

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING General Purposes Committee HELD ON
Thursday, 16th January, 2025, 7.00 - 8.05 pm**

PRESENT:

**Councillors: Amin (Vice-Chair), Carroll, Cressida Johnson (Chair),
Dawn Barnes and Erdal Dogan**

ALSO ATTENDING:

11. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the filming at meetings notice, and attendees noted this information.

RESOLVED:

To note the filming procedure

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

13. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

15. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS

There were none.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting, 14 October 2024, were discussed.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the previous meeting, 14 October 2024, were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

17. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26

The Chief People Officer introduced the report. He explained that this was a statutory report and contained no substantial changes from the previous year's report.

Following questions from Members it was noted that:

- Members asked that Pay Policy Statement on point 3.5 be clarified to make it obvious that those payments made under contracts for services in excess of £500 per day are made to those who are engaged under contracted services.
- The market allowance criteria and the suitability of their utilisation. It was stressed by Members that it would be a low bar to meet one of the criteria for market allowance. Officers explained that the meeting of the first criteria of the post being advertised on more than one occasion and a suitable applicant could not be recruited, would be the first stage and that the other criteria would need to be met to meet with market allowance criteria. Officers offered to amend the criteria in the Pay Policy Statement at 9.3 to reflect this.
- That there was a requirement for a business case for senior posts and benchmarking of similar roles across other local authorities and the private sector.
- There were difficulties understanding what individual motivations for working at Haringey were, and it was explained that the authority would at least try to recruit at the standard grade before recruiting with a market supplement. It was explained that it was difficult to justify market supplement, with good reason, to ensure that this would only be met in exceptional circumstances.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee approved the draft Pay Policy Statement 2025/26.
2. That the Chief People Officer was authorised, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to make such amendments to the Pay Policy Statement as considered minor.
3. That the Committee agrees the Pay Policy Statement for endorsement by Full Council on 24 March 2025.

4. That 3.5 of the Pay Policy Statement be amended to be clearer that this is in relation to those who are engaged under contracted services and not employees.
5. That 9.3 of the Pay Policy Statement be amended to accurately reflect the process of engaging market allowances.

18. PEOPLE REPORT

The Chief People Officer introduced the report. It was explained that this was a standing item for the Committee and that there were few significant changes to the report from its previous iteration.

It was noted that there had been a steady increase in the number of permanent employees at Haringey since September 2024. It was additionally highlighted that agency staff numbers were decreasing, because of the significant efforts to reduce the number of agency staff by management. It was explained that it was expected that this reduction in agency staff numbers would continue.

It was noted by officers that there had been a reduction in the number of sickness absences from staff.

It was stressed that the financial situation of the Council was considered to be difficult and that officers would not expect significant staffing number increases.

Following questions from Members it was noted that:

- Members questioned the number of apprentices and the fluctuation of these opportunities within the Council. Officers explained that the majority of apprenticeships in the figures reflected a significant number of current staff undertaking apprenticeships as part of their role, that it was expected that, as staff completed their apprenticeship at differing times, that numbers would fluctuate. Officers explained that employees generally undertake internal apprenticeships to improve career development. Officers explained that they would like to review entry level apprenticeships and improve the numbers of them across the Council. Members questioned whether it would be possible to monitor a cohort of apprentices within the Council to monitor outcomes. Officers expressed some concerns with how to undertake this, particularly with self-selection and bias. However, they would review possibilities of this and the possibility to introduce case-studies of apprenticeships.
- Officers explained that the recruitment of apprentices in future would be used as a means to “grow our own” staff and ensure that agency staff were less relied upon. It was noted that this would be part of the development of the

future Workforce Strategy.

- That the number of external consultants employed at a rate of more than £500 per day was 68.
- Officers noted that apprentices employed by the Council tended to be more local people, and that the team often worked to recruit from the local area.
- Officers explained that the service was working to engage more with local colleges to offer some work experience opportunities that were managed well.

RESOLVED:

1. The Committee noted the report

19. HR POLICIES

The Head of Employment, Reward and Transformation introduced the report. She explained that the processes that were in the report were developed in line with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's (ACAS) best practice. It was noted that policies were being developed to be simpler to ensure ease of access.

Officers explained the rationale for the development of the Probation, Purchasing Annual Leave and Organisational Change policies.

Following questions from Members it was noted that:

- Officers explained that they had strengthened the probation policy to allow for final review meetings to take place on time.
- Officers explained the development of the "closed ringfence" which had been developed during restructures, to ensure that those that were experienced in any similar role would be prioritised during any role restructure.
- Officers noted that, in the case of purchase of additional annual leave, the cost saving from the purchase offset the potential reduction of resource. Officers explained that the purchase of leave was an application process, and not a right, which would not be approved if there would be significant loss of resource to the Council. Officers explained that, on exception, there was a method to modify annual leave, but stressed that upon the approval of annual leave and purchase of annual leave, that this had been completed. It was stressed that officers would communicate very clearly to those purchasing annual leave what expectations and requirements were.

- Officers explained that there was an application window to purchase annual leave which was set to ensure a smooth administrative process.
- Members asked for a report in mid-2026 to understand take up of the purchasing of annual leave with a year's worth of data.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee approved the proposed changes to the Probation, Purchasing Annual Leave and Organisational Change policies.
2. That a report be developed in mid-2026 to understand the impact of the HR policies on the organisation.

20. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as 3 April 2025

CHAIR: Councillor Cressida Johnson

Signed by Chair

Date