

Report for: General Purposes Committee – 6 July 2026

Item number: 7

Title: People Report March 2026

Report authorised by: Dan Paul, Chief People Officer

Lead Officer: Tanya Patchett, Head of Employee Relations, Business Partners and Reward

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non-key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 The People Report is designed to give Officers and Members relevant workforce data in an easy to understand format in order to support informed strategic decision making.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

2.1 Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The report is for information and for the Committee to note.

4. Reason for Decision

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Alternative Options Considered

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Background information

6.1 The People Report combines key workforce data and analysis including headcount, the cost of both the permanent workforce and off payroll arrangements, starters/leavers, sickness absence and Apprentices as shown in Appendix A.

6.2 People Report Headlines

- 6.2.1 During this reporting period, the Council's established workforce has remained broadly stable. Headcount increased slightly from 3,729 to 3,731, contributing to a 0.3% increase in the pay bill. The growth in the established workforce that has occurred over the reporting period shown in Appendix A has reduced significantly between December 2025 and March 2026.
- 6.2.2 Agency worker usage has remained broadly stable over the 9-month period from June 2025 to March 2026, showing a small increase. The intervening period shows some increases and decreases. This is partly due to some months being 5 week months for the purposes of agency staff payments (June 2025 and March 2026 were both 5 week months). December is always a lower spend month due to the Christmas season and the requirement for most agency workers to take a two week break over this period. The Council will continue to closely monitor agency usage and will seek to reduce reliance on this workforce where feasible. However, this type of workforce remains essential in addressing short term capacity gaps, managing fluctuations in workload and providing cover while permanent recruitment processes are underway, ensuring the continued delivery of critical services to residents.
- 6.2.3 The trend for higher paid agency workers (£500+ per day) shows a similar pattern, albeit with proportionally a higher increase in FTE and spend over the reporting period.
- 6.2.4 The overall total workforce continues to increase, albeit with a reduction in the period June-September 2025. That reduction was entirely due to a reduction in agency workers over that period.
- 6.2.5 During the last rolling year period 50% of new employees were aged under 40 years old, a decrease of 1% since the previous rolling year. However, 34% of leavers were also from this age group, a decrease of 1% when compared to the previous rolling year period. This indicates that the proportion of younger employees joining and leaving the Council remains broadly stable. The proportion of employees leaving for reason of redundancy has more than halved over the reporting period. The number of starters in the rolling year has reduced as the insourcing of Fusion (c.120 employees) has fallen out of the calculation time period.
- 6.2.6 During the period of December 2025 to March 2026 the Council has had 18 existing employees start a new apprenticeship. The overall number of apprenticeships in progress has decreased slightly due to more apprenticeships ending than starting in the period. The vast majority of employees undertaking apprenticeships are existing employees taking a qualification course, rather than newly recruited apprentices.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 In order to streamline the production of timely workforce data the People Report will act as a single source of people data for the use of both officers and members.
- 7.2 The production of this report will complement the reports produced by Finance to give officers and members a set of management controls that will help track the reduction in the workforce, both on and off payroll; and the associated spend across the Council.

It will enable officers and members to track the progress of HR related initiatives controlling recruitment, establishment numbers, and performance management exercises.

8 Statutory Officers' comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Director of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

8.1.1 This report recommends Committee to note the changes in the workforce from December 2025 to March 2026. The impact of these changes has already been considered as part of the regular budget monitoring process and would have been reported accordingly. There are no other financial implications arising from this report.

8.2 Director of Legal and Governance

8.2.1 The Director of Legal & Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no legal comments as this report is for information purposes only.

9 Use of Appendices

Appendix A - People Report (March 2026)

10 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.