

<b>HR Advisor LGR</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>This report seeks approval to increase the current HR Advisor establishment by seven hours per week, enabling recruitment to a full-time, permanent HR Advisor post and ensuring sufficient capacity to support the organisation with ongoing demands.</p> <p>Key performance indicators show an increase in total sickness absence from 2,195 days (2024/25) to 2,409 days (2025/26), with long-term sickness rising from 738 days to 1,267 days, alongside sustained turnover (31 leavers in 2024/25; 34 in 2025/26).</p> <p>Additional HR resource will help maintain consistent advice across all services, support managers through complex long-term absence cases, and strengthen recruitment and case management ahead of upcoming legislative change.</p>
<b>Options considered</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase the headcount of the department by 7 hours to allow consistency in levels of advice and support across all service areas</li> <li>2. To maintain the headcount of the department</li> </ol>
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	No consultation has taken place.
<b>Recommendations</b>	For to approve Option 1 – increase to the establishment by 7 hours per week to allow for recruitment to a full-time permanent HR Advisor post
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	To allow the team to provide timely, efficient and professional HR Advice to all service areas
<b>Background papers</b>	N/A

<b>Wards affected</b>	List any affected wards
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Include all relevant portfolio holder(s) here Cllr Tim Adams
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Susan Sidell, HR Manager

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	A strong, responsible and accountable council
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A
Council Policies & Strategies	N/A

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>
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Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	N/A

## 1. Purpose of the report

The report seeks to outline a proposal to request an additional seven hours per week to allow for recruitment to a full-time permanent HR Advisor post.

## 2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1. The HR Team currently consists of three HR Advisors (2.8 FTE) to provide advice, support and guidance to the Organisation on all people related matters.
- 2.2. With the increase in activity in relation to LGR and an increase in business-as-usual work, specifically an increase in sickness absence and recruitment activity this is putting additional pressure on the business-as-usual activity within the team.

## 3. Proposals and Options

- 3.1. Maintaining the current headcount of the HR Team is an option however with the increase in business-as-usual work specifically in sickness absence classed as long term which requires a great input of HR support.
- 3.2. In the financial year 2024/25 sickness absence in NNDC totalled 2195 days with 738 of these being attributed to long term sickness defined as sickness lasting for 28 days or longer. In 2025/26 sickness absence in NNDC totalled 2409 with 1267 of these being attributed to long term sickness. This is an increase of 529 days of long-term sickness absence.
- 3.3. HR Advisors are currently involved in all sickness cases from the 28 day point to provide advice and guidance to line managers and support to those not able to attend work. This requires attendance at a number of meetings, Occupational Health referrals, meeting notes and outcome letters, in addition to advice to managers on the process and pre-meets as required. All of which have a significant impact on the ability of the team to provide advice and support in relation to other people related matters.
- 3.4. In the period 2024/25 31 officers left NNDC employment, in the period 2025/26 34 officers left NNDC employment. Recruitment is a significant part of the HR Advisor role and with the upcoming changes through the Employment Rights Act 2025 including the changes to unfair dismissal rights the importance of right first-time recruitment becomes more of a concern.
- 3.5. Employee Relations cases both formal and informal place a significant pressure on the team. With the current structure of one post being filled on a part time basis having an impact on the time taken to complete investigations

and further processes, impacting on not only the HR team but the subject of the investigation and any complainant.

- 3.6. The recruitment to three full time posts would allow the distribution of resource heavy case work to be split more evenly across the team providing greater resilience and support to the wider workforce.

#### **4. Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1. To allow the HR Team to support the service areas in successful recruitment, onboarding and retention of officers, particularly in key roles to ensure successful achievement of Corporate Priorities.
- 4.2. To ensure timely investigation and management of grievance, disciplinary and capability casework.

#### **5. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 5.1. The cost of an additional 7 hours at the top of a grade 7 will be as below, please note this is in line with the current pay scales (2025/26) and is inclusive of oncosts. Please note the post is currently included in the establishment as a 30 hour per week post and the below costs are for an increase to 37 hours per week only.

01.07 – 31.12.2026 £5,632.72

01.01 – 31.12.2027 £11,265.43

01.01 – 31.03.2028 £2,816.36

**Total £19,714.51**

- 5.2. Following discussions with the appropriate member of the finance team and the Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, it is understood there is a possibility of funding this from the Organisational Development Reserve.

##### **Comments from the S151 Officer:**

Increased demand from changes in legislation and the new requirement for more proactive support is driving establishment growth. Additionally increasing capacity and resilience in the team will reduce the overall risk to service delivery.

Budget growth will be partially offset by in year savings from the current vacancy and the balance funded from reserves.

#### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1. There are no additional legal implications in the recruitment of this post.
- 6.2. This is an establishment post at 30 hours per week, with an existing job description.

## **Comments from the Monitoring Officer**

***The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section. They will outline any legal advice provided.***

This report seeks to increase the establishment of the HR department by 7 hours (thereby making all HR advisers full-time) to address current and anticipated capacity pressures, to deal with increase in sickness, recruitment, and upcoming legislative changes.

The proposal is that this increase be funded (either fully or in part) by use of the Organisational Development Reserve.

## **7. Risks**

7.1. N/A

## **8. Net Zero Target**

8.1. N/A

## **9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

9.1. It is proposed this post will be advertised and recruited to in accordance with NNDC's recruitment guidelines and current employment law.

## **10. Community Safety issues**

10.1. N/A

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

To approve the request to increase the establishment and budget by 7 hours per week to 37 hours for the post 2394 HR Advisor.