

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2025, AT
7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Rachel Carter (Chair)
Councillors M Connolly, T Deffley, A Holt and
D Willcocks

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Committee Support Officer
Emily Cordwell	- Human Resources Officer
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place

157 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

158 MINUTES - 4 JUNE 2025

It was moved by Councillor Connolly and seconded by Councillor Willcocks that the minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 4 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillors Deffley and Holt abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meetings of the Human Resources Committee held on 4 July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

159 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and said that there would be a verbal update from the Director of Place at the end of the meeting.

160 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

161 HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTER 1 STATISTICS

The Human Resources Officer introduced the report, which followed the layout familiar to the Committee and detailed the Human Resources statistics for Quarter 1.

The Chair thanked the Human Resources Officer for the report.

Councillor Deffley asked if the council had a policy or any measures which they used to try and retain staff who resigned.

The Human Resources Officer said that should an employee resign, conversations would be had, and any potential alternative avenues to the person leaving explored. She said that there were plans to launch a programme where those thinking of resigning could speak with Human Resources first, to discuss the reasons as to why they wished to resign and to see if any preventative measures could be taken to avoid the resignation.

Councillor Connolly referred to page 30 of the Health and Safety Committee minutes and noted the six incidents where staff had reported feeling unwell due to poor office air quality (due to high CO2 levels). She asked how these levels were monitored and questioned if the frequency of the monitoring was sufficient.

The Human Resources Officer said that she would ask the Health and Safety Officer to report back to the

Committee on this matter.

Councillor Connolly referred to page 31 of the report and asked who was responsible for matters identified during parking inspections, as these related to serious issues.

The Director for Place said that she appreciated the points made and advised that conversation had been had on these issues today and thus were in hand. She said that the Committee would therefore receive further feedback.

Councillor Conolly said that it was good to note that the matter of idling ice cream vans expelling fumes at Hartham was being addressed, and thanked officers for this.

The Chair referred to air quality monitors and recalled that teachers were given such devices for classrooms.

The Human Resources Officer said that each part of the building had a monitor, which could be viewed at any time.

The Chair asked if Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was adding to the difficulties in recruiting to job vacancies.

The Human Resources Officer said that LGR meant that people were not moving posts between councils, and that this in combination with a shortage of qualified staff within Planning and Environmental Health had affected recruitment.

The Director for Place said that with regard to Planning vacancies, there was a particular industry shortage of senior staff – as people moved on after training due to the council's inability to compete with private sector pay.

It was moved by Councillor Connolly and seconded by Councillor Deffley, that the recommendations, as detailed,

be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED –that the Human Resources Management report for Quarter 1 (April– June 2025) be considered and any comments provided to the HR Adviser regarding the content or formatting of the report.

162 ANNUAL EQUALITIES REPORT 2024/25

The Human Resources Officer introduced the report which included recommendations for the 2025/26 employment equality action plan.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and queried why only six of the nine protected characteristics were covered within the papers.

The Human Resources Officer said that she would speak to the report author and request that this information be included in the next report.

The Chair asked if unpaid carers could also be included within future reports and asked what the council currently did to protect this group.

The Human Resources Officer said that carers were not ‘logged’, but that a policy existed which defined how a carer was recognised and gave entitlement to five paid days leave (pro-rata) for caring responsibilities. She said that this detail could also be included in the next report.

Councillor Connolly referred to the promotion of equalities based events within the calendar and asked if the number of these could be increased.

The Human Resources Officer said that it was a priority for an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group to be convened, which would allow such an increase.

Councillor Willcocks queried the number of 'unknown ethnicity' responses given by employees on their exit questionnaires and asked if it was mandatory to provide this information.

The Human Resources Officer said that should a person not wish to give such information it was possible to opt for 'other'.

Councillor Deffley asked if it was a legal requirement for the council to produce an annual equalities report. The Human Resources Officer said that it was a legal requirement.

It was moved by Councillor Willcocks and seconded by Councillor Connolly, that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the Annual Equalities Report 2024/25 be noted; and

(B) that the recommendations set out in the 2025/26 action plan be considered and approved.

163 URGENT BUSINESS

The Director for Place gave a verbal update regarding operational changes to management within the Human Resources Department.

The Director for Place said that East Herts had entered into a shared service with Broxbourne Council, which would see a senior manager split their time between the two organisations. She added that the arrangement would also enable East Herts to receive specialist director level support from Broxbourne and gave further opportunities for shared work.

Members were advised that the contract was for one year and would be reviewed in six months' time. She reiterated

that the arrangement related to management only, with the postholder directly reporting to the Director for Place and would not see any changes to other staff members or an alignment of the organisations policies.

The meeting closed at 7.26 pm

Chairman
Date