

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2026, AT 7.00
PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Committee Support Officer
Sara Saunders	- Director for Place
Laura Smith	- Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner

310 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

311 MINUTES - 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

It was moved by Councillor Willcocks and seconded by Councillor Connolly that the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 24 September 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 meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 24

September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

312 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and reminded participants to use the microphones when speaking.

The webcast of the meeting can be viewed at [HR Committee - 4 February 2026 - YouTube](#)

313 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

314 HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTER 2 STATISTICS

The Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner introduced the report which gave Human Resources statistics for Quarter 2 of 2025, highlighting the key points, to include:

- A Council employee headcount of 304 – 274.34 FTE.
- 10 new starters across several service areas - with ongoing challenges remaining in Environmental Health.
- 54 vacancies – with critical roles supported by agency/interim cover.
- 16 leavers - With projected turnover slightly above target.
- A focus on statutory training.
- Neurodiversity workshop delivered, e-learning emphasised, and new anti-harassment training launched.
- 2 reportable accidents, with no RIDDOR incidents.

The Chair thanked the Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner for the report.

Members expressed a repeat desire for comparative data – to include trends and benchmarking against other councils, and a further breakdown of vacancies.

Members heard that there had been a high turnover of staff within the Human Resources Department and received apologies regarding the omission of such data/breakdowns within the quarterly reports. They were given assurances that this data would be included going forward.

It was moved by Councillor Connolly and seconded by Councillor Swainston, 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 2 (July - September 2025) be considered and any comments provided to the Human Resources Adviser regarding the content or formatting of the report.

315 HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTER 3 STATISTICS

The Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner introduced the report which gave Human Resources statistics for Quarter 3 of 2025, highlighting the key points, to include:

- A Council employee headcount of 299 – 269.91 FTE.
- Staff sickness absence – 721.91 FTE lost – this being made up of 238.69 days short-term, affecting 75 employees, and 474.22 days long term, affecting 17 employees.
- 7 new starters.
- 55 vacancies – with hard to fill roles remaining in Planning and Environmental Health.
- 9 leavers – with projected annual turnover above target.
- A focus on mandatory training compliance, with a review of training content underway.
- Domestic abuse and Prevent training delivered.
- 4 non-reportable accidents, with no RIDDOR

incidents.

The Chair thanked the Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner for the report.

Members noted and showed appreciation for the improved breakdown of the vacancies data within the report (in contrast to the Quarter 2 papers). Clarity was sought regarding e-learning modules for Members, and a request was made for both staff and Member e-learning completion rates data. Members also expressed concerns regarding the ongoing issues with car park related safety responsibilities and the possible vandalism to the roof of Bishops Stortford Town Council.

Members heard that the e-learning platform was being reviewed, and that following comments from the Member Development Group, officers had been made aware of the need for Councillors to receive improved communications and guidance.

Members were told that the issues surrounding car park safety and the possible vandalism to Bishops Stortford Town Council would be picked up by the Director of Place, with progress/ further information reported back to the Committee. They heard that that there had been a positive change in the reporting of incidents, with plans for more regular health and safety updates due to the car park challenges.

It was moved by Councillor Swainston and seconded by Councillor Willcocks, 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 3 (October-December 2025) be considered and any comments provided to the Human Resources and Organisational Development Adviser regarding the content or formatting of the report.

316 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2025

The Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner introduced the item which set out the outcome of the annual Gender Pay Gap report, detailing progress on last year's action plan and outlining new actions for 2026. She said that the mean gender pay gap had decreased by 4 points, with the median gender gap increasing by 3 points.

Members heard that there was a strong gender balance at senior levels within the council, and that the gap was mainly driven by the higher proportion of women in lower paid roles (i.e., clerical and/or part time posts) and the outsourcing of male dominated council services. Members were told that the council was confident that the gap was not due to unequal pay – with the Hay job evaluation used.

Members were advised that the action plan for 2026 included the continued promotion of equality focused initiatives and the delivery of mandatory equality, diversity and anti-bullying and harassment training. They also heard that the new applicant tracking system was improving recruitment data, and that the council remained committed to reducing the gender pay gap.

The Chair thanked the Shared Senior Human Resources Business Partner and her colleagues for the report.

Members praised the high take up of the equality, diversity and anti-bullying and harassment training, but noted that a quarter of staff were yet to complete this. A request was therefore made for further information on how these completion gaps were spread out.

Members also observed that the annual report had concluded a disparity within the lower pay scales for the past three years, and a desire for more meaningful analysis was expressed – to include such data of

comparative councils.

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 Gender Pay Gap Report 2025 be noted; and

B) that the action plan for 2026/27 be approved.

317 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

The Director of Place introduced the report which set out the updated Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27. She said that prior to the paper going before Council an update to include the additional responsibilities payment awarded to the Deputy Chief Executive would be made – this reflecting the senior management restructure which was undertaken in 2025.

The Chair thanked the Director of Place for the report.

Members sought clarity on the other posts which received additional responsibilities payments and heard that these were the statutory posts of the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer.

Members agreed that it would be helpful for National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales to be included within the report – to include examples of posts which fall into each pay spine.

It was moved by Councillor Holt and seconded by Councillor Swainston, 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 Pay Policy Statement

2026/27 be recommend for approval by council.

318 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - (IF REQUIRED)

There was no Part II business.

319 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 7.32 pm

Chairman
Date