparation of the Office Needs Assessment, consideration has been given to environmental sustainability. Related policies in the Core Strategy are all subject to Sustainability Appraisal.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 In order to plan for the future of Redditch Borough up to 2026, Officers have been formulating a robust and credible evidence base. The Office Needs Assessment (Appendix A) forms part of this evidence base. Components of the Office Needs Assessment were completed in house, however due to the specialist nature of some of the tasks required to complete an Office Needs Assessment it was necessary for Consultants to be commissioned.
- 4.2 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy sets a requirement for Redditch Borough Council to plan for the construction of 45,000sq.m of office floorspace for the period 2006 – 2026 in the town centre and peripheral zone. Officers are aware that there are constraints on supply of land within the town centre therefore it was considered necessary to test this figure in terms of:
- a) whether the 45,000 sqm is appropriate i.e. is there demand for this much floorspace;
 - b) Is there an adequate supply of land in the town centre to cater for this level of development.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 The Office Needs Assessment has been jointly prepared by Redditch Borough Council Officers and GVA Grimley in association with GHK Consulting. The Assessment follows on from the

Employment Land Review (this was presented to Executive Committee on 2nd March 2009) and examines in more detail, the need for offices within the town centre and reviews potential development sites to accommodate the identified requirements within the boundary of the Town Centre and Peripheral Zone (As illustrated in Appendix B).

- 5.2 In undertaking the Office Needs Assessment there were four key stages:
- a) Survey of Existing Occupiers (a phone survey was undertaken with a sample of office occupiers);
 - b) Assessment of Floorspace in Redditch town centre (this focused on the amount and type of office provision in the town centre and peripheral zone. The section also analysed any potential pipeline developments and past lettings/sales in the town centre and peripheral zone);
 - c) Property Market Review (this section analysed the office property market within the town centre);
 - d) Need for Additional Floorspace (this section reviewed the previous section and assessed the need for additional office floorspace in the town centre and peripheral zone).
- 5.3 The key issues arising from these sections are:
- a) The town centre is an attractive location for the Office market with:
 - i) Affordable rental levels
 - ii) Flexible Accommodation
 - iii) Location accessible to main transport routes
 - b) Since January 2000 to March 2009 there has been a gradual increase of office lettings – the average take up being around 3, 800 sq.m per annum, the freehold sales market is more limited;
 - c) Despite this, vacancy levels are at their highest in over a decade (currently 19% of the total stock);
 - d) Achieving the WMRSS target of 45, 000sq.m is challenging given the limited amount demand for such a high level of office floorspace in the town centre and peripheral zone;
 - e) The Town Centre and Peripheral zone can only accommodate half of this requirement;

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- f) A revised office target of 30, 000 sq.m over the Plan period is recommended;
 - g) The study identifies some potential sites which can accommodate around 22, 000 sq m, this means an additional 2.3ha would need to be identified outside the town centre/peripheral zone in order to achieve the 30, 000 sq m requirement;
 - h) In order to attract a wider office market which has not traditionally wanted to locate in the Borough, the marketing of the town centre is fundamental to its success.
 - i) Regional and sub regional public sector organisations should be a focus for the Council when identifying potential occupiers of office accommodation in the town centre.
 - j) A wider range of 'office products' are required, i.e. new, modern office buildings with flexible space capable of accommodating medium to large businesses is required.
 - k) Support from Economic Development will be required in order to ensure a holistic approach is taken towards identifying the types of sectors that should be focused upon in the town centre.
 - l) In order to achieve the challenging office requirement policy will need to set precedence over competing uses such as residential and leisure in the town centre.
- 5.4 The implications of the Office Needs Assessment on the Core Strategy would be that greater emphasis should be given to need of office requirements over housing requirements in the town centre.
- 5.5 The draft report was presented to Planning Advisory Panel where the item was discussed at length. There were a number of key points arising from this discussion which Members and Officers considered it necessary to reflect in this Committee Report. These points are set out below:
- a) What is an Office? – In relation to this study an Office is defined as a B1 use class and includes the following office based sectors:
 - i) Construction;
 - ii) Retailing;
 - iii) Professional Services;
 - iv) Insurance, Banking, Finance;

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- v) Computing services;
 - vi) Other business services;
 - vii) Public Administration and Defence;
 - viii) Health and Social work;
 - ix) Transport and Communications
 - x) Education
 - xi) Other Services
- b) How many employees typically occupy a sq.m of office floorspace? The answer to this is twofold. For professional services a density standard of 19-29 sq.m/per worker is applied, for the various other types of office occupiers a standard of 34 sq.m/per worker is applied.
- c) Both Pool Place and Grove Street are identified as potential sites to meet Office Needs over the medium to long term. At present these sites are currently retail parks. Although the purpose of the Office Needs Assessment is not to develop schemes for future sites (it purely identifies the potential sites), it is necessary to consider ideas on how to deliver a potential office use on these sites. It was suggested at the PAP (30/11/09) that Officers consider this as part of the future LDF production, and specifically whether a comprehensive out of town retail offer may be more appropriate for the Borough than what is currently offered. Officers agreed that this could be an appropriate way forward given the need to identify sufficient sites for Offices in the town centre and peripheral zone and Officers will consider this issue as part of the wider LDF production.

6. Other Implications

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Asset Management | - | The Council's Land and Property holdings are affected by the contents of this report no differently than any other land and property holdings. |
| Community Safety | - | None. |
| Human Resources | - | None. |
| Social Exclusion | - | None. |
| Environmental / Sustainability | - | None. |

7. Lessons Learnt

Not applicable.

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8. Background Papers

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Preferred Option.

Panel Report.

9. Consultation

There have been informal consultations with some stakeholders, landowners and also with relevant Borough Council Officers.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Ashley Baldwin (Planning Assistant), who can be contacted on extension 3376 (ashley.baldwin@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix A – Office Needs Assessment

Appendix B – Town Centre and Peripheral Zone

Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

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WATER QUALITY POLICY

(Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

To seek the adoption of a policy in relation to Water Quality in the Council's owned and managed buildings.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RECOMMEND** that

the policy in relation to water quality in Council-owned and managed buildings, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There is currently no allocated budget for the management and control of water quality in Council owned and managed buildings. Revenue budget bids have been submitted for £10,500 for 2010/11 from General Fund and £18,500 from the HRA for 2010/11.

Legal

- 3.2 Under Section 2 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council has a general duty to ensure; so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. This includes the maintenance of places of work in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks.
- 3.3 Where non-domestic premises are made available to persons who are not employees, but use Council premises of their work (for example, at the Business Centres), or premises are made available as a place where persons may use plant or substances provided for their use there (for example, leisure facilities), Section 4 of the Act places the Council under a duty to ensure that, such premises are safe and without risk to health.

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- 3.4 The Approved Code of Practice L8 gives practicable advice on the requirements of the Health and Safety at work act 1974(HSWA) and the control of substances hazardous to Health regulations 1999(COSHH) concerning the risk from exposure to legionella bacteria.
- 3.5 Legal implications if we do not comply with the regulations is Corporate manslaughter (Barrow in Furness, legionella outbreak August 2002).

Policy

- 3.6 The Council currently has no policy on Water Quality in its owned and managed buildings and this policy will represent new policy. Whilst the Council does not currently have a formally adopted policy for Water Quality, the policy does formalise the water hygiene strategy that already exists and is being operated within the Council.

Risk

- 3.7 In adopting the Policy, the Council is demonstrating its commitment to and management of its Health & Safety duties in respect of members of staff and the public. If the Council does not adopt the Policy, it won't be able to demonstrate that it has a scheme for preventing or controlling the risks associated with water quality.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.8 In order to comply with the duties in respect of water quality, there is a need to 'flush' relevant systems and this obviously involves using large amounts of water. In addition, where tanks are cleaned, dilute bleach is used. However, the environmental impact of managing water quality is considered to be minimal when compared to the potential impact a failure to manage water quality could have.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 The Council has an obligation to manage water quality in its buildings. Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance contained in Legionnaire's disease – The control of legionella bacteria in water systems – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance (L8) states that employers and those with responsibilities for the control of premises should prepare a scheme for preventing or controlling the risk arising from Legionella in order to comply with their Health & Safety duties.

4.2 The Council has been complying with its duties but needs to have a formal adopted scheme setting out the relevant practices and processes.

5. Key Issues

5.1 The Strategy sets out how the Council deals with the control of Legionella in its owned and managed premises. It defines the Legionella Risk Categories and the methodology to be applied to the assessment of the risks.

5.2 Overall, the Council's policy for the management of water quality is:

- a) To have clear procedures for the design and management of water services;
- b) To have specific lines of responsibility for the management of water services;
- c) To identify locations with high risk users of premises;
- d) To identify where possible potential risk areas due to materials, storage methods, poor installation etc. within buildings;
- e) To check on a regular basis the quality of water within buildings;
- f) To train staff and contractors to ensure that works carried out on water services comply with legislation and the policy;
- g) To ensure that any risk of contamination is removed or reduced in an efficient, cost effective manner with the minimum disruption to building users.

5.3 The Approved Code of Practice also requires the allocation of roles and responsibilities and these are set out on page 8 of the draft policy.

5.4 The Policy sets out the survey programme for the Council owned and managed premises and the routine maintenance required to comply with the Council's duties. Water sampling is not required under normal circumstances (that is, where water systems are in regular use). However, some sampling is required where, for example, water temperatures are kept too low to kill the Legionella bacteria and the Policy sets out where such sampling is required and what actions to take in the event of an outbreak.

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5.5 Appendix 2 sets out the Water Services Log Book which will be kept at each of the Council's owned and managed premises and will be completed by the premises occupier and maintenance contractors. This will record actions taken in respect of water quality to demonstrate the Council's compliance with its duties and the legislation. The Log Books for all Council owned and managed premises will be checked regularly by Asset Maintenance Officers to ensure that the Council's duties are being met.

5.6 The revenue requested as part of the budget bids will enable the Council to comply with its duties and this Policy by providing the resources to carry out the monitoring of water systems in Council owned and managed buildings.

6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - The Council is responsible for water quality in its owned and managed buildings to ensure that they are safe for use by staff and members of the public.
- Community Safety - There are no specific Community Safety implications.
- Human Resources - All management and monitoring of water quality will be carried out within existing resources.
- Social Exclusion - There are no specific social exclusion implications.

7. Lessons Learnt

7.1 High profile cases such as the case in 2002 involving Barrow Borough Council demonstrate the importance of water quality in protecting public health. Significant fines and/or imprisonment could result if death occurred as a result of Council failure to manage water quality in its premises in a satisfactory manner.

8. Background Papers

8.1 HES Guidance: Legionnaire's disease – The control of legionella bacteria in water systems – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance (L8).

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8.2 Worcestershire County Council: Water Quality – Management Arrangements for the Control of Legionella and Maintenance on Wholesome Water Quality in Redditch Borough Council owned and managed Buildings.

8.3 Report of the public meetings into the legionella outbreak in Barrow-in-Furness, August 2002.

9. Consultation

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is John Homer (Asset Maintenance Officer), who can be contacted on extension 3704 (e-mail: john.homer@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Water Quality Policy
Appendix 2 – Water Services Log Book

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No Direct Ward Relevance

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PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 - 2015

Report of the Head of Strategy and Partnerships

1. Summary of Proposals

The committee is asked to recommend the adoption of the Private Sector Housing Strategy and Action Plan. The Council is required to produce a Private Sector Housing Strategy taking into account the current issues affecting the sector. This strategy replaces the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2004.

The Council has undertaken stock condition research through the Building Research Establishment and surveyed residents to identify the issues and the action plan has been produced to raise the standards in housing conditions in the private sector and give support and advice to private sector tenants and vulnerable households.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that

the Private Sector Housing Strategy, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be adopted.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 The Council receives an allocation from the Regional Housing Capital Pot to support regeneration in the Private Sector. The Council's proposed allocation for 2010/11 is £77,000.
- 3.2 This allocation will be used to support the delivery of the strategy's action plan.

Legal

- 3.3 Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has the power to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the social, economic or environmental well-being of its area.

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- 3.4 The Housing Act 2004 requires the Council to keep the housing stock under review to identify any action that may need to be taken by them.
 - 3.5 The Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 requires the Council to publish how it intends to improve the housing in its area.

Policy

- 3.5 This strategy is an update from the 2005 Private Sector Housing Strategy

Risk

- 3.6 Without a clear strategy for the private sector housing function, staff and other resources in the form of schemes, grants and support could be misdirected and wasted. The Audit Commission report *Why the strategic housing role matters* (September 2009) highlights a need for Council's to prioritise targets relating to existing stock.

Sustainability / Environmental / Climate Change

- 3.7 Reducing empty homes creates more sustainable communities. Utilising existing resources for housing need creates less of an environmental impact than new build.
- 3.8 Making homes decent and more energy efficient results in reduced energy consumption and reduces fuel poverty.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 Central Government continues to promote the use of private rented sector homes for people in housing need.
- 4.2 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a number of measures that have impacted on the way local authorities operate a private sector housing service. This is the most significant piece of primary legislation relating to private sector housing. It reinforces the link between housing and health and introduced a measure for assessing health and safety hazards. The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) replaced the 'fitness' standard for housing. The Act also strengthens and increases the rights for private tenants.

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- 4.3 The Audit Commission report *Why the strategic housing role matters* (September 2009) writes that well targeted spending on existing housing can yield financial benefits:
- a) £1 spent on housing support for a vulnerable person saves nearly £2 in health services, tenancy failure, crime and residential care;
 - b) Spending as little as £2,000 on adaptations to help an elderly person to stay in their own home can save £6,000 a year on care;
 - c) If only 5 per cent of empty homes could be brought back into use, councils' could cut the annual homelessness costs by £1/2 billion.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 Building Research Establishment (BRE) completed a stock modelling survey of Redditch private housing (all non-social) in April 2009. This stock modelling survey is a proven desk top method of surveying homes using national data sets.
- 5.2 Central ward, with high density housing and high numbers of pre 1919 dwellings has the highest percentage of dwellings in the following categories: non-decent dwellings, dwellings with inadequate thermal comfort, dwellings with category 1 hazards, dwellings in disrepair, non-modern dwellings, dwellings in fuel poverty, vulnerable households, vulnerable households living in non-decent accommodation.
- 5.3 Based on the evidence of the BRE stock modelling data this strategy recognises there are significant issues in older areas of the Borough and hot spots in part of the former new town areas. Resources and policies should be focussed towards the areas of most need, these being the older dwellings that are situated in Central and adjacent wards (Lodge Park and Abbey).
- 5.4 A snapshot survey took place during summer 2009 using face to face contact with customers, Redditch Borough Council's website and a postal/email survey of private tenants, landlords and owner occupiers to see which private sector housing services are seen as priority.
- 5.5 This survey shows that residents' top priorities are:
- a) Assistance to low-income households on property maintenance and helping arrange subsidised loans;

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- b) Returning empty properties back to use;
 - c) Helping older people and people with disabilities to live independently in their own homes by providing stairlifts, wider doorways, etc;
 - d) Advice on reducing energy use and combating fuel poverty.
- 5.6 To reflect the issues from the stock condition research and residents priorities this strategy has to two main strategic aims:
- a) Improve housing conditions in the private sector;
 - b) Give support and advice to private sector tenants and vulnerable households.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management - None identified.

Community Safety - Making homes decent and safe is a commitment of this private sector housing strategy.

Human Resources - None Identified.

Social Exclusion - This strategy aims to support and advise private tenants and vulnerable households. There are objectives in this strategy aimed at socially excluded groups.

Private landlord training and development increases awareness of issues affecting vulnerable groups.

7. Lessons Learnt

Without an evidenced Private Sector Housing Strategy, the Council may direct its private sector resources to issues that are not a high priority for the sector and receive a poor inspection rating.

8. Background Papers

None.

9. Consultation

Relevant Borough Council Officers.

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10. Author of Report

The author of the report is Alexandra Gittins (Housing Policy Officer) who can be contacted on extension 3225 (e-mail alexandra.gittins@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Action Plan of previous strategy with updates
Appendix 2 – BRE Indicator definitions
Appendix 3 – BRE Methodology

Executive Committee

Abbey Ward

3rd February 2010

FORMER COVERED MARKET – INITIAL OPTIONS APPRAISAL

(Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic & Property Services)

1. Summary of Proposals

To ask Members to consider the options available for the site of the former Covered Market.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

EITHER

- 1) the site be declared surplus to the Council's requirements; AND/OR
- 2) Property Services, in conjunction with Planning Services, be authorised to work up a detailed development brief to be reported to a future Executive Committee meeting; AND/OR
- 3) the Property Services Manager be authorised to secure any short term interim uses of the former covered market area that would generate income, subject to planning considerations and in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holder.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There is a small budget for repairs to the site of £2,900 for 2009/10.
- 3.2 Property Services have negotiated with the Valuation Office and have secured the site's removal from the rating list so that void rates are no longer payable.
- 3.3 Rent for uses such as a contractors' compound may generate additional revenue in the short term for the site until its future is decided.

Executive Committee

3rd February 2010

- 3.4 A capital receipt will be receivable if the site is disposed of for redevelopment but the level of such receipt will be dictated by the extent of any proposed scheme and the prevailing market conditions.

Legal

- 3.5 The Council is required to dispose of any interest in land including leases for the best consideration possible in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. A short lease of less than 7 years may, however, be let at less than best rental if the proposal supports the Council's policies / work.
- 3.6 The Council's title to the site is in the process of being registered under the Council's Voluntary Land Registration Programme and will be fully investigated by Legal Services as part of any detailed appraisal to assess any restrictions that may affect the site.

Policy

- 3.7 The Council's agreed Strategy for the Asset Management Plan is to ensure that asset holdings reflect organisational requirements to meet current service delivery needs.
- 3.8 The monitoring and review of the use of the Council's assets in supporting Value for Money delivery of services embraces the acquisition and disposal of property.
- 3.9 Planning Services have not supported previous applications for permanent car parking as this would be against current policy.
- 3.10 The Town Centre Strategy has been formally adopted by Members and recommends mixed use for the site including residential and café/restaurant offer.

Risk

- 3.11 The site is currently vacant and will continue to attract petty vandalism and ongoing maintenance if retained in its current status.
- 3.12 Marketing of the site in the current poor economic conditions may result in a reduced number of interested developers and a depressed capital value. It is possible that no acceptable interest would be generated and the site would be retained until the market improves.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.13 These matters would be fully addressed through the planning process and any development brief produced.

Report**4. Background**

- 4.1 Officers have been asked to consider options for the use or redevelopment of the former Covered Market site.
- 4.2 The original open market site in Royal Square was sold by the Council to Scottish Widows to allow the Kingfisher Centre extension which is now occupied predominantly by Debenhams.
- 4.3 Redditch Market was then temporarily sited in its current location on Market Place and Alcester Street whilst the Covered Market was being constructed.
- 4.4 The Covered Market was required to be constructed as part of the sale agreement and was opened in 2003 and Redditch Market then relocated from Market Place/Alcester Street.
- 4.5 The Covered Market location proved to be unpopular with shoppers and ultimately traders, resulting in a steady decline over several years.
- 4.6 Property Services undertook a review of the operation of Redditch Market in consultation with the remaining traders during early 2006. It quickly became evident that the Covered Market location was unsustainable and that the only feasible way Redditch Market could survive was to relocate to Market Place. Members' support for an initial 2 year trial was obtained in June 2006. The move proved to be successful, resulting in permanent planning permission being obtained in 2009.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 Property Services submitted a planning application for general car parking use on the Covered Market site in March 2007 but this was withdrawn as Planning Officers could not support this use even for a 2-3 year temporary term as it was against Local Plan Policy.
- 5.2 The owners of the Kingfisher Centre have been approached with a view to selling the site to them, but they have confirmed that they have no interest in acquiring or developing the site.

Executive Committee

3rd February 2010

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- 5.3 Other than occasional uses, there have been no long term Council uses identified for the site.
- 5.4 Officers on the Development Group have discussed alternative uses and have favoured a mixed retail and apartment development.
- 5.5 In March 2009 Arup working alongside market experts Jones Long La Salle and Urban Design Specialist Martin Brown were appointed by Redditch Borough Council to deliver a Town Centre Strategy (TCS) for Redditch effectively encompassing everything within the ring road and just beyond, including the Former Covered Market site.
- 5.6 The draft Strategy recommends that the former Covered Market site be utilised predominantly for a single aspect residential development with ancillary retail and restaurant/café offer.
- 5.7 Achieving the aspirations of the TCS in the current economic climate would be very challenging. Current professional opinion is that the residential market will improve slowly over the next 3-4 years and even then may not attain the same levels seen in 2007.
- 5.8 The only way to adjudge current interest would be to undertake some form of market testing which may or may not result in a developer coming forward. A Development Brief of some description or planning guidance would need to be produced before market testing could take place.
- 5.9 Interim uses may need to be considered in more detail if the site is to remain undeveloped for a lengthy period.
- 5.10 There will be resource implications in driving this project forward and a successful bid for revenue funding may be required if in due course a decision to proceed is taken.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management

The proposed disposals are in accordance with the current Asset Management Strategy Plan and have been appraised using good asset management practice guidelines.

Community Safety

The Town Centre Strategy addresses this issue in detail but any development will seek to reduce anti-social behaviour and will be built in accordance with "Secure by Design" principles.

Executive

Committee

3rd February 2010

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Human Resources | None other than Property, Planning and Legal Services' Officer time. |
| Social Exclusion | The proposal as part of the Town Centre Strategy will encourage social inclusion. |

7. Lessons Learnt

None indicated.

8. Background Papers

Relevant papers are held within the Property Services Team and Town Centre Strategy.

9. Consultation

There has been no specific consultation other than with relevant Borough Council Officers. Wider consultation has been undertaken in producing the Town Centre Strategy.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Rob Kindon (Property Services Manager), who can be contacted on extension 3303 (e-mail: rob.kindon@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

3rd February 2010

CORPORATE SICKNESS STATISTICS

(Report of the Head of Human Resources and Communications)

1. Summary of Proposals

To bring to Members' attention the current sickness statistics for the Council for the period July 2009 – Sept 2009 and to outline the work programme by Officers to assist in the reduction of these statistics.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) the statistics be noted; and
- 2) the programme outlined in the report to reduce sickness absence be approved.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There is a health and safety budget available. In addition funding can be obtained to target specific health promotions. There is a Service Level Agreement in place with WCC for the provision of Occupational Health services.
- 3.2 Additional costs could be incurred through agency staff to cover sickness absence.

Legal

- 3.3 The Council has a current Sickness Absence Policy. There are legal implications for the Council under Health and Safety at Work Act, "duty of care" for employees.

Policy

- 3.4 The sickness absence policy is currently under review as part of the Harmonisation of Polices we are undertaking with Bromsgrove District Council.

Executive Committee

3rd February 2010

Risk

- 3.5 There is a risk to service delivery and performance if there are high sickness levels in the organisation.
- 3.6 There are a number of changes taking place within the authority that could impact on the future absence levels. For example Job Evaluation and Shared Services.
- 3.7 The current outbreak of Swine Flu is likely to impact on future sickness absence levels

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.8 None

Report

4. Background

At the meeting of this Committee on 11 June 2008 Members requested a brief report be brought to alternate future meetings, outlining the current sickness absence statistics within the authority.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 Overview of sickness absence statistics are shown as Appendix 1. Details of current sickness absence statistics per department are shown at Appendix 2. A breakdown of reasons per department is shown as Appendix 3.
- 5.2 Sickness absence target for 09/10 is set at 8 days per FTE, the 1st quarter 1.83 and the 2nd quarter sickness absence outturn was 2.02 days per FTE, however the targets are not yet profiled to account for those quarters during the year when higher sickness absence levels are anticipated.
- 5.3 The numbers of employees who have been absent from work due to suspected or confirmed swine flu is 40 employees.
- 5.4 Payroll have issued a reminder to all employees and Managers to ensure sickness absence paperwork is completed and returned promptly as this impacts on the reporting of accurate sickness statistics .
- 5.5 Members requested at the Executive meeting in August for the figures to be compared to statistics available. The comparable data is shown below.

The DLA Piper benchmarking survey 2009

- 5.6 The survey directly compares Redditch absence levels to that of the average for Districts and All local authorities.
- 5.7 The survey identifies that we are comparable to other Districts and lower than that of the average for all Local Authorities.

Redditch **9.19 days** (June 2008 - May 2009)

Districts Average 9.1 days

All Local Authorities Average 10.5 days

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Absence Survey for 2009 reports

- 5.8 Public Sector 9.7 days per employee per year a slight decrease from the previous years figures of 9.8.
- 5.9 Private Sector 6.4 days per employee a decrease from previous year at 7.2 days.
- 5.9 CIPD report that a possible reason for the decrease in sickness levels was identified by employers are possibly due to increased employee concern over job security. 56% of organisations that participated in the survey have made redundancies in the last 12 months and 4 in 10 employers use absence data as part of the criterion when selecting for redundancy. Restricted sick pay is also identified as a contributing factor to the reduction in absence levels.
- 5.10 Sickness absence toolkit has been developed to assist managers managing staff through the sickness absence policy. The toolkit is available on the intranet.
- 5.11 Stress risk assessments have been introduced for all employees returning following a stress related absence. Managers are required to undertake the risk assessment with advice from Human Resources.
- 5.12 A trigger process has been implemented to ensure there is communication between, Payroll, HR Officer and Line Manager when an employee is absent with a stress related absence.

Executive Committee

3rd February 2010

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- 5.13 A close working relationship had been developed with the PCT and are working in partnership to promote health awareness and signpost employees to where specific support is available. In partnership with the PCT, a Breast Awareness talk for staff took place in October, further Health promotion events will be arranged throughout the year.
- 5.14 We are introducing letters to staff in recognition of their exemplary attendance record.

Future Development

- 5.15 The Sickness Absence policy will be reviewed in conjunction with BDC as part of the harmonizing of employment policies.
- 5.16 The payroll team will be embarking on reviewing payroll processes using the LEAN principles, sickness recording will be reviewed as part of the exercise to improve the recording of sickness absence to enable real time data to be available.
- 5.17 Sickness reporting will be reviewed when the HR21 (Kiosk system) which is planned to be introduced next year. The HR21 facility will enable the development of electronic forms and self service for employees.
- 5.18 A stress toolkit is being drafted to support managers who are working with employees who are absent from work due to stress. This will be referred to Health and Safety Committee.
- 5.19 The costs of a stress audit are currently being investigated.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management - None.

Community Safety - None.

Human Resources - Resources to support managers in the process, and arrangement of referrals.

Social Exclusion - None.

7. Lessons Learnt

None.

8. Background Papers

Records within Human Resources (some of which may be exempt).

9. Consultation

9.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.

9.2 Trade Union Representatives are also consulted.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Becky Barr, (Human Resources & Development Manager) who can be contacted on extension 3385 (e-mail: becky.barr@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

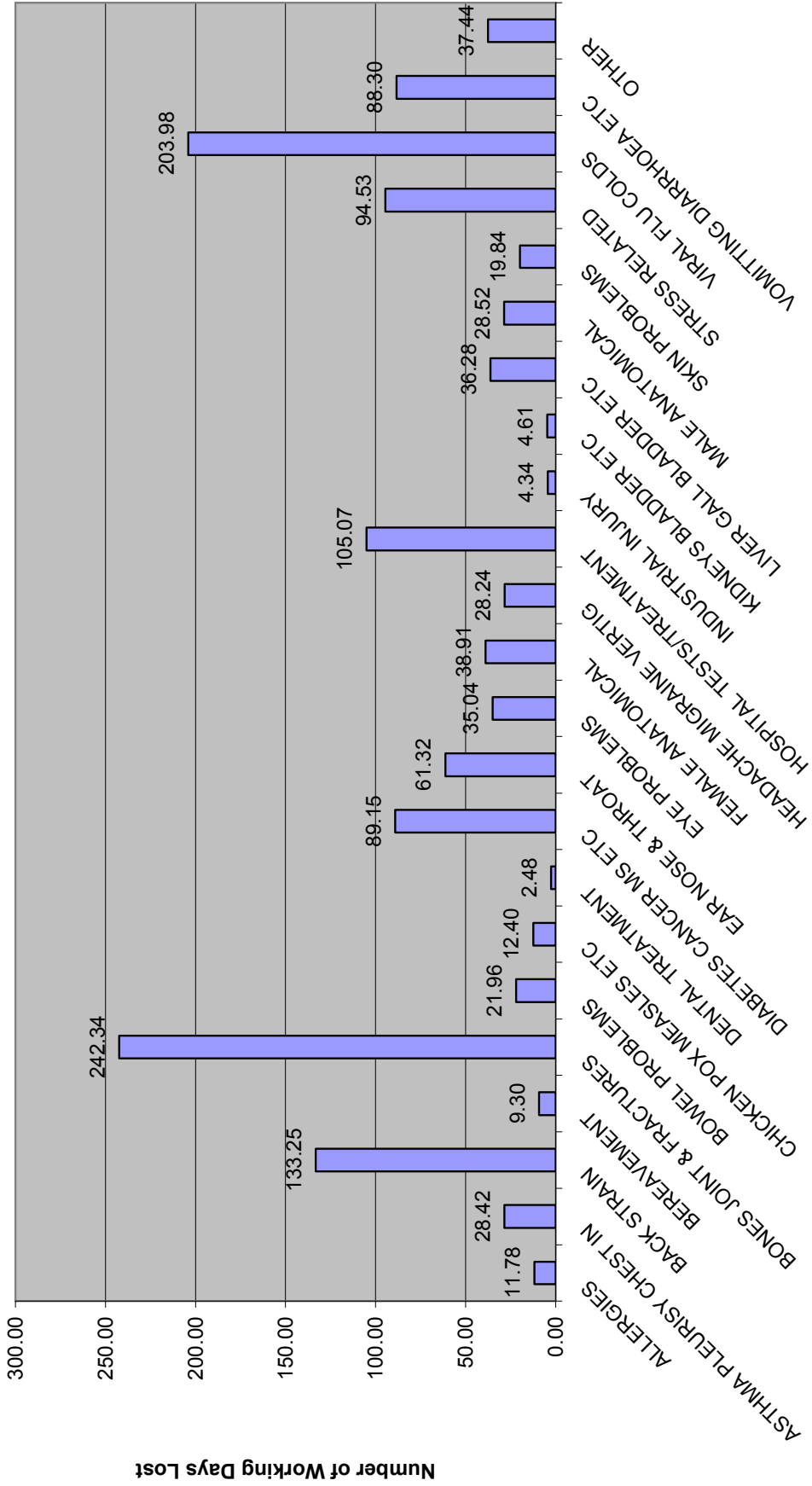
11. Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Overview of sickness absence statistics.
- Appendix 2 - Details of current sickness absence statistics per department.
- Appendix 3 - A breakdown of reasons per department.

Sickness Figures for 2009/2010 by Service

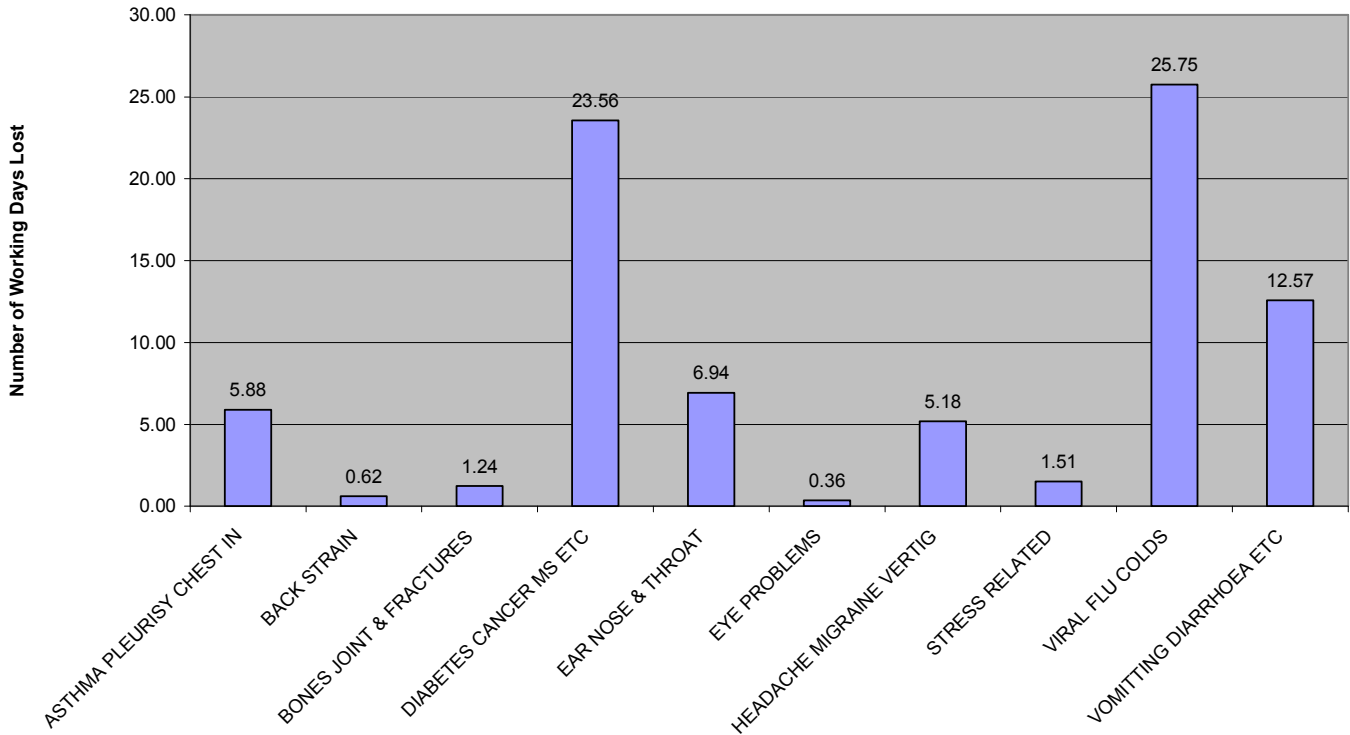
| SERVICE | Total FTE @ September 09 | Actual no of employees absent - September 09 | | Days per FTE - Year to Date | | Projected - per FTE | | | | | | | | | | | | Target 09/10 |
|---|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|--------------|
| | | Short term Absences up to 28 days | Long term Absences 29 days+ | Short term Absences up to 28 days | Long term Absences 29 days+ | Apr-09 | May-09 | Jun-09 | Jul-09 | Aug-09 | Sep-09 | Oct-09 | Nov-09 | Dec-09 | Jan-10 | Feb-10 | | |
| Legal, Democratic & Property Services | 5.00 | 139.76 | 3.19 | 33.42 | 32.48 | 32.48 | 45.88 | 45.88 | 45.88 | 43.82 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 121.16 | 2.76 | 22.42 | 9.61 | 9.61 | 31.72 | 31.72 | 31.72 | 43.88 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 18.60 | 0.42 | 18.60 | 28.83 | 18.60 | 0.00 | 22.34 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Finance, Revenues & Benefits | 15.00 | 169.51 | 2.76 | 57.68 | 59.70 | 59.40 | 63.08 | 61.39 | 61.39 | 61.39 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 150.91 | 2.46 | 41.72 | 28.70 | 30.86 | 12.01 | 24.26 | 13.36 | 13.36 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 18.60 | 0.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 18.60 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Asset & Maintenance | 11.00 | 181.83 | 2.71 | 87.68 | 89.70 | 83.20 | 68.06 | 67.04 | 67.04 | 67.04 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 181.83 | 2.71 | 43.67 | 27.28 | 18.50 | 17.98 | 61.38 | 13.02 | 13.02 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.50 | 0.30 | 0.22 | 0.26 | 0.90 | 0.19 | 0.19 | | | | | | | | |
| Housing & Community | 19.00 | 533.87 | 5.29 | 101.14 | 101.56 | 96.93 | 99.13 | 100.90 | 100.98 | 100.98 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 269.31 | 2.67 | 33.12 | 52.73 | 38.26 | 59.54 | 45.49 | 40.17 | 40.17 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 264.56 | 2.62 | 37.95 | 46.49 | 73.90 | 31.43 | 43.12 | 31.67 | 31.67 | | | | | | | | |
| Operations | 23.00 | 568.40 | 4.66 | 130.37 | 132.79 | 125.71 | 122.82 | 122.19 | 122.00 | 122.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 405.78 | 3.33 | 32.24 | 55.18 | 52.39 | 90.21 | 82.14 | 93.62 | 93.62 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 162.62 | 1.33 | 48.51 | 11.69 | 11.31 | 11.69 | 50.13 | 29.29 | 29.29 | | | | | | | | |
| Environment | 5.00 | 91.80 | 2.72 | 33.98 | 34.02 | 34.16 | 34.83 | 34.83 | 33.79 | 33.79 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 73.20 | 2.17 | 3.10 | 8.68 | 19.61 | 17.98 | 13.64 | 10.19 | 10.19 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 18.60 | 0.55 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Planning & Building Control | 1.00 | 23.33 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 23.33 | 1.00 | 7.44 | 4.98 | 2.50 | 4.42 | 0.62 | 3.37 | 3.37 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Strategy & Partnerships | 2.00 | 31.57 | 1.63 | 21.20 | 20.33 | 18.33 | 18.33 | 18.33 | 19.33 | 19.33 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 31.57 | 1.63 | 9.30 | 6.77 | 0.00 | 0.62 | 10.54 | 4.34 | 4.34 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| HR & Communications | 2.00 | 182.02 | 6.70 | 26.67 | 26.67 | 26.67 | 26.26 | 27.15 | 27.15 | 27.15 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 31.36 | 1.16 | 9.30 | 0.00 | 9.92 | 8.42 | 1.24 | 2.48 | 2.48 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 150.66 | 5.55 | 37.20 | 37.82 | 18.60 | 19.22 | 19.22 | 18.60 | 18.60 | | | | | | | | |
| Customer & IT | 4.00 | 135.88 | 3.38 | 41.96 | 41.92 | 40.30 | 40.32 | 40.32 | 40.25 | 40.25 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 135.88 | 3.38 | 31.70 | 18.60 | 9.12 | 41.67 | 9.92 | 24.87 | 24.87 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Leisure & Arts | 8.00 | 160.67 | 2.25 | 74.02 | 80.05 | 78.50 | 76.20 | 77.88 | 71.48 | 71.48 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 108.30 | 1.52 | 5.55 | 13.24 | 6.88 | 35.63 | 25.81 | 21.19 | 21.19 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 52.37 | 0.73 | 16.71 | 3.90 | 13.70 | 14.16 | 3.90 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Sure Start | 1.00 | 9.68 | 0.41 | 13.68 | 14.22 | 14.50 | 13.79 | 22.29 | 23.84 | 23.84 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 9.68 | 0.41 | 0.00 | 0.35 | 0.00 | 2.98 | 1.24 | 5.11 | 5.11 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Assistant Service | 0.00 | 10.82 | 1.09 | 0.00 | 10.75 | 10.75 | 10.16 | 10.16 | 9.97 | 9.97 | | | | | | | | |
| Short term Absences up to 28 days | | 10.82 | 1.09 | 0.62 | 0.00 | 10.20 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Long term Absences 29 days+ | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 644.39 | 1553.13 | 1115.63 | 399.15 | 354.85 | 361.63 | 399.68 | 419.84 | 373.76 | 373.76 | | | | | | | | |
| Total Short Term Absence YTD | | 1553.13 | | 240.18 | 226.12 | 206.92 | 323.18 | 281.13 | 275.60 | 275.60 | | | | | | | | |
| Total Long Term Absence YTD | | 686.01 | | 158.97 | 128.73 | 154.71 | 76.50 | 138.71 | 98.16 | 98.16 | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL Days lost YTD | | 2239.14 | 8.00 | 399.15 | 354.85 | 361.63 | 399.68 | 419.84 | 373.76 | 373.76 | | | | | | | | |
| BYP1 12 Sick Days Per FTE in Month | | | | 0.60 | 0.59 | 0.50 | 0.66 | 0.70 | 0.62 | 0.60 | | | | | | | | |
| 2009-10 | | 2308.91 | | 1115.63 | | | | | 1193.28 | | | | | 0.00 | | | 0.00 | |
| 2008-09 | | 5653.10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.00 | | | 0.00 | |
| Year | | Annual | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Redditch Borough Council - Reasons for Sickness (July - September 09)

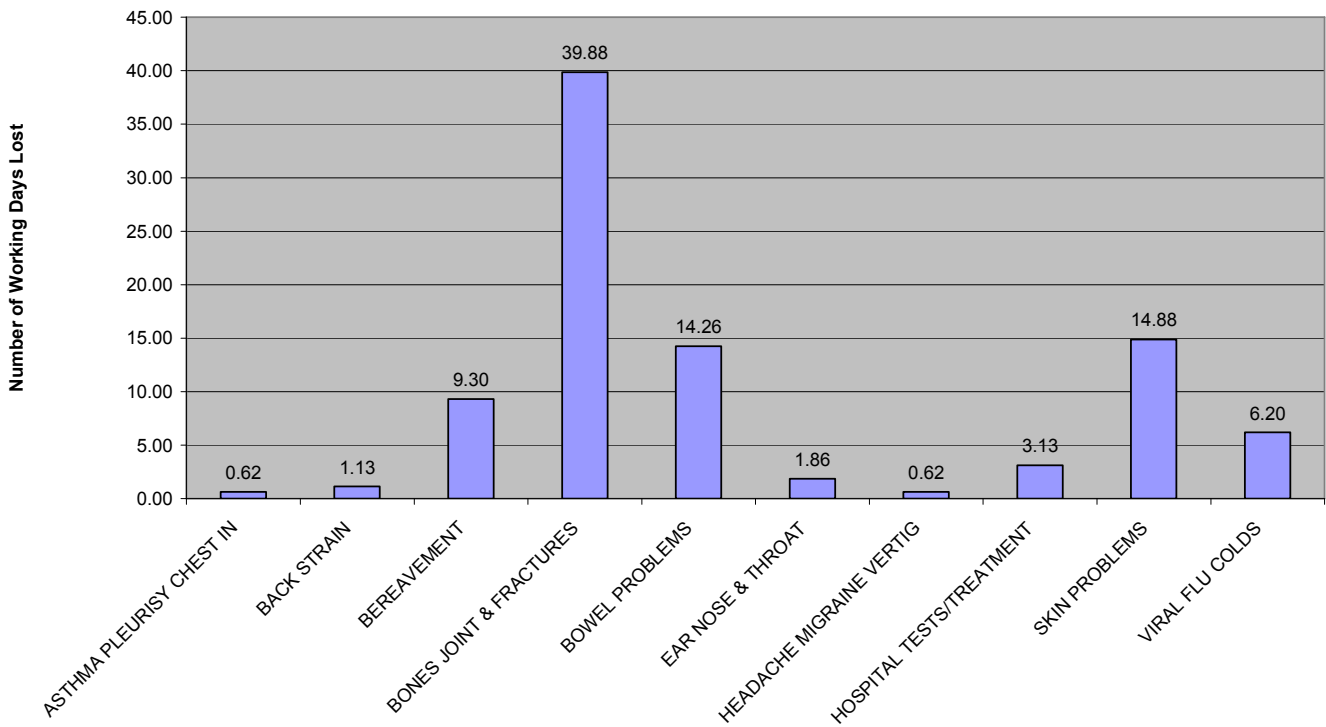


Appendix 3

Finance, Revenues & Benefits (July - September)

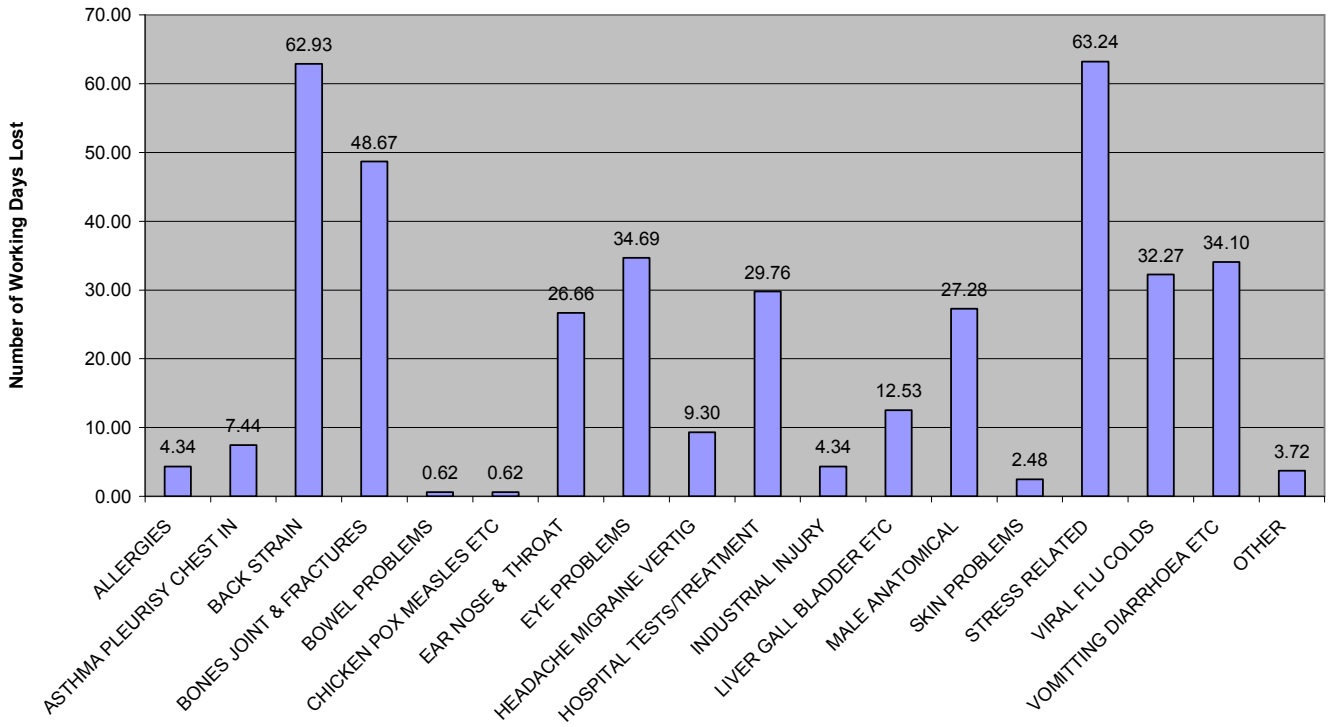


Legal, Democratic & Property Services (July - September)

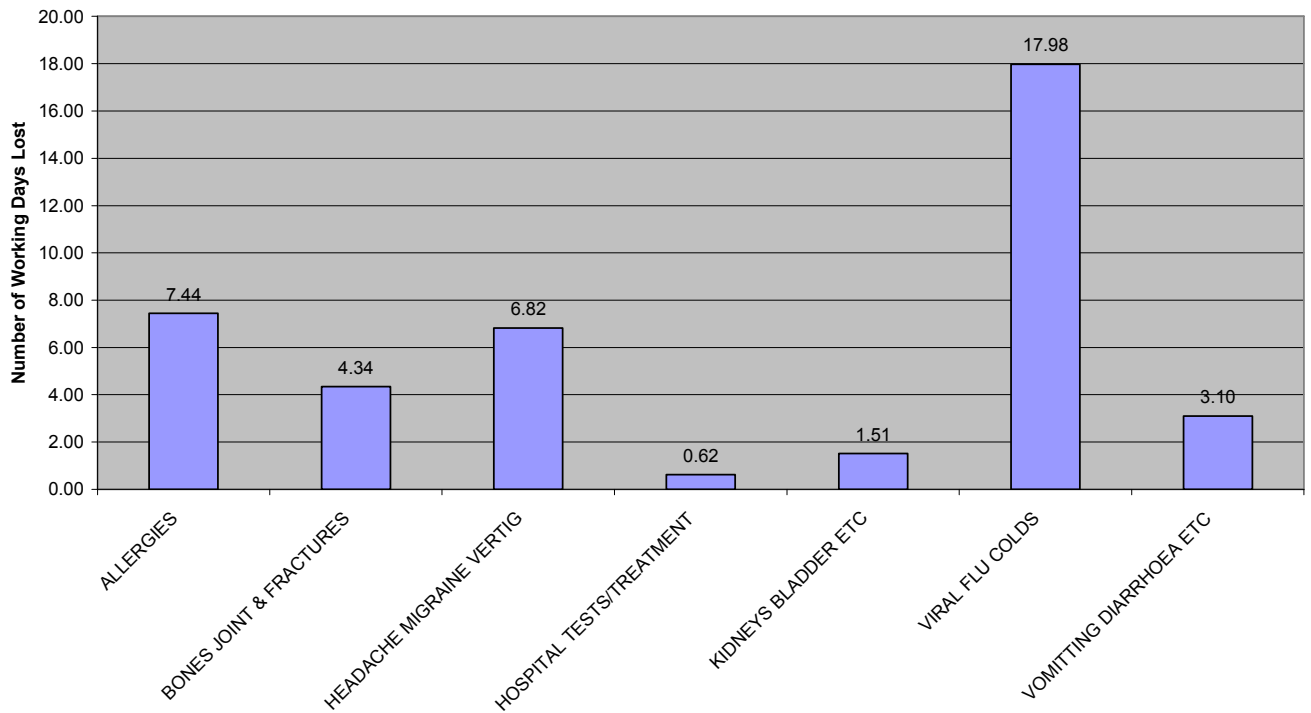


Appendix 3

Operations (July - September)

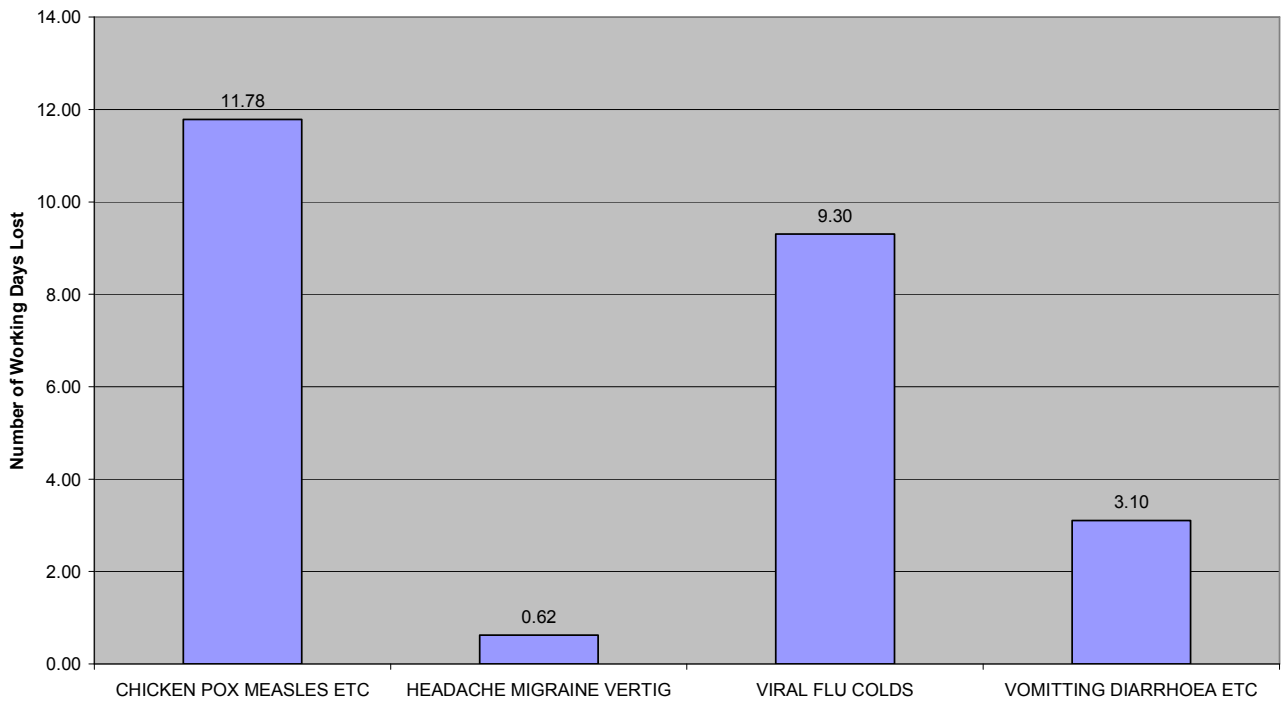


Environment (July - September)

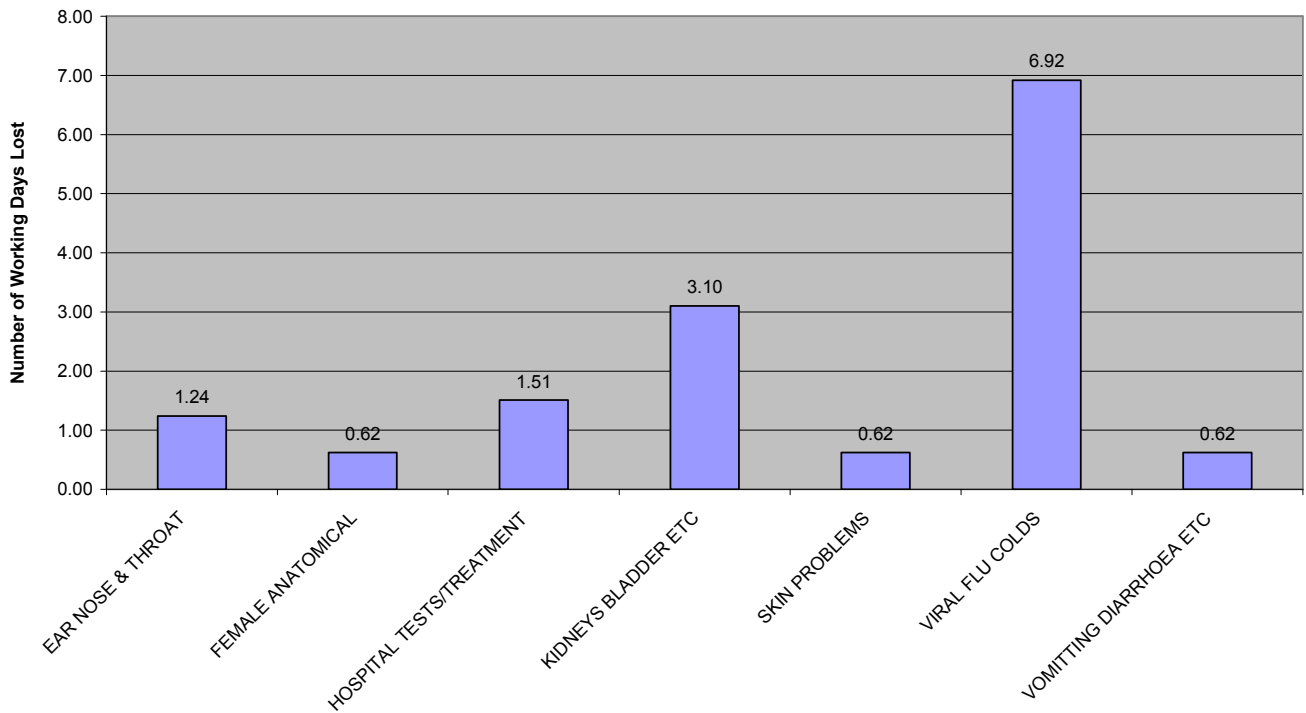


Appendix 3

Strategy & Partnerships (July - September)

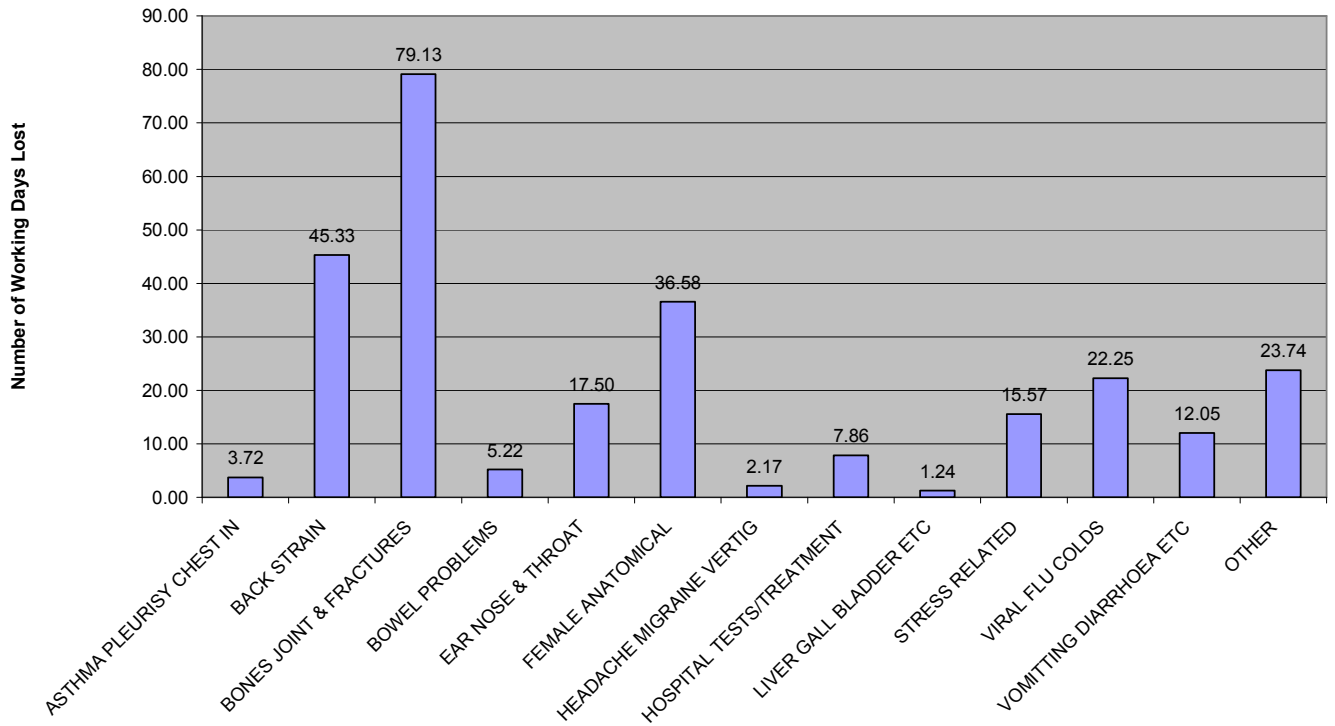


Planning & Building Control (July - September)

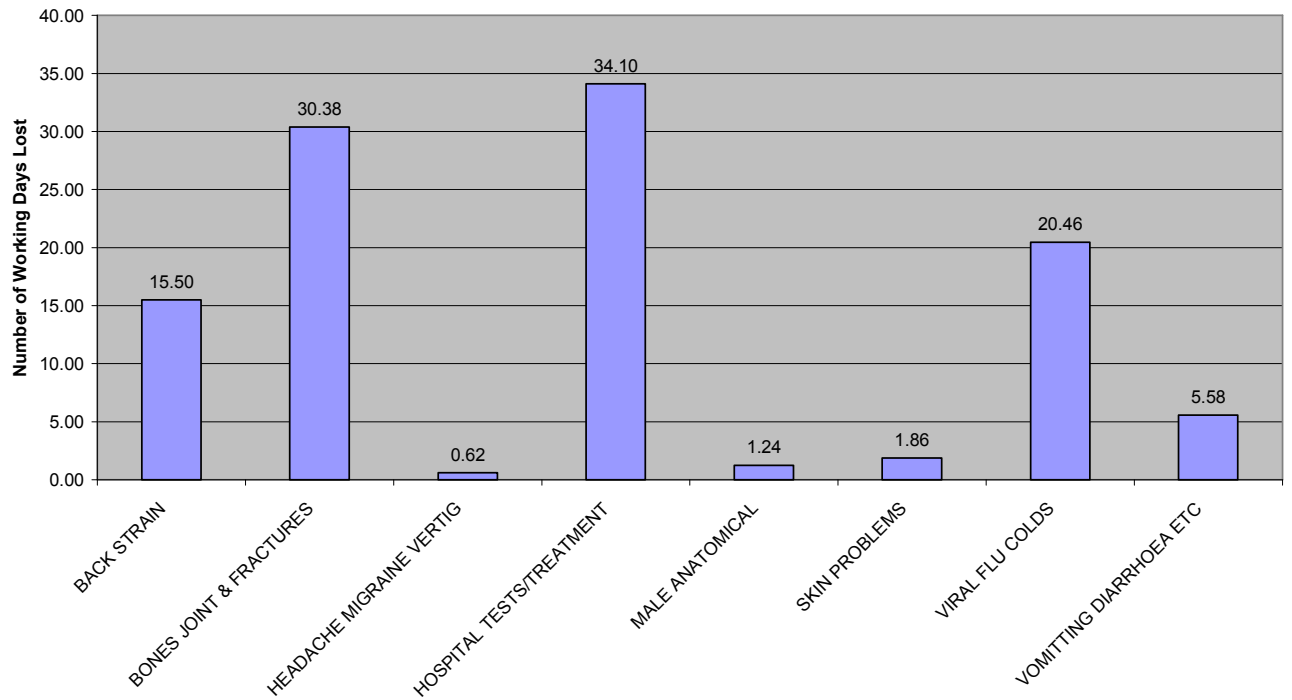


Appendix 3

Housing & Community Services (July - September)

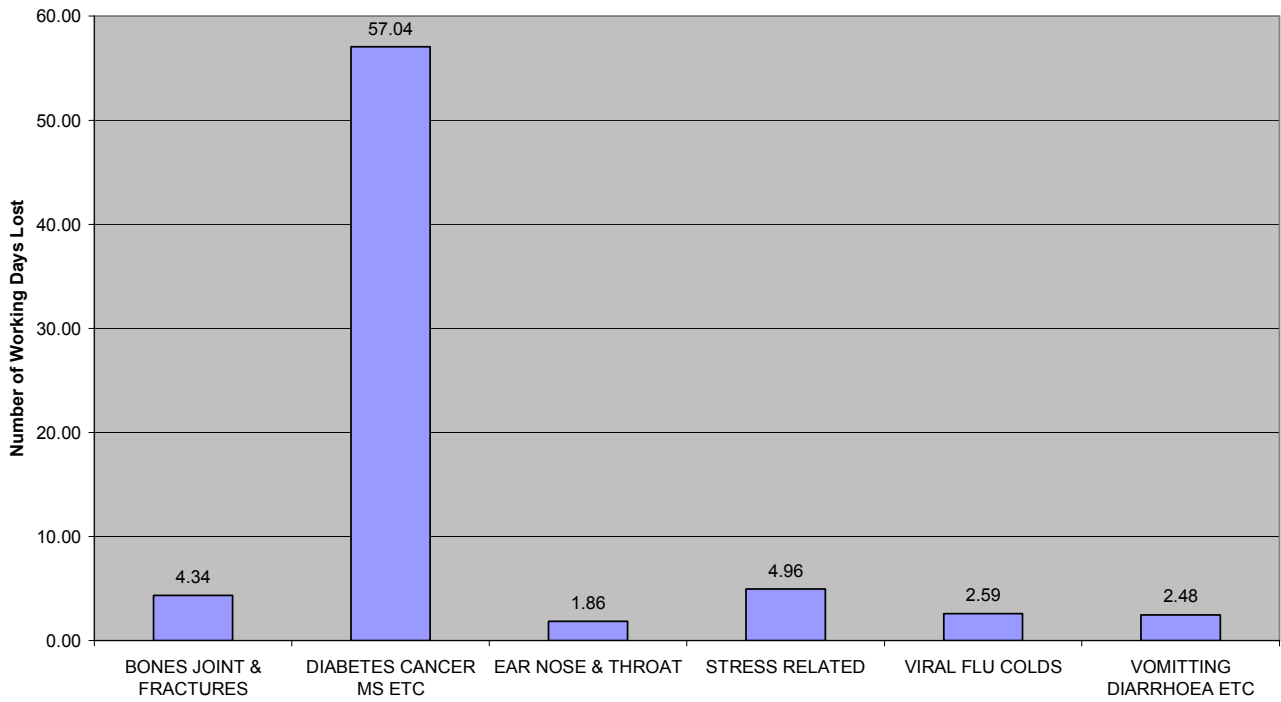


Asset & Maintenance (July - September)

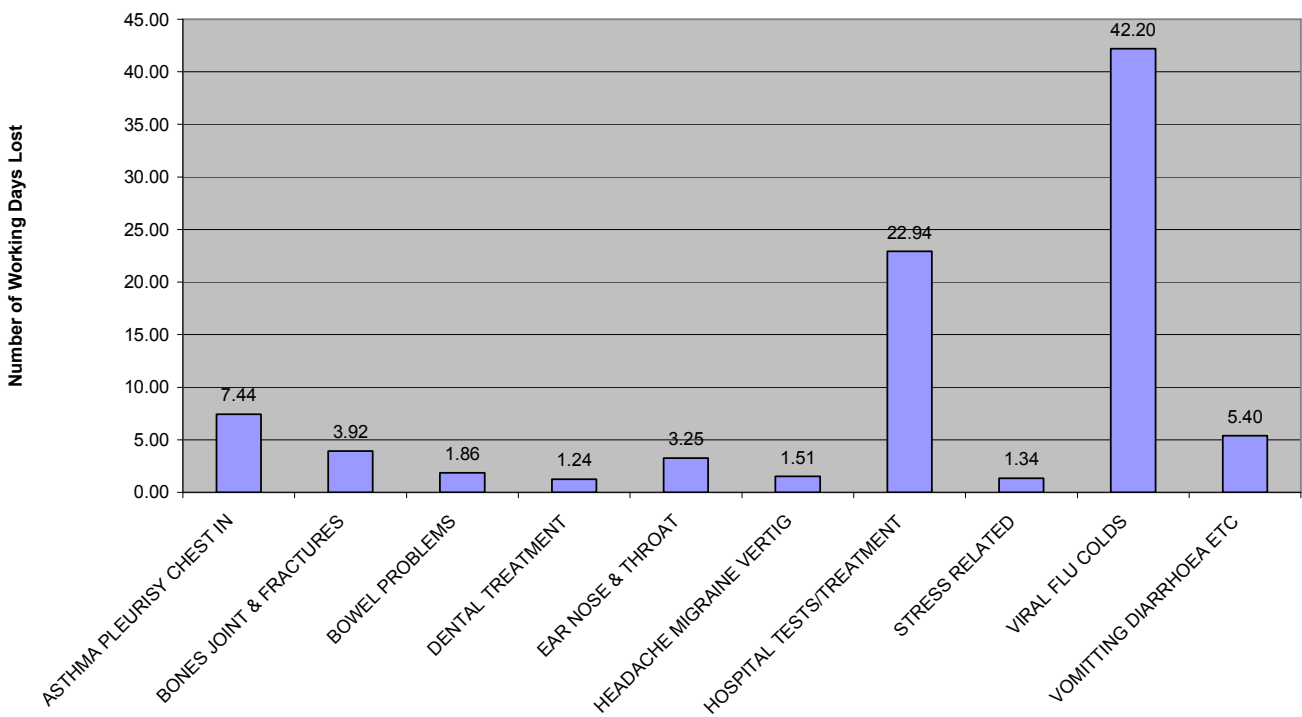


Appendix 3

HR & Communications (July - September)

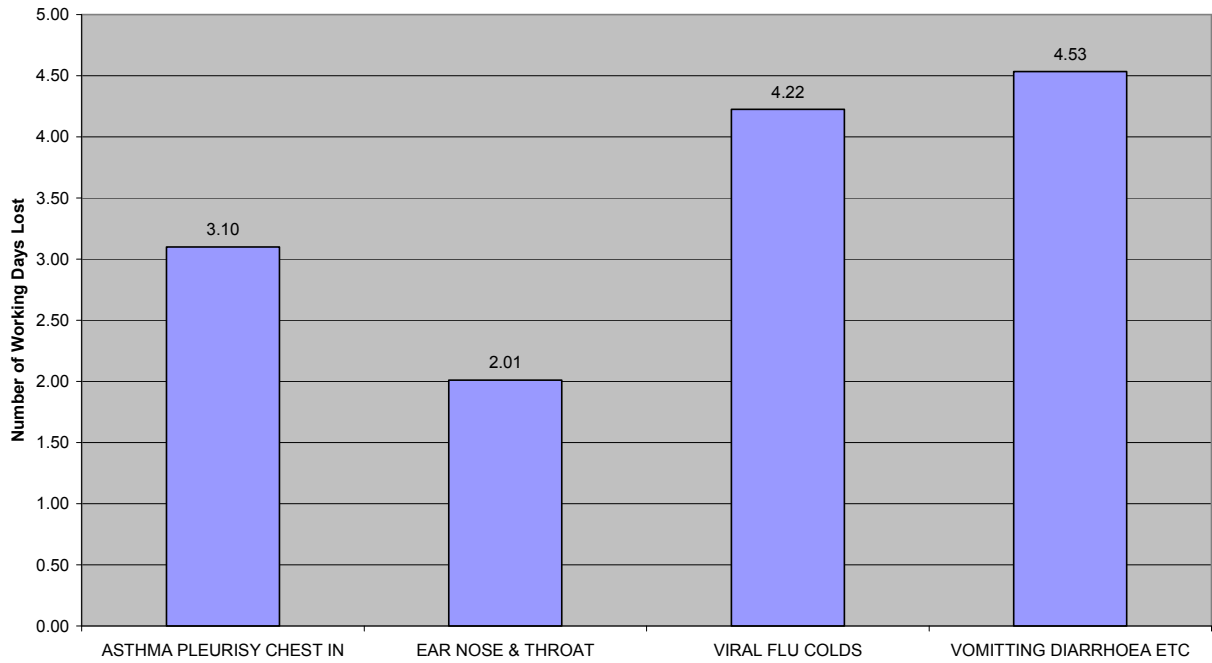


Customer & IT Services (July - September)



Appendix 3

Sure Start (July - September)



Leisure & Arts (July - September)

