

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 11 February 2026.

PRESENT: Councillor A Blackwell – Chair.

Councillors S Cawley, L Davenport-Ray, P A Jordan, P Kadewere, D N Keane and C Lowe.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S A Howell.

19. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22nd October 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

21. WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT (QUARTER 2)/ (QUARTER 3)

The Committee received and noted reports for Quarters 2 and 3 on Human Resources (HR) matters impacting on the performance of the Council during the periods 1st July 2025 to 30th September 2025 and 1st October 2025 to 31st December 2025. The reports included the latest position and trends relating to employee numbers, salary costs and sickness absence. Copies of the reports are appended in the Minute Book.

The Committee heard that the workforce totalled 689, the fulltime equivalent (FTE) working out at 635.84 Officers in Quarter 2. In Quarter 3, the workforce totalled 688, the fulltime equivalent working out at 636.25 Officers. The figure for Quarter 2 represented an increase from the previous Quarter. The periods ended with an underspend of £1.65 million and an overspend of £1.9 million on Contractor and Agency costs.

It was confirmed that 33 individuals left the Council in Quarter 2 which was a slight increase from the previous Quarter when 25 employees left. 31 individuals left in Quarter 3. The overall turnover was 16.8% in Quarter 2 and 16.1% in Quarter 3. There were 2 retirements in each Quarter with a combined service period of 49 years. There had been an increase in recruitment with 59 roles advertised in Quarter 2 and 72 in Quarter 3. Sickness absence had increased from 8.4 days per

FTE to 9.6, and long-term sickness was 24 employees.

In response to a question from Councillor Jordan regarding internal transfers of employees and the impact on their previous teams, Members were advised that certain departments within the organisation were considered effective entry points for employees. These roles provided opportunities for individuals to gain experience before exploring other areas of the organisation where their skills may be better suited. It was noted that staff movement between teams for development purposes was encouraged, and that restricting such progression may increase the risk of employees seeking opportunities outside the organisation.

The Committee requested further information regarding roles that had proven persistently difficult to fill, including whether Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may have been a contributing factor and what actions could be taken to address this. Members were advised that the organisation was increasing its recruitment presence and exploring a range of alternative advertising methods. It was noted that many of the challenging vacancies related to specialised roles, and that a more proactive approach was being adopted, including targeted headhunting rather than relying solely on applications. In addition, attendance at recruitment fairs had increased to support those efforts.

The Committee further queried whether roles which are difficult to fill could be advertised as remote working opportunities. Members were advised that the organisation was currently encouraging a return to office-based working and, as such, did not wish to promote these roles as fully remote positions.

Following a question regarding the costs associated with the food waste bin collection service, the Panel were advised that additional funding had been provided to support its introduction as a new service. It was further noted that, over time, the service would be absorbed into business-as-usual operations.

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In response to a question from the Chair, it was confirmed that 90 vouchers for staff had been obtained for the Flu vaccination but this did not include the employees who were eligible through their GP.

It was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

22. WORKFORCE STRATEGY UPDATE

By means of a presentation (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Kiran Hans, HR Coordinator – Project Delivery, provided the Committee with an update on the Workforce Strategy. Reference was made to examples of training and development activities, such as the Management and Leadership programme.

Members were advised that all modules were being delivered with the aim of ensuring that as many managers as possible completed the training by the end of March 2026. It was noted that, following this date, the modules would transition into business-as-usual activity and would remain available for new managers, as well as for existing managers seeking refresher training.

The Committee was informed that the Electric Vehicle scheme had generated significant interest among staff. It was noted that a hybrid vehicle supplier was in the process of establishing a portal for employees, and that the organisation considered it important to provide access to both electric and hybrid options.

Attention was drawn to the Incremental Pay Progression process, which had been streamlined through the introduction of an electronic form to improve efficiency. It was noted that all submissions were subject to a robust moderation process.

It was noted that there were minimal issues with the implementation of the Hybrid Working Policy and that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network had been launched.

The new support service through Anglian Water, SHOUT, was highlighted. Members heard this was a free confidential text service for mental health support.

Councillor Lowe commended the 'I Am Remarkable' sessions. In response to her question regarding staff support, the Panel noted the existence of a menopause support network, where articles and podcasts were shared via Teams. They also highlighted a menopause cafe, offering discussions on a range of beneficial topics for staff.

Councillor Davenport-Ray asked for further insight regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusiveness, wondering whether this included neurodiversity. The Committee heard that neurodiversity was included.

Councillor Jordan praised the organisation's inclusive approach, noting its ongoing development and expansion across all areas. She suggested that promoting these efforts could help attract prospective employees.

Following earlier comments on internal recruitment, the Panel noted that the organisation's flexibility in enabling staff to move between teams contributed to improved job satisfaction. It was also observed that some teams chose to exceed the minimum requirement of two office days per week due to their positive experience of the working environment.

Councillor Kadewere expressed his appreciation for the clarity and quality of the reports prepared by Officers. Referring to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), he asked whether the organisation was prepared should Option E not be selected. The Panel were advised that, from an HR perspective, preparations were in place, including engagement with other councils and expanded collaborative efforts to plan for all potential outcomes. This included regular meetings with other local authorities to assess alignment, with examples such as the coordination of occupational health provision, to support a smooth transition.

After a question relating to Electric vehicles, the Panel heard that, although the Scheme was new, 4 Employees had signed up and the supplier had offered free home charging points as part of the package.

Councillor Lowe queried whether staff were being reminded to contribute to the ongoing LGR discussions, emphasising the importance of all input. It was confirmed this had been promoted via the intranet and the Chief Executive's weekly email.

It was

RESOLVED

that the information presented be received and noted.

23. GENDER PAY GAP REPORT MARCH 2025

Consideration was given to the Council's Gender Pay Gap Report, which had been prepared by the Head of HR and OD (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). The Report was based on the employees as of 31st March 2025. The Council was legally required to publish the gender pay gap information each year. Member's attention was drawn to the fact that the Mean Pay Gap was -2.47% (£-0.36) which indicated the extent to which women earned on average more per hour than their male counterparts. Members were informed that this demonstrated the Council's ability to recruit and retain an equal workforce.

The Committee discussed the Mean Bonus Pay Gap. Following questions by Councillor Davenport-Ray regarding the data, it was advised that the data would be provided once it was ready at the end of the financial year.

Councillor Keane wondered how this would be affected by Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The panel heard this would be reviewed once the decision regarding LGR had been shared in July.

Councillor Cawley praised the report and thanked the team for their hard work. He sought further clarity regarding the roles contained in the data. It was heard that further detail could be

shared after the meeting but it was noted that the upper middle pay bracket is the higher skilled administrative roles which were predominantly female.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Gender Pay Gap Report – March 2025 be endorsed for publication.

24. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/2027

With the assistance of a report by the Strategic HR Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee considered the draft 2026/2027 Pay Policy Statement. The Statement provided information about the Council's policies relating to the pay and reward of Chief Officers and other employees, as required by the Localism Act. Members were informed that the Statement would be published on the Council's website together with data on Senior Officers' salaries as required by the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.

Councillor Cawley sought further insight into the process which ensured fairness in the award of salary increments across the Organisation. It was stated that Staff were nominated by their Line Managers and decisions were made by Heads of Service that ensured consistency across the Service. Whereupon,

it was

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/2027.

25. REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYEES

It was noted that apologies had been received from the Representatives of Employees.

Chair