

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2026

Councillors Present: Matt Shakespeare (Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Jeff Brooks and Clive Hooker

Also Present: Councillor Laura Coyle (attending remotely), Councillor Vicky Poole, Olimpia Byrne, Nikki Davies (Wellbeing Officer), Vicky Holland (Human Resources Officer), Rebecca Hopkins (Human Resources Officer) and Martyn Sargeant (Service Director (Strategy & Governance)), Councillor Laura Coyle, Councillor Vicky Poole, Olimpia Byrne, Karen Turner and Sam Chiverton (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Antony Amirtharaj

Councillor(s) Absent: Councillor Biyi Oloko

PART I

5. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2025 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Adrian Abbs advised that he had been lobbied in relation to various items on the agenda.

7. Actions Arising From Previous Meetings

Members reviewed the actions from previous meetings. The following points were noted:

- Officers undertook to provide a written report to Members on actions from the meeting on 14 January 2025.
- It was noted that an update on the vacant posts would be provided later in the meeting.
- Officers advised that the ideal average UK turnover rate was 14% or lower. This was not specific to Civil Service staff. According to the CIPD, in spring 2025, average annual turnover rate in the UK was 15%. Members asked for further detail on how the turnover rate varied by industry.
- Officers advised that there were 97 internal staff movements between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. Members suggested that this be shown as a percentage of the roles that the authority had filled for future reports.
- It was confirmed that the main reasons for leaving the Council were retirement, followed by work conditions, workload and salary.
- Concern was expressed at the low number of exit interviews completed. Officers outlined the current process with options for both online forms and face-to-face exit interviews. Members requested an action plan to improve participation.

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- Officers confirmed that they were investigating whether iTrent could facilitate maintaining contact with leavers and undertook to report back at the next meeting.
- It was noted that the Employee Value Proposition included information on reward and recognition, which contributed to retention, but there was nothing specific on retention at present.
- It was reported that 31 agency workers were permanently employed in 2023/24 and 20 in 2024/25. Officers agreed to investigate how many agency workers were continuously employed across financial years.
- In relation to sickness absence, officers reported the UK average was 9.5 days per employee (September 2025), with the average for public services at 13.3 days. The council's figures were below this average.
- Officers reported that analysis on mental health sickness by department remained outstanding.
- A briefing had been sent to members on pastoral care and officers summarised the multi-layered approach to employee wellbeing and support.
- Members noted that 19% of survey respondents strongly disagreed that everyone had an equal opportunity to develop. It was noted that this was being discussed through the Employee Engagement Forum. Members asked for further analysis to as to whether diverse employees felt disadvantaged.
- With regards to calculating the cost of staff sickness, officers suggested this would be difficult and suggested focusing on managing the sickness rate itself.
- It was agreed that the Executive Director for Adult Social Care be invited to the next meeting to provide an update on sickness absence.
- It was confirmed that the Executive Director for Resources would be invited to a future meeting to outline the appraisal process.
- Officers indicated that the percentage of staff receiving an appraisal would be included as a KPI for Q1 2026/27
- Testing was underway regarding uploading of appraisal documents to iTrent and officers undertook to provide an update to the next meeting.
- It was noted that some staff were off sick or on maternity leave during the 6 month period over which mandatory training had been monitored. It was confirmed that managers received regular notifications of which members of their teams had not completed their mandatory training.
- Members raised concerns about the number of Microsoft licences versus staff headcount and requested further clarification.

Actions:

- **Provide further breakdown on how turnover rate varied by industry.**
- **Show internal staff movements as a percentage of roles filled.**
- **Develop an action plan to improve participation in the exit interview process.**
- **Investigate how many agency workers were continuously employed across financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.**
- **Provide further analysis regarding employees' concerns about a lack of equal opportunities for development.**

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- Provide an update on sickness in ASC to the next meeting.
- Provide an outline of the appraisal process to a future meeting.
- Clarification to be provided regarding the number of Microsoft licences purchased across the Council.

8. Statutory Pay Policy 2026/27

Olympia Byrne (HR Services Manager) presented the Statutory Pay Policy. (Agenda Item 5.)

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members raised concerns regarding the completeness, transparency, and governance of the Statutory Pay Policy (SPP), and questioned the use of the term "chief officers", noting that the Localism Act provides a specific definition, whereas the council appeared to use the term more broadly to include service leads and managers. It was suggested that different terminology should be used to avoid confusion. Officers indicated that the terminology was largely prescribed but agreed to consider providing additional clarity in future reports.
- It was requested that senior officer roles and their delegated powers be clearly published and defined, including in the management structure charts and glossary. It was highlighted that Part 12 of the Constitution was inconsistent with the SPP. Officers confirmed that the Scheme of Delegation was in the process of being reviewed and would come to Council for approval later in the year.
- Members asked whether all officer roles with remuneration packages above £100,000 had been approved by Full Council. Officers explained that due to pay awards, some Service Leads' salaries now exceeded the threshold. These would require Full Council approval from April onwards. Members requested confirmation from the Monitoring Officer as to whether the Council was constitutionally compliant regarding approval of these roles.
- Members noted the impracticality of requiring Full Council approval every time a role crossed the £100,000 threshold due to pay inflation, particularly given the frequency of Council meetings.
- Assurance was provided that when the SPP was considered by Council later in the year, officers would bring forward proposals for any new posts falling within the threshold, including those arising from ongoing restructures such as the Business Support Review.
- Members requested that any significant changes to the SPP from previous years be clearly flagged in the introduction to assist Members. Officers confirmed that the main update was to pay grades, reflecting the pay award, and that any further material changes would be highlighted in future.
- Members asked if the £10,000 Market Supplement Policy payment was a one-off or ongoing, and what the process was for awarding it. Officers explained that a separate market supplement procedure existed, and roles must have undergone through two failed recruitment rounds to be eligible. The payment was reviewable, dependent on the role, with details set out in the procedure.
- Further details were sought on costs associated with new Chief Officer appointments, including recruitment and exit costs. Officers stated that such details were not typically included in the SPP due to its prescribed format. It was stated that the Committee's role was not to provide detailed financial breakdowns of personnel

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changes, and that such requests be directed to the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder or Finance Officers.

- Members queried the £3,000 payment referenced in the recruitment and retention section, asking whether it applied to all staff after one year of service. Officers clarified that it applied only to certain hard-to-fill roles within Children and Family Services.

Actions:

- **Publish details of senior officer roles and delegated powers, addressing any inconsistencies between the SPP, the Constitution and other documents.**
- **Monitoring Officer to confirm whether the council is constitutionally compliant regarding the approval of roles with salaries over £100,000.**
- **Monitoring Officer to provide reassurance on the process for Council approval of high-value roles at the next meeting.**

RESOLVED to note the report.

9. **Update on HR Activity Q1 and Q2 - 2025/2026**

Karen Turner (HR Business Partner Manager) presented the HR Activity Report for Quarter 1 and 2 (Agenda Item 6).

The following points were raised in the debate:

- The Committee welcomed the fact that the sickness rate was trending downwards but noted that the turnover rate was increasing slightly.
- Members questioned the value of providing projected annualised turnover figures, since these were subject to seasonal variation, and requested comparison of projected and annual figures in future reports.
- Members requested that future reports provide details of agency workers in care homes, as well as those outside care homes, to give a more comprehensive overview. It was noted that the proportion of agency workers at Birchwood Care Home had reduced to 10%. The reduction in agency worker expenditure was welcomed.
- It was highlighted that previous reports had included a table detailing the number of training courses offered and their uptake, which appeared to be missing from the current report. Members requested that this table be reinstated in future reports, with similar data provided for appraisals.
- The positive trend in job applications was welcomed. However, it was noted that the increase could be influenced by broader economic conditions, not solely the Council's recruitment efforts.
- It was noted that feedback from applicants about the recruitment process had been positive. Members asked about the dropout rate for applicants who started but did not complete the process and suggested that this would be a useful KPI.

Actions:

- **Include actual vs projected turnover in future reports.**
- **Provide the average number of agency workers in care homes, as well as those outside care homes in future report**
- **Reinstate the table detailing the number of training courses offered and their uptake in future reports.**

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- **Provide a table on appraisals completed, in future reports.**

RESOLVED to note the report.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting Tuesday, 14 July 2026.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature