

MINUTES OF THE General Purposes Committee HELD ON Monday, 6th July, 2026, 7.00 - 7.36 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Dawn Barnes (Vice-Chair), Ash Ahmed, Michael Brookes (Chair) and Dan Johnson

ALSO ATTENDING:

Councillors: Makbule Gunes (Virtual, Non-Voting)

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

RESOLVED:

That the filming procedure was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Gunes, but attended online.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS

There were none.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2026 were discussed.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2026 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

7. PEOPLE REPORT

The Chief People Officer introduced the report

It was explained that the report would give Officers and Members relevant workforce data in an easy to understand format to support informed strategic decision making.

It was highlighted that there was a difficulty in comparing data from December 2025, due to the anomalous data that arose during the Christmas period. It was noted that data following this period was seen to be relatively stable, while noting that the permanent workforce was steadily increasing.

It was noted that the number of new starters in the organisation had dropped, due to it being artificially high following bringing some services, such as leisure, in house.

It was noted that apprentices were generally current employees looking to gain additional qualifications.

Following questions from the Committee, the following information was shared:

- It was asked that future employment data showcase information between meetings of the General Purposes Committee, to more accurately demonstrate staffing data.
- It was explained that agency percentage pay had been increased due to the pay award which would have taken place, which increased the overall spend.
- It was explained that there had been significant progress on the reduction of agency staffing, and that this would be continued. It was explained that there were some cases where agency staff were useful, in terms of flexibility or specific technical skills, however, despite the Council's aim to generally reduce agency staff.
- It was noted that there were 58 senior consultants recruited via agency. It was noted that these were recruited via agency for specific reasons, and stressed that the Council aimed to fill these posts with permanent staff wherever feasible.

RESOLVED:

That the General Purposes Committee:

1. Noted the report.

8. HR POLICIES

The Head of Employee Relations, Business Partners and Reward introduced the report.

It was explained that the policies were brought to the committee on a cyclical three-year basis; in order to review HR policies to ensure they were fit for purpose and more user friendly.

It was explained that some of the policies brought to the Committee were rewritten to meet with changes within the Employment Rights Act (2026).

It was noted that the Council worked with partners and Unions to ensure that the policies were fair and aligned with best practice.

The proposed policies and their impact on staff and managers were outlined.

Following questions from the Committee, the following information was shared:

- It was explained that the current probation process did put the Council at some risk following the Employment Rights Act, and therefore, it was required that the policy be updated to mitigate this.
- It was stressed that the Unions had been part of discussions in the drafting of proposed policies. It was noted that there may be occasion where there would be disagreement, but that these instances would be clearly highlighted in any report.

RESOLVED:

That the General Purposes Committee:

1. Approved the changes to the Annual Leave and Time Off Policy, Probation Policy, Recruitment Policy and Sabbatical Policy.

9. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

It was asked that the General Purposes Committee develop a Work Programme of future reports for the Committee.

10. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted.

CHAIR: Councillor Michael Brookes

Signed by Chair

Date