
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX
COMMITTEE,
HELD ON TUESDAY, 30TH JULY, 2024 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Chapman BEM (Chairman), Calver (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Baker, Morrison and G Stephenson
In Attendance:	Katie Wilkins (Head of People), Carol Magnus (Organisational Development Manager), Jo Williams-Lota (Human Resources Manager), Madeline Adger (Leadership Support Manager) and Bethany Jones (Committee Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence was given by Councillor Guglielmi (with no substitution).

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Amos and:-

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Monday, 26 February 2024, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

No Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38 had been submitted on this occasion.

5. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.1 - PEOPLE STRATEGY

The Committee heard that the organisation's People Strategy had been updated following the adoption of the Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028. The Strategy complemented the Corporate Plan and provided the underpinning for a number of other key strategies. It set out the organisation's approach for ensuring it was an 'employer of choice' within the District, that it followed the required employment legislation and best practice, and that it supported its staff to enable them to perform their duties professionally and with confidence.

Members were told that the Strategy recognised the increasingly complex context within which Tendring District Council carried out its work and placed a focus on 'getting basics right'. That included a focus on core mandatory training, increased expectation that staff would manage their own learning by utilising online tools as appropriate, the introduction

and implementation of updated employment legislation, including expected changes to the Equality Act.

Officers informed the Committee that the Strategy used the framework of the employee life cycle (Joining, Staying and Leaving) with a number of subheadings within each stage.

The Committee noted that the adoption of the People Strategy would set the focus and priorities for the next five years. It had realistic targets which recognised the current climate, and which sought to ensure the organisation's workforce was in the strongest possible position for whatever challenges came along in the coming years.

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor G Stephenson and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee endorse the adoption of the People Strategy 2024 to 2029.

6. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.2 - LEAVE POLICY

The Committee heard that Tendring District Council was committed to developing and maintaining working arrangements that enabled employees to achieve a better work-life balance. Annual leave and other types of leave were important elements in achieving a positive approach to work.

Members were told that there were several types of leave entitlement, and that it was essential that an employee gained authorisation for the type of leave that best suited their need for absence from the workplace. All requests for leave would be dealt with fairly and consistently, in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy (*Employment*).

Officers informed the Committee that the updated policy incorporated the new provision for time off for Carers which had been introduced in April 2024. The new provision was intended to allow employees time to provide or arrange care for a dependent with a long-term care need.

The background section of the Officer report (A.2) contained a detailed summary of the key policy changes.

The updated policy applied to all employees of Tendring District Council.

The Committee was also told that the purpose of the Officer report was to inform the Committee of the requirements of the Carers Leave Act 2024; however, the changes made to the Payroll and HR system, in respect of the administration of staff's entitlement to leave could have been done under the Officers' delegated powers.

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Amos and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee:

- a) endorses and adopts the Council's updated Leave Arrangements for Employees Policy; and,
- b) notes that the Human Resources team will regularly monitor and review this policy's implementation and will report to the Council's Human Resources & Council Tax Committee as part of future Workforce Reports.

7. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.3 - WORKFORCE UPDATE REPORT

The Committee heard that the analysis of workforce data provided Members with statistics relating to the staff employed within the Council and how that compared to the Tendring District and national averages. It was a standard report that was provided to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee periodically.

Members were told that, at the time of writing, Tendring District Council had 507.48 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. The FTE figure equated to 752 workers in total (including casual workers and learners). That was made up of 420 full-time and 332 part-time staff.

Officers informed the Committee that the 'Grow Our Own' approach for staff to gain professional qualifications in hard to recruit areas would continue. The organisation's sponsorship programme for qualifications would continue and apprenticeships would be utilised whenever possible. Apprenticeships up to, and including, Level 7 (post graduate level) were increasingly available and could be funded via the organisation's Levy, through 'levy sharing' or from the Government's co-investment scheme.

The Committee was reassured that, as previously reported, amongst the fully contracted staff, there were a number of employees who were undertaking external apprenticeships, including those at degree level (Level 6) and above.

Members noted that over the last 12 months, Officers had been working to achieve degrees in the following areas:

- Chartered Housing;
- Chartered Surveying;
- Chartered Management;
- Digital & Technology Solutions;
- Accountancy;
- Building Control; and,
- Planning.

The above were only examples; the list was not exhaustive.

The Committee was also told that Tendring District Council had always encouraged organic progression (*growing our own*). However, TDC had several vacancies (*technical and non-technical*) that remained unfilled due to a lack of suitable candidates.

Officers also informed Members that some posts required qualified individuals that were increasingly scarce or where the market attracted higher pay scales than those currently

adopted by Tendring District Council. That could have a detrimental impact on the retention of the Council's existing staff and future recruitment opportunities.

The Committee was reminded that, the Council had worked with the EELGA last year to carry out an independent review of our pay structure. That had led to some options to support the best use of the NJC pay spine in alignment with the employment market. Those had included, salary and benefits benchmarking, improved marketing of vacancies and employment offer and expanding TDC's well-established "grow your own" ethos. Those options had been considered as part of the Assistant Director change programme.

Members were notified that the commitment of Tendring District Council employees 'to go the extra mile' had continued despite the challenges identified above and should be noted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee notes the contents of the Officer report (A.3).

8. **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS) - A.4 - MARKET FORCES POLICY UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee heard that the Council was committed to the principles of equal pay for work of equal value. The National Job Evaluation and Grading Scheme had provided an analytical and non-discriminatory method of evaluating jobs. However, there could be exceptional circumstances, explicitly due to labour market conditions, where the evaluated grade resulted in an inability to successfully recruit or retain suitable staff for specific jobs. In those exceptional circumstances, it might be appropriate for consideration to be given to the payment of a Market Forces Supplement to overcome the problem.

Members were told that a Market Forces Supplement was an additional, temporary payment to the basic salary of an individual job or specific group of jobs where market pressures would otherwise prevent the Council from being able to recruit or retain staff with a particular skill or group of skills. It was an exceptional measure and would be taken only when all other measures had been exhausted.

Officers informed the Committee that the Council viewed Market Forces Supplements as 'Risk and Retention' payments, in that those incentives were provided to employees in critical roles, aiming to retain those highly skilled staff, by compensating them according to job market conditions.

The Committee was reminded that the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee had previously requested that Officers engaged the services of the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) to expand on the earlier Pay Review undertaken to carry out a comprehensive, service wide review of TDC's pay structure as followed:-

- Access the whole staffing establishment (including Chief Officers), in the context of neighbouring (District) authorities and regionally.

- In the context of professional and technical areas – that would be an extension of the work already undertaken by EELGA and would also consider those areas in which Market Forces Supplements were currently applied.

The Committee was reassured that analysis of the benchmarking data had indicated that the majority of this Council's roles were paid at a level in line with comparative roles in the East of England region. That had aligned with the Council's experience of recruitment and retention and indicated that the pay line was set at an appropriate level.

Members noted that, similar to other local authorities, Tendring had experienced recruitment and retention issues for some professions/technical roles and had used a Market Forces Supplement (MFS) Scheme in respect of those.

The Committee was also told that the Council's Discretionary Market Forces Policy had been last updated in July 2021. To ensure its continued alignment with recognised best practice, the policy had been revised based on several recommendations from the EELGA review. Those recommendations had included the following:-

- Data on all Market Forces Supplements would be reported to the Council's Human Resources & Council Tax Committee annually to ensure regular monitoring of their use across the Council.
- When Market Forces Supplements were paid, they were time-limited and subject to rigorous review in line with market conditions.
- Proposals, including recommendations on the actual value of the Market Forces Supplement to be applied (*up to or equivalent to a maximum of one grade in the authority's salary structure*), would be included in the business case put forward for approval. That would depend on the market salary benchmarking undertaken.
- The cost of Market Forces Supplements would be met from service budgets.
- The Market Forces Supplement would be payable for two years. If, after 18 months, the Head of Service/Assistant Director believed further payment was necessary due to market conditions, they would conduct another comprehensive review. That review must be carried out no later than three months before the anticipated supplement end date.
- Should the review identify that there was no longer a need for the payment of a Market Forces Supplement, the HR Team would give the employees three months' notice that the supplement would be coming to an end, with no right of appeal.
- Finally, delegation for the approval of Market Forces Supplements would be afforded to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Assistant Director (Partnerships) and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor G Stephenson and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee:

- a) approves and adopts the Council's updated Discretionary Market Forces Policy, noting the incorporated change in the approval process for future Market Forces requests, including the proposed delegation afforded to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Assistant Director (Partnerships) and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee and that information will be passed to the Committee for information purposes; and
- b) notes that the Human Resources team will keep a register of market supplements in payment, and this will be reported to the Council's Human Resources & Council Tax Committee on an annual basis, to ensure regular monitoring of the use of market supplements across the Council.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.13 pm

Chairman