

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 22 May 2025.

PRESENT

Miss. H. Butler CC
Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC
Mr. A. Innes CC
Mr. B. Lovegrove CC

Mr. J. Miah CC
Mr. P. Morris CC
Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC
Mr. P. Rudkin CC
Mrs B. Seaton CC

1. Appointment of Chairman.

It was moved by Mr Andrew Innes and seconded by Mr Peter Morris:

“That Miss Helen Butler be elected Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council”.

The motion was put and carried. Five members voting for the motion and four against.

RESOLVED:

That Miss Helen Butler be elected Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

Miss Helen Butler CC – In the Chair

2. Election of Vice-Chairman.

It was moved by Miss Helen Butler and seconded by Mr Peter Morris:

“That Mr Paul Rudkin be elected Vice Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.”

It was moved by Mr Ozzy O'Shea JP and seconded by Mr Brian Lovegrove:

“That Mr Jewel Miah be elected Vice Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council”.

The Chairman informed members that both candidates had been duly proposed and seconded. In accordance with item 4 of Standing Order 27 a secret ballot would therefore take place.

The Chief Executive announced the results of the ballot, as follows:

Five votes for Mr Paul Rudkin, four votes for Mr Jewel Miah and one abstention. The motion “That Mr Paul Rudkin be elected Vice Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council” was carried.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Paul Rudkin be elected Vice Chairman for the period until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

6. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

8. Presentation of petitions under Standing Order 35.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 35.

9. People Strategy 2024 - 2028 Overview.

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on how the agreed People Strategy 2024-2028 was being reviewed. The report also outlined the cycle of quarterly updates which would be presented to the Committee. A copy of the report and presentation, marked 'Agenda Item 9', are filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) In response to a question relating to recruitment and retention, the Director stated that whilst the rate of staff turnover across the Authority was 13-14%, there were additional challenges in recruiting to specific specialist roles. This was in line with a national shortfall of specially qualified applicants for certain roles. In addition to recruitment and retention challenges, the Authority also had an aging workforce

which was expected to contribute to staffing pressures. The Council continued to promote the benefits of a career within the Authority.

- (ii) The Director advised members that gathering demographic information about employees was undertaken in order to understand the representation and inclusion of different groups. The data would be utilised in order to identify disparities, track progress on diversity and inclusion initiatives, and to ensure that the workforce was representative of the community. The Council would continue to encourage staff to disclosed demographic data, as a number of staff did not do so.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on progress against the agreed People Strategy and the cycle of quarterly updates to be presented to the Committee, be noted.

10. Workforce Report 2024 - 2028.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on workforce information and performance measures for the period of 2024/2025. This included details on headcount, Full Time Equivalent (FTE), absence rates and reason, and reported Annual Performance Reviews (APR). A copy of the report and presentation, marked 'Agenda Item 10', are filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) In response to a question asked, the Director stated that staff vacancies were not held within the corporate HR system. Instead, staffing budgets were allocated within individual service areas and vacancies were recorded within individual financial systems. Members noted that the Council had introduced escalated financial controls in December 2023 and part of these controls required all recruitment to be approved by the relevant senior management team, Director, and People Services. Managers were encouraged to consider all options for resourcing teams before advertising for recruitment.
- (ii) With regards to an increase in the Council's FTE over the period 2024 to 2025, the Director stated that this was understood to be due to both recruitment challenges within the Authority and the rising cost of living nationally. As both challenges continued, existing staff had become more willing to take on additional hours, with a number of staff transitioning from part-time to full-time work.
- (iii) The Director acknowledged that the overall APR compliance rate was not at an acceptable level and assured members that the Council continued to encourage managers to undertake APRs with their staff on a regular basis. The Reviews were important in providing the opportunity for staff to provide feedback and discuss performance and progression. It had been identified that whilst the Reviews were largely being conducted, completion was not consistently recorded on the central recording system. People Services were undertaking work to simplify the recording and reporting process and would provide additional support to services where staff predominantly operated remotely.
- (iv) With regards to levels of absence across the organisation, members noted that managers were expected to follow the attendance management process set out within the Council's Managing Attendance and Medical Capability Policy and

Procedure. People Services continued to support managers with attendance management and HR business partners provided dedicated support to services where attendance levels became a significant issue. There had been a reduction in the overall rate of absence across the organisation and People Services would focus on continuing with work undertaken in order to sustain this.

- (v) Stress, depression and mental health continued to be the leading reason for absence across the Authority. Cases were understood to be due to both personal and work related challenges. The Council's wellbeing offer was well utilised and many staff utilising the offer often remained within work whilst doing so.
- (vi) It was noted that reason for absence data was based on information presented by the employee either at the first point of reporting absence, when presenting a fit note from a healthcare professional, or when returning to work. The Council's Managing Attendance and Medical Capability Policy and Procedure outlined that staff could self-certify for up to seven days and then would be required to present a fit note for longer periods of absence.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on workforce information and performance measures for the period of 2024/2025, including details on headcount, Full Time Equivalent (FTE), Absence rates and reason, and reported Annual Performance Reviews (APR), be noted.

11. People Strategy Update - Leadership and Workforce Development.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on progress made in relation to Leadership and Workforce Development projects, part of the Council's People Strategy. A copy of the report and presentation, marked 'Agenda Item 11', are filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) In response to a question relating to the Council's approach to hybrid working, the Director stated that office based staff continued to work in a hybrid way at various locations, which included County Hall and at home. A review of the Council's Smarter Working Policy and Guidance was being undertaken in order to ensure that it was relevant. Staff productivity, as well as the advantages and disadvantages for working in a hybrid way, would be considered as part of the review. The outcome of this work would be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.
- (ii) Members noted that the new learning management system, the Learning Hub, would offer improved functionality and increased usability, at a similar cost, than the previous system, the Learning Pool.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on progress made in relation to Leadership and Workforce Development projects which are part of the Council's People Strategy, be noted.
- (b) That the Director of Corporate Resources be requested to present the outcome of a review of the Council's Smarter Working Policy and Guidance to the Committee at a future meeting.

12. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure: Action Plans.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update of the current Action Plans which contain provision for compulsory redundancy and details of progress on their implementation. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the update of the current Action Plans which contain provision for compulsory redundancy and details of progress on their implementation, be noted.

13. Date of Next Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 18 September 2025 at 10:00am.

10.00 - 11.12 am
22 May 2025

CHAIRMAN