

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 2 APRIL 2008

MANAGING ABSENCE – PILOT PROJECT FOR EMPLOYEE REFERRAL

Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to the extension of the current Managing Absence Pilot which is currently underway in Facilities Management (Onsite Services) and consequently approval for the extension of the negotiated contract with the service provider Active Health Partners.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 23 November 2006 the then Corporate Governance Committee agreed that a Pilot Absence Management Project should undertaken within Onsite Services. In approving the Pilot it was agreed that a further report would be submitted at the end of the Pilot in order to consider what action to take thereafter.
- 2.2 The Pilot commenced in February 2007 and covered a Pilot Group of 500 employees.
- 2.3 The Council contracted, on a negotiated basis, with Active Health Partners to provide the service which involves employees within the Pilot group contacting a 24 hour contact centre in order to report that they are unable to attend work due to ill health. When they report to the Contact Centre they discuss their absence with an occupational health adviser who then informs their supervisor direct of the employee's absence and anticipated date of return. This notification is done by e-mail and/or SMS messaging.
- 2.4 Prior to returning to work the employee contacts the Contact Centre to confirm date of return.
- 2.5 Early indications are that there have been benefits arising from the Pilot including:-
- Positive response from employees to the system
 - The provision of good management information; and
 - Reductions in absence levels in the Pilot Group compared to the Control Group
- 2.5 Whilst early indications are positive, the full evaluation has yet to be completed and to allow this to be done it is proposed that the Pilot be extended for a further period until July 2008.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 It is therefore proposed that the current Pilot be extended until 31 July 2008 following which a further report will be submitted to Cabinet containing a full evaluation.

3.2 On the basis that the proposal to extend the timescale for completion of the pilot is acceptable it will also be necessary to extend the terms of the contract with Active Health Partners, principally in relation to the overall contract costs.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 At the outset the overall costs of the pilot were expected to be £28,000. However given the proposal to extend the pilot that anticipated overall costs are now expected to be not to exceed £36,650. These additional costs of extending the Pilot can be met from existing resources within the Department of Corporate Support.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Cabinet is asked to;

- i. approve the recommendation that the current Absence Management Pilot be extended until 31 July 2008;
- ii approve the extension of the existing contract with Active Health Partners; and
- ii. otherwise note the contents of this report.

Elizabeth Morton
**Depute Chief Executive/
Executive Director of Corporate Support**

MHR/CH
25 March 2008

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Managing Absence – Pilot Project for Employee Referral – Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support – Corporate Governance Committee – 28 September 2006

Anyone wishing further information should contact Martin Rose, Head of Personnel on 01563 576092