

DRAFT

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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 2026

Councillors Present: Jeff Brooks (Chairman), Patrick Clark, Heather Codling (Vice-Chairman), Iain Cottingham, Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Tom McCann, Justin Pemberton and Vicky Poole

Also Present: Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Dominic Boeck, Richard Somner, Howard Woollaston, Clive Hooker, David Marsh, Carolyne Culver, Adrian Abbs, Clive Taylor, Billy Drummond, Janine Lewis and Tony Vickers

Officers Present: Melanie Booth (Group Executive), Sarah Clarke (Executive Director – Resources), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Service Lead – Financial, Reporting and Property), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director – Children’s Services), Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director – Place), Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Thomas Radbourne (Democratic Services Officer), Nicola Thomas (Service Lead – Legal and Democratic)

PART I

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

2. Potential Redundancies - Establishment Changes

Councillor Iain Cottingham introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 3), which sought approval for a number of potential redundancy payments following consultation upon a number of internal restructures. The primary focus was explained to be streamlining operations to ensure that the Council remained financially sustainable amidst ongoing financial pressures.

Councillor Cottingham reported that the proposal involved the elimination of 37.45 full-time equivalent posts, which had been vacant for some time and would not be recruited against. This was expected to deliver a saving of £1.64 million. The redundancies were projected to result in annual salary cost savings of approximately £400,000.

Councillor Cottingham highlighted that there had been an update to section 3 of the report with the maximum pension contributions rising to £1.7 million.

Councillor Stuart Gourley urged that the proposal be treated in an empathetic manner and that staff be treated with respect.

In response to a query from Councillor Ross Mackinnon, it was confirmed that none of the roles at risk were part of the recent drive to convert agency to full time staff.

Councillor Mackinnon suggested that the Executive lead by example and reduce in number from ten to nine. Councillor Jeff Brooks responded that the Executive membership was under constant review.

Councillor Dominic Boeck addressed Councillor Heather Codling and queried whether it was anticipated that there would be a deterioration in the services delivered to children and young people. Councillor Codling did not anticipate any deterioration and commented that whilst posts would be removed the re-organisation would put the service in a better position ultimately.

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Councillor Adrian Abbs queried why the Executive was making people redundant when there would be a natural 30% turnover of staff each year. Councillor Cottingham explained that the proposal aimed to address financial pressures and to ensure the organisation was fit for purpose. It was noted that the changes would involve the creation of new roles to meet statutory requirements and address emerging challenges, particularly in areas such as property management and statutory services.

Councillor Mackinnon queried how the loss of roles within Children's Services would not lead to a deterioration in service. Councillor Codling responded that the re-organisation was required in order to meet the statutory reforms being introduced by government, and that whilst some redundancies might be unavoidable, efforts would be made to minimise the impact on individuals by offering alternative positions within the organisation.

Councillor Boeck commented that well performing areas of Children's Services were likely to be diminished by the proposals and requested assurance that the exemplary services would not be degraded. Councillor Codling responded that she had been assured by officers that there would be no degradation to the service.

Councillor David Marsh requested assurances that there would be no compulsory redundancies. Councillor Cottingham clarified that specific roles and posts had been identified for redundancy and that they would be compulsory.

In response to a request from Councillor Clive Taylor, Councillor Cottingham provided assurances that there would be further formal consultations with Unison should the recommendation be approved.

Councillor Brooks seconded the recommendation within the report, and provided further assurance that there would be no deterioration in services.

Recommendation: (Vote to be taken in Part II).

3. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, specified in brackets in the heading of each item. [Section 10 of Part 10 of the Constitution refers.](#)

4. Potential Redundancies - Establishment Changes Appendix

(Paragraph 1 – information relating to any individual)

(Paragraph 2 – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual)

(Paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial/business affairs of a particular person)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 5), which sought approval for a number of potential redundancy payments following consultation upon a number of internal restructures.

RESOLVED that: Executive agreed authorisation of the redundancy payments fully detailed in the Part II Appendix.

Other options considered: consideration was given to not proceeding with the proposals. This option was ruled out as there was a clear business need to ensure that Departments were appropriately structured to meet statutory duties and to respond effectively to support the Council priorities. The existing structures do not support this so doing nothing is not an option.

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The proposed changes could be delayed. This is not recommended as it would have an adverse impact on the operation of the teams in question and would also negatively impact the Council's ability to deliver savings

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.30 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature