

MINUTES OF THE MEETING General Purposes Committee HELD ON Thursday, 3rd April, 2025, 7.00 - 7.42 pm

PRESENT:

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

ALSO ATTENDING:

22. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

RESOLVED:

That the filming procedure was noted.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

24. URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dogan noted a non-pecuniary interest as a UNISON Member.

26. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS

A question was submitted by Mr Sean Fox, UNISON Joint Branch Secretary, representing all unions representing Haringey employees.

He highlighted the question of equality in the Council's policy regarding parental leave. He explained that there was a concern that there was a building in of inequality by continuing to offer only the statutory minimum entitlement on Shared parental leave payments, as well as a risk of inequality from the failure to put in place entitlements for those who take parental responsibility for Children under special guardianship or Kinship arrangements.

The Union representative explained that they noted the current parental leave provisions which had been put in place by the Council was positive and that they were generally pleased with the policy as it stood. However, it was noted that there were felt to be deficiencies in terms of shared parental leave payments and entitlements for those who take parental responsibility for Children under special guardianship or Kinship arrangements.

The Chief People Officer provided a response. Officers stressed the difficult financial position of the Council. It was explained that there was no objection to the policy in principle, but stressed that the implementation of any shared parental leave payments would increase costs to the Council significantly. It was explained that the proposals were not recommended as the implementation would potentially lead to job losses.

Officers explained that parental responsibility for Children under special guardianship or Kinship arrangements could be considered separately by Members and that the financial implications of the development of such proposals were expected to be limited.

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting, 16 January 2025, were discussed.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the previous meeting, 16 January 2025, were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

28. PEOPLE REPORT

The Chief People Officer introduced the report. It was noted that there had been a decrease in agency worker costs since the last meeting, as a result of the work of managers across the Council. It was stressed that the work undertaken by agency staff was important and necessary, but it was stressed the cost of such a provision was high. It was additionally noted that there was an increase in permanent staff being recruited, resultant of agency staff recruitment and bringing in house of leisure services.

Following questions, the following responses were given by officers:

- It was explained that, following the last meeting and the implementation of the changes to purchase of annual leave, around 1900 days of annual leave were bought by staff, reducing costs to the Council by approx. £240,000 annually.

Cllr Carroll entered the meeting at 7.10pm

- That the number of agency workers had decreased across all directorates. It was noted that Digital Services and Properties Services had the most interim

and consultant staff within its cohort.

- It was explained that sickness rates were generally higher in frontline work and lower in back-office staff. It was additionally stressed that sickness figures were consistent across the organisation and the Employee Relations team supported managers with the process.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

1. Noted the report

29. HR POLICIES

The Head of Employee Relations, Business Partners and Reward introduced the report. It was explained that there were proposed changes to the Ill Health Retirement and Parental Leave policies, which were outlined within the report. The rationale for the proposed changes were explained.

Following questions from the Committee, the following responses were given:

- Members asked whether there could be a minor amendment for clarity, to include parental leave in the Parental Leave Policy, Paragraph 5.7.1. Officers agreed to this amendment.
- It was noted that shared parental leave was uncommon across the Council, whereas parental leave was reasonably commonly taken across the Council. It was stressed that it would be difficult to model shared parental leave costs to the Council.
- It was explained, following questions, that parental responsibility for Children under special guardianship or Kinship arrangements leave arrangements would likely have low uptake if it was adopted by the Council.
- Information on benchmarking with other authorities on shared parental leave was asked for by the Committee. It was noted that a few authorities across London had equalised shared parental leave and that officers would provide information on the implications of this to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agreed:

1. That proposals for support for parental responsibility for Children under special guardianship or Kinship arrangements would be provided for the next meeting of General Purposes Committee.
2. That benchmarking with other authorities on shared parental leave would be shared with the Committee.
3. Approved the changes to the Ill Health Retirement and Parental Leave policies.

30. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE POLICY - AMENDMENT

The Chief People Officer introduced the report. It was explained that the proposals within the report were not what the Council would undertake as a first option, but stressed that the financial situation required the proposal to be put forward. Officers explained that they welcomed the support of the Unions at Haringey for providing constructive support to the development of the policy.

Following questions, the following responses were given:

- That officers and Members noted the reassurance from the support provided by the Unions in Haringey and that they welcomed their support during the process of developing the policy to be as fair as possible, and in the approach to minimise impact to those on lower pay grades in the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

1. Approved the following change in Appendix 1 of the Organisational Change Policy as follows:

3.1.1 Current wording (to be deleted):

How a Statutory Redundancy Payment is calculated:

The payment will be using the employee's actual weekly rate of pay (rather than the statutory minimum) to calculate redundancy payments. The Statutory number of weeks used to calculate a redundancy payment is shown below: -

- 0.5 week's pay for each complete year of service where the employee's age was under 22
- 1 week's pay for each complete year of service where the employee's age was 22 or above, but under 41
- 1.5 week's pay for each complete year of service where the employee's age was 41 or above

In addition to the statutory provision, the Council will pay:

- 1 week's pay for each complete year of continuous local government service

The maximum number of years payable is limited to 20.

3.1.2 **New wording (to be inserted):**

How a Redundancy Payment is calculated:

The Statutory number of weeks used to calculate a redundancy payment is shown below: -

- 0.5 week's pay for each complete year of service where the employee's age was under 22
- 1 week's pay for each complete year of service where the employee's age was 22 or above, but under 41
- 1.5 week's pay for each complete year of service where the employee's age was 41 or above.

The maximum number of years payable is limited to 20.

The Council enhances the above statutory redundancy entitlements in two ways:

1. An additional weeks' pay is given for each complete year of local government service up to 20 years.
2. The cap used for the calculation of a week's pay is set at £950 rather than the statutory cap. From 2026, this amount will be increased every year on 1 April by the percentage increase in the consumer prices index in the previous September, rounded up to the nearest pound.

Where the Employer is required to pay an amount to a pension fund upon redundancy as part of pension scheme regulations, the enhancement in 1. above will be offset against that payment until it is fully offset (with the employee being paid any amount of enhancement that remains).

- 3.2 Amendments will be made to the Redundancy payments scheme for Teachers to apply the £950 weekly pay cap.

31. OTHER PANELS - MINUTES OF MEETINGS

The Committee discussed the minutes of other bodies.

RESOLVED:

1. The minutes of other bodies were noted.

32. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

33. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as item 12 contains exempt information as defined under paragraph 1, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972: Information relating to an individual

34. EXEMPT MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The exempt minutes of other bodies were discussed.

RESOLVED:

The exempt minutes of other bodies were noted.

35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as 1 July 2025

CHAIR: Councillor Cressida Johnson

Signed by Chair

Date