

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 5 February 2026.

PRESENT

Miss H. Butler CC (in the Chair)

Dr. J. Bloxham CC	Mr. J. Miah CC
Mr. S. L. Bray CC	Mr. P. Morris CC
Mr. M. H. Charlesworth CC	Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC
Mr. G. Cooke CC	Mr. K. Robinson CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC	Mrs B. Seaton CC
Mr. A. Innes CC	Mrs D. Taylor CC

40. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2025 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

41. Question Time.

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

42. Questions asked by members.

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

43. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

44. Declarations of interest.

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.

45. Presentation of petitions under Standing Order 35.

There were no petitions.

46. Work Programme 2026.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the proposed reporting timetable on relevant workforce matters and the Work

Programme for 2026. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the proposed reporting timetable on relevant workforce matters and the Employment Committee Work Programme for 2026, be approved.
- b) That the contents of the Employment Committee Terms of Reference, be noted.

47. Gender Pay Gap Reporting.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the results regarding Gender Pay Gap reporting for Leicestershire County Council for 31 March 2025, and a comparison against the results for the previous three years. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that there was an error within paragraph 6 of the report; the reference to quartiles should have made reference to lower, middle, upper middle and upper quartiles.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) In response to a question asked, the Director outlined that the median gender pay gap was attributable to male members of staff holding higher-graded positions than female members of staff, and provided assurance that like-for-like roles continued to be paid equally.
- (ii) A member asked how the Council could encourage more men to enter stereotypically female-dominated fields such as social care without contravening the Equality Act, as such service areas could benefit from greater male representation. The Director explained that the issue often began earlier in the career pipeline, including education and qualification routes, and provided assurances that work was ongoing with the Adults and Communities and Children and Family Services departments in order to promote social work as an inclusive profession.
- (iii) It was noted that women were more likely to work part-time following childcare responsibilities, which could affect progression. The Director outlined that a flexible approach to work formed part of the Council's commitments to its staff, and highlighted the flexible policies already in place, including enhanced maternity and neonatal provisions, and support for wider caring responsibilities. The Council continued to review its policies regularly in order to ensure they were suitable.
- (iv) With regards to roles at a senior level, the Director acknowledged that the organisation had fewer job-share arrangements for senior level posts. This was an issue which had been recognised both within the organisation and within other authorities. Consideration would be undertaken on this matter as part of wider work relating to recruitment and retention

RESOLVED:

- a) That the content of the report regarding the County Councils Gender Pay Gap reporting, be noted

- b) That the publication of the Gender Pay Gap report by 30 March 2026, be noted.

48. Workforce Report 2025-26 Quarter 3 Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on workforce information and performance measures for Quarter 3 of 2025/26, including details relating to headcount, Full Time Equivalent (FTE), absence rates and reason, and reported completion of Annual Performance Reviews (APRs). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 9', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- (i) With regards to ill health dismissals, a question was asked regarding under what circumstances an employee would be dismissed rather than retired on health grounds. The Director explained that dismissal occurred only where an underlying medical condition prevented the employee from returning to their contracted duties, such as following a stroke or heart attack. Although the terminology could appear stark, dismissal was the legal mechanism for ending employment in such cases and included such retirements. It was noted that capability dismissals could occur where attendance levels remained unsatisfactory, despite warnings and support, although this was distinct from ill health dismissal.
- (ii) Members of the Committee were concerned regarding agency staff expenditure. The Director explained that costs varied depending on urgency, role type and market availability, and that some specialist areas, particularly technical roles, faced significant recruitment challenges. Efforts continued to be made in order to ensure comparable pay between agency and permanent staff in order to avoid any loss permanent employees to agency work. The Director agreed to provide the Committee with information relating to how agency rates compared to those of substantive employees, as well as a breakdown of agency use between covering absence, filling vacancies, or undertaking specialist roles not delivered by Council staff members.
- (iii) Concern was raised relating to the level of stress, depression and mental-health rates which had been reported within the Adults and Communities department. It was noted that this concern would be addressed as part of a report elsewhere on the agenda which was focussed on attendance management within the Department.
- (iv) With regards to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, a question was asked regarding whether vacancy management had been considered in order to minimise future redundancy costs and whether early workforce planning would be beneficial. The Director confirmed that workforce considerations formed part of ongoing preparatory work for LGR. Formal arrangements with partner authorities would be established once the direction for LGR was clear. This would allow vacancies to be managed across the wider pool of staff and reduce the need for avoidable recruitment ahead of structural change.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on workforce information and performance measures for Quarter 3 2025/26, including details relating to headcount, Full Time Equivalent (FTE),

absence rates and reason, and reported completion of Annual Performance Reviews (APR), be noted.

- (b) That the Director of Corporate Resources be requested to provide the Committee with information relating to how agency rates compared to those of substantive employees, as well as a breakdown of agency use between covering absence, filling vacancies, or undertaking specialist roles not by Council staff members.

49. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure: Action Plans.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented the current Action Plans which contained provision for compulsory redundancy and details of progress made with their implementation. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

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

50. Date of Next Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Employment Committee would take place on 21 May 2026 at 10:00.

51. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the remaining item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and that, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

52. Attendance Management - Focus on Adults and Communities.

The Committee considered an exempt report of the Director of Corporate Resources, the purpose of which was to provide an overview of the sickness absence position in the Adults and Communities Department, as at the end of December 2025. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14' is filed with these minutes. The report was not for publication by virtue of paragraphs 3 and 10 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Director responded to questions regarding the sickness absence position in the Adults and Communities Department, and the work which had been undertaken to mitigate the level of sickness absence within the Department. It was noted that a range of interventions had been introduced, and that sickness absence within the Department had begun to reduce.

RESOLVED:

That the overall sickness position for the Adults and Communities Department, as at the end of December 2025, and the updated sickness absence position, be noted.

53. Working Arrangements Policy.

The Committee considered an exempt report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided the Committee with external legal advice relating to the Council's proposed Working Arrangements Policy. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 15', is filed with these minutes. The Report was not for publication virtue of paragraphs 4, 5 and 10 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Executive to the meeting for this item.

The Director and Chief Executive responded to questions in relation to the proposed Working Arrangements Policy and the legal advice received on the matter. With regards to how the Council should proceed, the Committee agreed with the recommendations outlined within the report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed action outlined within paragraph 16 of the report, be supported.

10.00 - 11.32 am  
05 February 2026

CHAIRMAN