



HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE

AGENDA

DATE:	Thursday, 30 July 2026
TIME:	7.30 pm
VENUE:	Committee Room, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor Chapman BEM (Chairman)
Councillor Calver (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Guglielmi
Councillor S Honeywood

Councillor Keteca
Councillor Smith
Councillor G Stephenson

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DATE OF PUBLICATION: Wednesday, 22 July 2026

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

The Committee is asked to note any apologies for absence and substitutions received from Members.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (Pages 5 - 20)

To confirm and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Monday, 2 March 2026.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors are invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests of Non-Registerable Interests, and the nature of it, in relation to any item on the agenda.

4 Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38

Subject to providing two working days' notice, a Member of the Committee may ask the Chairman of the Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the Tendring District **and** which falls within the terms of reference of the Committee.

5 Career Track - Verbal Update

The Committee will receive an oral update rearding the Council's Career Track service.

6 Report of the Director (People) - A.1 - Workforce Update (Pages 21 - 30)

To provide Members of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee with an update on current workforce statistics, including key trends in staffing levels, recruitment, retention, and diversity. This update supports the Committee's ongoing oversight of workforce matters and reflects the Council's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement in its employment practices.

7 Report of the Director (People) - A.2 - Employment Legislation (Pages 31 - 38)

To update Members of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee on the implications of the Employment Rights Act 2025 for the Council's employment policies, procedures and working practices. The report outlines the action being taken to maintain compliance with current and forthcoming employment legislation and to support consistent, fair and effective people management across the Council.

Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee is to be held in the Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE at 7.30 pm on Thursday, 22 October 2026.

Information for Visitors

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX
COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 2ND MARCH, 2026 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Chapman BEM (Chairman), Baker, Guglielmi, Keteca and G Stephenson
In Attendance:	Katie Wilkins (Assistant Director (People)), Marcia Fuller (Acting Head of People), Lewis Vella (Senior Finance Manager) (except items 23 - 28), Leanne Thornton (Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager), Debianné Messenger (Work Based Learning Manager), Bethany Jones (Democratic Services Officer) and Katie Koppenaal (Democratic Services Officer)

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Calver (Vice-Chairman) (with no substitution) and Morrison (with no substitution).

19. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Tuesday 21 October 2025, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

21. 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.

22. REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (FINANCE & IT) - A.1 - FORMAL CONFIRMATION OF COUNCIL TAX AMOUNTS FOR 2026/27 FOLLOWING THE NOTIFICATION OF THE PRECEPTS FROM THE MAJOR PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES

The Committee heard that, at its meeting held on 17 February 2026, Council had considered the Executive's Budget and Council Tax proposals for 2026/27 and, as part of that process, the Council Tax for the District and Parish/Town Council Services had been approved.

Members were told that, once the precepts were received from the major precepting authorities, the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee had the delegated responsibility to agree the total Council Tax for 2026/27.

The total Council Tax for the year was made up of the District and Parish/Town Council amounts approved by Council on 17 February 2026 and the corresponding amounts agreed by the major precepting authorities. Legislation required that formal confirmation by Members even though the process was dictated by legislative formulae and there was no judgement or choice to be made.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the precepts issued by Essex County Council, Essex Fire and Essex Police, as set out in Appendix A to the Officer report (A.1), be noted; and
- (b) the amounts of Council Tax for 2026/27, as shown in Appendix C to the Officer report (A.1), for each of the categories of dwellings be formally confirmed.

23. **CAREER TRACK - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update and watched a video on the following:

- Current number of apprentices/previous apprentices in departments around the Council;
- National Apprenticeship Week;
- What is National Apprenticeship Week?; and
- Statistics on apprentices at Tendring District Council;

Questions from Members:	Answers from Officers:
<i>Do Officers have the apprentice destination data handy for the minutes of this meeting?</i>	Yes, that can be provided. (This information has been provided under this table of questions).
<i>Does Tendring District Council work with the Sixth Form College in Colchester?</i>	They are classed as one of Tendring District Council's partners, but the Council does not deliver apprenticeships at the Sixth Form College. The Council has done so previously, and the Council works closely with Colchester Institute, but not specifically the Sixth Form College.
<i>Has the Council ever thought about giving preferential or priority treatment to children in care that are looking for employment and if it could be fine-tuned with Essex County Council?</i>	The Council pays for all transport costs for all apprentices that are on apprenticeship contracts and Officers are not aware that any other Authority also does this. The Council has the potential to follow Essex County Council's line which is giving guaranteed interview status for care leavers which could be discussed at another time.

Career Track Apprentice Destination Data 2023 - 2025			
Name of Employer	Number of Apprentices	Progression Following Apprenticeship	Number of Apprentices
ALPH Legal and Compliance	1	Completing Higher Level Apprenticeship	1
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council	1	Full Time Employment	1
Braintree District Council	4	Full Time Employment	4
CDC Consultancy	1	Full Time Employment	1
Colchester City Council	8	Full Time Employment	8
Essex County Council	1	Full Time Employment	1
GP Primary Choice Ltd	1	Full Time Employment	1
London Borough of Newham	1	Full Time Employment	1
		Completing Higher Level Apprenticeship	0
Maldon District Council	11	Full Time Employment	9
		Completing Higher Level Apprenticeship	1
		No progression due to medical grounds	1
Sliverton Aggregates Ltd - Main	1	Full Time Employment	1
Suffolk County Council	1	Full Time Employment	1
Suffolk County Council - Highways	2	Full Time Employment	2
Tendring District Council	41	Full Time Employment	34
		Completing Higher Level Apprenticeship	5
		Travelling abroad	1
		Maternity Leave	1
The Letting Link	2	Full Time Employment	1
		Completing Higher Level Apprenticeship	1
Virtual Kent School - Kent County Council	8	Full Time Employment	6
		Completing Higher Level Apprenticeship	2

Data Collation:

Training providers record learner achievement and progression outcomes with the Department for Education (DfE) once a learner completes their programme.

Destination data is usually collected within two months of completion and recorded with the DfE to show whether the learner has progressed into employment, further learning, or another apprenticeship.

Providers commonly follow up with learners around three months after completion to confirm and update their destination, ensuring the data reported to the DfE is

accurate.

It was moved by Councillor Chapman BEM, seconded by Councillor Guglielmi and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that an item be included on the next Human Resources and Council Tax Committee agenda to enable the Committee to discuss the Council following in line with Essex County Council i.e. to give guaranteed interview status for care leavers.

24. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) - A.2 - PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Committee heard that the aim of the Officer report (A.2) was to provide Members with an overview of current people development activities across the Council, key achievements, emerging priorities, and future plans. The programme supported the Council's strategic aim to build a skilled, inclusive and motivated workforce, whilst ensuring the Council's staff were in the best possible position as Tendring District Council (TDC) prepared staff for the transition through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Members were told that the training and development statistics provided within the Officer report were based on a 6-month period namely, 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025. Training identified was a combination of mandatory training, employees requesting additional support through learning, and managers' recommendations for their team members.

Officers informed the Committee that Career Track continued to play an essential role in supporting the Council's commitment to workforce development. In addition to delivering apprenticeships internally, Career Track supported other public sector employers, enabling shared skills development across the region. The contribution was particularly important given the economic challenges with the District and the need to strengthen local employment pathways. By enhancing progression routes and increasing access to accredited training, Career Track directly supported workforce resilience and helped address long-term skills needed within the District.

Apprenticeships

The Council also utilised the Apprenticeship Levy to fund a range of apprenticeship programmes delivered by external training providers. Those apprenticeships were used where specialist qualifications were required, or where programmes fell outside the scope of Career Track's provision. Current externally delivered apprenticeships included:

Regulatory, Compliance & Public Protection

- Level 4 Regulatory Compliance Officer
- Level 4 Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety

Planning, Surveying & Built Environment

- Level 6 Chartered Surveyor
- Level 6 Building Control Surveyor
- Level 7 Chartered Town Planner

Environmental Health & Public Health

- Level 6 Environmental Health Practitioner

Digital, Technology & Data

- Level 2 Digital Marketing
- Level 3 Multi-Channel Marketer
- Level 6 Digital and Technology Solutions Professional
- Level 7 Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist (integrated degree)

Finance, Audit & Corporate Services

- Level 7 CIPFA Accountancy/Taxation Professional (x2)
- Level 7 Internal Audit Professional

Human Resources, Learning & Development

- Level 3 CIPD Learning and Development

Community, Leisure & Operational Services

- Level 2 Leisure Team Member
- Level 2 Horticulture Construction Operative

The Committee was made aware that, as a large employer, the Council was able to use the levy funding to support apprenticeship training and assessment costs for employees undertaking qualifications that fell outside of the scope of Career Track's provision.

Members noted that the levy generated a funding allocation based on the Council's pay bill, and that could be used to support internal apprenticeship training. While employers might transfer up to 50% of their levy funds to other organisations, this Council had chosen to retain its levy allocation to ensure that 100% of available funds were invested in developing its own workforce. Where beneficial, the Council also accessed transferable levy funding from other organisations to maximise opportunities for staff.

The Committee was also told that a wide range of approved apprenticeship standards could be funded through the levy, and that information was routinely shared with managers to ensure that opportunities were fully utilised across service areas. This approach ensured resources were used efficiently, provided access to high-quality accredited training, and supported improved service delivery, staff development and retention.

Access to levy funding for Level 7 apprenticeships had ceased on 1 January 2026 for learners aged 22 and over; however, the Council had maximised the opportunity prior to this change by enrolling an additional four employees onto Level 7 programmes.

E-Learning and Development

The Council currently had two e-learning platforms, each offering a variety of online training courses accessible to Council staff via the Council's Intranet. Those systems were iHasco and Skillgate, and each platform offered the opportunity for staff to search for relevant training, to complete the course online at a time that suited them, and to attain a pass mark and, for some courses, a certificate. The e-learning platforms allowed employees to access high-quality content and enabled self-paced learning which could be incorporated into their working day. That was also a cost-effective way to deliver a

high number of courses in varying subject areas, to meet the needs of the services across the organisation. That method of training also allowed Officers to monitor and analyse employee engagement and access.

The courses available were easily accessible and supported the continuous professional development of the workplace. The iHasco e-learning platform specialised in offering training relating to health, safety and wellbeing, whereas the Skillgate e-learning platform was more focused on improving skills and knowledge.

Skillgate and iHasco were used to deliver the Council's mandatory training courses to its employees, allowing Officers to ensure the Council maintained a compliant workforce, and remained up to date with ever-changing legislation and best practice. Employees received regular email reminders from the e-learning systems until the mandatory courses had been completed.

There had been a reduction in the completion of e-learning courses in comparison to the last reporting period. That was primarily due to the previous mandatory Sexual Harassment Awareness Training which had launched in December 2024. Also, during March 2025 – June 2025 the seasonal beach patrol staff had been recruited which had required a high number of mandatory trainings, as part of their induction process.

iHasco E-Learning Data	
Total number of courses completed during that period:	1,005
Total number of different types of courses accessed:	65
Of those, number of mandatory training courses completed:	
• Sexual Harassment Awareness	61
• Fire Awareness	127
• Essential Health and Safety Training	129
• Environmental Awareness	50

Skillgate E-Learning Data	
Total number of courses completed during that period:	308
Total number of different types of courses accessed:	126
Of those, number of mandatory training courses completed:	
• Understanding the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Adults Level 1 and 2	25
• Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity	29
• Environmental Awareness at Work	28
• Lone Working Safety for Home and Remote Workers	25

Sponsored Qualifications Training

The Council actively supported employees to undertake professional qualifications that aligned with their roles, development needs and longer-term career aspirations. Through structured programmes, financial support and dedicated study time, the Council enabled staff to build specialist expertise, progress within career pathways, and to contribute to succession planning and retention.

During the past year, a wide range of qualifications had been completed or were currently being studied, including:

Regulatory, Governance & Public Administration

- Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) Foundation Course (x3)
- AEA Certificate
- AEA Practical Project Management
- PACE Interviewing (Police and Criminal Evidence)
- Data Protection

Housing & Community Services

- Level 3 Certificate in Housing (x2)
- Level 4 Certificate in Housing
- Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) – Housing Certificate in Practice
- Level 3 Chartered Institute of Housing (x3)

Environmental Health, Planning & Safety

- MSc Emergency Planning
- Business Continuity Institute (BCI) Training

Leadership, Management & Corporate Skills

- Level 7 Total Leadership
- Level 7 Professional Public Relations Diploma
- Level 3 CIPD Foundation (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

Finance & Professional Services

- Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) Level 3

Access to Higher Education & Academic Development

- Access to Higher Education Diploma
- BSc Access Modules (x2)

All employees were able to apply for sponsorship through the Council's Qualification Sponsorship Application process. Applicants were required to set out how the qualifications supported their role and service priorities, with managers confirming how it aligned with development needs and operational requirements. Applications were assessed on their merits, the organisational need, and available training budget.

Successful applicants entered into a legally binding Training Agreement, which enabled the Council to recover costs should an employee not complete the qualification or leave the organisation within two years of completing their studies. That approach ensured responsible use of public funds whilst encouraging commitment to completion.

The Council's investment in professional qualifications directly supported Section 7 of the Annual Governance Statement 2024-25, which focused on developing organisational capacity and leadership. Through a planned approach to professional development, the Council continued to build a skilled and resilient workforce, strengthened succession planning, and upheld strong governance and service standards.

Workforce Development

The Council was firmly committed to investing in the growth, capability, and career progression of the workforce. The Council recognised that empowering staff through continuous training and development was fundamental to continuing to deliver high-quality services and fostering a resilient workforce who felt confident as the Council prepared for LGR. In addition to e-learning and apprenticeships, the following training courses had been delivered between 1 July 2025 and 31 December 2025.

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Mental Health First Aid Refresher Training
- Sexual Harassment Training for Managers

Regulatory, Compliance & Enforcement

- PLPO training
- CSAS Training
- Fixed Penalty Notice Training
- Basic Vehicle Inspection Course (x2)
- Vehicle Examination Training

Safeguarding & Professional Standards

- Professional Boundaries Training
- Becoming a DSO (Designated Safeguarding Officer)

Customer Experience, Communication & Public Interaction

- Customer Care Excellence
- Effective Compliant Handling
- Media Training (x5)

Information Governance

- Freedom of Information Practical Training

Team, Leadership & Organisational Development

- MBTI Team Development for Sports and Leisure
- Medication Training

People Strategy Priorities

The Council's People Strategy 2024 – 2029 set out the organisation's long-term approach to supporting, developing and retaining its workforce. The Strategy underpinned the Corporate Plan and ensured that people management activity aligned with the Council's objectives and service priorities.

Workforce Planning

The Acting Head of People had undertaken one-to-one workforce planning sessions with Assistant Directors to review structures, identify critical roles and assess emerging skills gap.

Those discussions had also ensured that the use of career grades was being monitored effectively, with a clear focus on succession planning and the development of internal talent. As the organisation prepared for LGR and the transition to a unitary authority, consideration was being given to the length and timing of qualification pathways and career progression activity. Ensuring the workforce was equipped with the skills and capacity required for future operating models would be central to maintaining service continuity.

The Council continued to face recruitment challenges in key professional areas, including Planning and Environmental Health. To reduce reliance on agency staff and create a more stable and cost-effective workforce, the Council remained committed to a 'grow our own' approach. That included supporting staff to progress through Career Grade Schemes, which provided structured development routes linked to role competencies, technical skills and qualification achievement.

Career Grade Schemes were well-established across the organisation, with 357 posts currently operating within a career-grade structure. Those schemes offered clear and transparent pathways for progression, encouraged continuous improvement, and supported staff retention by providing opportunities for development and advancement. During the six-month monitoring period, 26 Officers had progressed through their career grades by completing qualifications or gaining the skills required for advancement.

Future Initiatives

Over the next two years, the Council would continue to work closely with senior managers to build a skilled, adaptable and resilient workforce capable of responding effectively to changes arising from LGR. Promoting continuous learning and development would remain central to preparing staff for new roles and responsibilities, whilst ensuring that employee wellbeing was supported through periods of transition.

Continued investment in qualifications, apprenticeships, and Career Grade Schemes would strengthen internal capability, support retention, and ensure that staff with the potential to progress were provided with opportunities to do so within available resources. That approach would help the organisation maintain stability, develop future leaders, and secure the skills needed for long-term service delivery.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee **NOTED** the contents of the People Development Update report.

25. **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) - A.3 - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27**

The Committee heard that the Localism Act 2011 (Chapter 8 – Pay Accountability, Sections 38-39) placed a statutory requirement on all local authorities to prepare and

publish a Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis. The Statement must set out the Council's policy in relation to the pay of its workforce for the forthcoming financial year.

Members were told that, under Schedule 2 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, the preparation and approval of the Pay Policy Statement was a function reserved to Full Council. The Human Resources and Council Tax Committee had, however, traditionally exercised responsibility for reviewing the draft Statement for recommendation onto Full Council for its approval and adoption.

Statutory Requirements

Officers informed Members that the Pay Policy Statement must, as a minimum, include the Council's policy on:

- the levels and elements of remuneration for each Chief Officer. *That included the Statutory Officer roles of Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Monitoring Officer, and Section 151 Officer. It also applied to Non-Statutory Chief Officers, as defined within the Council's Pay Policy Statement. For the purpose of the Statement, Chief Officers were those Officers who, in addition to the Statutory Officers named above, formed part of the Council's Senior Management Team.*
- the remuneration of the Council's lowest-paid employees, including the definition of 'lowest-paid' and the rationale for its adoption.
- the relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees.
- other aspects of Chief Officers' remuneration, including policies on recruitment, pay progression, performance-related pay, bonuses, termination payments, and transparency.

Members were also informed that Sections 38-41 of the Localism Act 2011 set out the statutory framework governing Pay Policy Statements. Section 41 required that decisions relating to Chief Officer remuneration must be made in accordance with the authority's Pay Policy Statement. The Council was also required to comply with wider statutory reporting requirements, including the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

Summary of the Draft Pay Policy Statement 2026/27

The draft Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 set out the Council's overarching approach to pay and remuneration. It affirmed the Council's adherence to the National Joint Council (NJC) National Pay Spine and its commitment to a fair, transparent and equitable pay framework. That included incremental progression based on length of service and performance, alongside compliance with nationally agreed pay awards.

The Statement also detailed:

- discretionary allowances available to statutory and non-statutory Officers;

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- the application of market forces supplements where required to support recruitment and retention;
 - policies relating to organisational change, redundancy payments, pay protection arrangements and access to the Local Government Pension Scheme;
 - provisions relating to mileage and subsistence, overtime, standby payments and other employment-related allowances; and
 - the Council's compliance with statutory reporting requirements, including the Gender Pay Gap, off-payroll working rules and the disclosure of senior salaries and severance payments.

Changes for 2026/27

Members noted that the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 reflected a number of updates to ensure continued compliance, transparency and alignment with national frameworks. The main changes related to updates in national pay arrangements, statutory reporting requirements, and associated workforce policies. Those included:

- implementation of the nationally agreed 2025/26 NJC pay award, including the removal of Spinal Column Point 2 from 1 April 2026, in accordance with the national pay spine changes;
- updated pay multiple calculations to reflect the revised lowest-paid spinal point and the associated forecast change in the pay multiple for 2026/27;
- updated gender pay gap figures and narrative in line with the latest statutory reporting period; and
- confirmation of the Council's use of Essex County Council's Managed Service Solution framework for temporary staffing, supporting consistent and compliant off-payroll engagement.

The Committee was also told that all amendments were shown in red text with the draft Statement (Appendix A) for ease of reference. The Policy had been reviewed to ensure it remained fully compliant with legislation, supported best practice in pay and reward, and maintained transparency for staff, Members and residents.

Officers also informed Members that the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee was invited to review the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 and provide any comments prior to its submission to Full Council.

The Committee was made aware that, following approval by Full Council on 31 March 2026, the Pay Policy Statement would be published on the Council's website, as required by the Localism Act, as soon as reasonably practicable.

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

RESOLVED that the draft Pay Policy Statement 2026/27, as set out in the Appendix to the Officer report (A.3), be recommended onto Full Council for its formal approval and adoption.

26. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) - A.4 - SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES (2026 - 2027) AND SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK FOR STAFF

The Committee heard that the Council had a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs. The updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (2026 – 2027) set out the Council's strategic approach to meeting those duties in accordance with the Children Act 1989, the Care Act 2014 and associated safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

Members noted that the Policy applied to all individuals working on behalf of the Council, including employees, elected Members, volunteers, contractors, providers commissioned by the Council, and organisations in receipt of Council funding. It established that safeguarding was a shared responsibility and that all individuals engaged in Council activity must recognise, report and respond to safeguarding concerns.

The Committee was told that the Policy was reviewed annually to ensure continued compliance with legislation, guidance issued by the Essex Safeguarding Boards and emerging best practice. The 2026 – 2027 update reflected recent changes in safeguarding legislation, recommendations from the Independent Review of Prevent (2023), and evolving safeguarding risks, including children missing from education. Safeguarding and Prevent training remained mandatory across the workforce and was delivered through the Council's e-learning platform.

The Committee was assured that clear accountability arrangements were set out. The Assistant Director (People) was the named Senior Officer for whistleblowing complaints and worked with Designated Safeguarding Leads and senior management on formal referrals. The Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery) continued to fulfil the statutory Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role for children and the non-statutory lead for adult safeguarding, in line with Essex County Council procedures. Safeguarding Champions provided additional advice and escalation routes across directorates.

Officers informed the Committee that the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff provided the detailed operational procedures required to implement the Policy. It outlined reporting pathways, staff responsibilities, whistleblowing arrangements, and supported a multi-agency approach to safeguarding across services.

Members also heard that Cabinet had approved the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (2026-2027) at its meeting held on 30 January 2026 as the Council's overarching safeguarding framework.

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

RESOLVED that the Safeguarding Handbook for Staff be approved as the Council's operational safeguarding procedures for the workforce, following Cabinet's agreement of the overarching Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (2026-2027).

27. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) - A.5 - UPDATED EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The Committee heard that the updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy provided an up-to-date and strengthened framework for the Council's internal arrangements and ensured continued alignment with the Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027, as previously approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 27 January 2023.

Members noted that the Policy set out the Council's commitment to fostering a fair, inclusive and respectful working environment for all employees, workers, apprentices, agency staff, volunteers and job applicants. It aimed to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and promoted good relations between people who shared protected characteristics and those who did not.

The Committee was reassured that the Policy reaffirmed the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, ensuring that employment practices, service delivery and decision-making actively supported equality and inclusion. It clearly explained the nine protected characteristics and provided definitions of prohibited conduct, including direct, indirect, associative and perceptive discrimination.

Officers informed the Committee that the Council was committed to ensuring dignity and respect at work and to making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and applicants. Recruitment, progression and training opportunities were based solely on merit, with inclusive and accessible processes designed to remove barriers. The Policy also reinforced the Council's ongoing commitment as a Disability Confident Leader, demonstrating strong leadership in disability inclusion.

Members also heard that robust requirements for monitoring, reporting and transparency were included, such as the publication of workforce diversity data, gender pay gap reporting and the setting of equality objectives in line with statutory obligations.

Officers made Members aware that the updated Policy had been developed with the support of Unison and would continue to be reviewed regularly. It strengthened the Council's commitment to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across all organisational practices, ensuring a culture in which individual differences were respected, valued and supported.

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

RESOLVED that the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee:

- a) formally adopts the Council's updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;

- b) notes that, in line with their delegated authority, the Assistant Director (People), in consultation with the Head of Paid Service, will make any necessary amendments to associated People policies arising from the update; and
- c) notes that, in line with that same delegated authority, the Assistant Director (People) will make any further amendments required to ensure ongoing legal compliance, including with the Employment Rights Act 2025.

28. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) - A.6 - TIME OFF AND FACILITIES AGREEMENT FOR TRADE UNION DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES

The Committee heard that the Council and Unison had a constructive and mutually beneficial working relationship that underpinned effective employee relations across the organisation. The updated Time Off and Facilities Agreement strengthened that partnership by providing clear, consistent arrangements that supported accredited Trade Union Representatives in carrying out their duties effectively. That approach promoted early resolution of issues, open communication, and a fair and well-run organisation.

Members were told that the agreement set out a consistent framework for supporting accredited Trade Union Representatives in line with statutory requirements and ACAS guidance. It outlined the principles governing reasonable paid time off for Union Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives, Union Learning Representatives and Union Equality Representatives. It confirmed entitlement to reasonable paid time during working hours for collective bargaining, individual representation, health and safety, learning and equality duties, as well as for approved Trade Union Congress (TUC) or Unison training.

Members were also made aware that Tendring District Council recognised Unison as its trade union for collective bargaining purposes, and the revised agreement reflected the Unison model and ACAS best practice.

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

RESOLVED that the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee:-

- a) formally adopts the Council's updated Time Off and Facilities for Trade Union Activities agreement, which consolidates and updates arrangements for Trade Union activities;
- b) notes that, in line with their existing delegated authority, the Assistant Director (People), in consultation with the Head of Paid Service, will make any necessary and consequential amendments to associated People policies and procedures arising from the implementation of this updated agreement; and
- c) notes that, using that same delegated authority, the Assistant Director (People), in consultation with the Head of Paid Service, will make any further amendments required to ensure ongoing legal compliance, including changes that will arise under the Employment Rights Act 2025, particularly in relation to Trade Union activities.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.38 pm

Chairman

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HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE

30th JULY 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

A.1 WORKFORCE UPDATE REPORT

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee with an update on current workforce statistics, including key trends in staffing levels, recruitment, retention, and diversity. This update supports the Committee's ongoing oversight of workforce matters, and reflects the Council's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement in its employment practices.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides Members with an overview of the Council's workforce profile, drawing on current data and comparing it with both local and national benchmarks. It forms part of the standard reporting cycle to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee.

As at the 31st May 2026, the reporting date used for this data collation, Tendring District Council employed 783 individuals, including casual workers and apprentices, equating to 501.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles. This comprised 427 full-time and 149 part-time staff, alongside 18 apprentices and 189 casual workers. The number of casual staff reflects the seasonal appointments including Seafront Staff, Leisure Attendants and Theatre Staff.

Recruitment and retention remain stable, with no significant impact currently being seen from the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation. The Council continues to attract strong levels of interest in vacancies, and recruitment and turnover trends are being closely monitored to ensure that any emerging workforce risks or changes in workforce trends can be identified and addressed at an early stage.

Despite ongoing national recruitment challenges, as highlighted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) Labour Market Outlook, which reported that 34% of public sector employers experienced hard-to-fill vacancies, the Council has continued to recruit successfully to a number of roles that have historically been difficult to fill. Recent appointments have been secured across key professional and operational areas, including accountancy, project management and leisure management, demonstrating the Council's ability to attract and retain skilled employees in a competitive labour market.

The Council's workforce spans a broad age range, from 16 to 81. Whilst retention levels remain strong across the organisation, effective workforce planning remains important to ensure that skills, knowledge and experience are retained, succession risks are managed, and service resilience is maintained over the longer term.

There has been no change in the reported workforce diversity figures since the last reporting period. Currently, 1.3% of contracted staff identify as being from an ethnic minority background, compared to 3.8% within the wider Tendring population. Similarly, 13 employees have declared

a disability, which is slightly higher than previously reported, although these figures may be under-represented due to the voluntary nature of disclosure.

The Council maintains a broadly balanced gender profile. Among full-time employees, 47.5% identify as male and 52.5% as female. At senior management level, gender representation is currently evenly balanced, with 50% of posts held by men and 50% by women, compared with 55.1% male and 44.9% female when previously reported.

As part of its commitment to meeting its equality obligations and maintaining an inclusive workplace, the Council is exploring a partnership arrangement with Colchester City Council and Braintree District Council to share a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead Officer. Subject to agreement, this shared resource would provide additional capacity and specialist expertise to support the Council's Equality Ambassador network, promote inclusive employment practices, and help ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities, whilst sharing costs and resources across the three authorities.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the content of this Workforce Update Report be noted.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The analysis of workforce data provides Members with statistical information relating to the Council's workforce and enables comparison with Tendring district and national averages. Regular monitoring of workforce, recruitment and retention data supports the early identification of emerging trends and enables the Council to respond appropriately to any changes, particularly as preparations continue for Local Government Reorganisation.

This is a standard report provided periodically to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee as part of its ongoing oversight of workforce matters.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

As this report provides a periodic workforce update for Members' information and oversight, no substantive alternative options have been identified. The report supports the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee's role in maintaining oversight of workforce and staffing matters in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

An alternative would be not to provide the update at this stage; however, this would reduce Members' visibility of current workforce trends, recruitment and retention data, and wider workforce planning considerations, particularly as preparations continue for Local Government Reorganisation.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Council's Corporate Plan, *Our Vision 2024–2028*, includes the theme of Financial Sustainability and Openness, with a commitment to continue delivering effective services while looking after the public purse. This requires careful planning, effective use of capacity, and clear prioritisation of the Council's time, money and assets.

This report supports the following Corporate Plan priorities:

- Working with partners to improve quality of life
- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities

By monitoring workforce trends and supporting effective workforce planning, the Council is better able to maintain service resilience, support employees, and contribute positively to the wider community.

This report also supports the Council's People Strategy 2024–2029 by helping to ensure that:

- the organisation complies with legislative and best practice requirements for employment;
- managers are appropriately knowledgeable and skilled in people management alongside their professional expertise; and
- Human Resources and Organisational Development practitioners are appropriately skilled and qualified to provide professional advice and guidance on operational and strategic workforce matters.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

The Council must ensure compliance with current employment legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Working Time Regulations 1998. The introduction of new employment legislation, including changes arising from the Employment Rights Act 2025 and associated implementation regulations, will require the Council to review and update relevant employment policies and procedures during 2026 and 2027.

The Council has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure their health, safety and welfare at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and other related legislation.

The Human Resources and Council Tax Committee has responsibility for the discharge of Part II miscellaneous functions, as set out in Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, as amended, and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Part 3 of the Council's Constitution. This includes decision-making on key Human Resource and Personnel issues not reserved by the Council or delegated to officers. The receipt of this workforce update supports the Committee's role in maintaining oversight of workforce and staffing matters, employment practices, workforce trends and organisational capacity.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Head of Paid Service holds delegated authority to determine the overall staffing structure, ensuring alignment with organisational needs and strategic priorities. The Director of People holds delegated authority to make operational decisions and implement changes to Human Resources policies and procedures, including those necessary to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice, in consultation with the Head of Paid Service where appropriate.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, which is provided for update and oversight purposes.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY	
This report does not require any additional resources. The following information is provided in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:	
A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;	Regular monitoring of the Council's workforce supports effective oversight of staffing resources and assists the authority in ensuring that sufficient capacity is in place to maintain service delivery.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks.	The report supports informed decision-making, effective risk management and alignment with legal requirements. Regular workforce monitoring and the review of people practices and policies help to ensure continued compliance with employment legislation and recognised best practice.
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	The Council uses workforce data and performance insights to support effective service delivery and workforce planning. As a major local employer and Anchor organisation, the Council also contributes to the development of the local workforce and the wider economic and social wellbeing of the district.
MILESTONES AND DELIVERY	
a) Management Team 7 th July 2026. b) Human Resources and Council Tax Committee 30 th July 2026.	
ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION	
Failure to monitor the authority's staffing levels, workforce demographics and vacancies could affect the Council's ability to respond effectively to service demand, workforce pressures and emerging organisational risks.	
OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT	
The local union branch executive is consulted on staff change management programmes and is regularly updated on the authority's staffing levels. No specific consultation has been undertaken in relation to this update report.	
EQUALITIES	
Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 establishes the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to: a. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; b. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and c. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.	

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership is also a protected characteristic, but only in relation to the first limb of the duty.

The Council is committed to being an inclusive employer and a Family Friendly Employer in its people policies and practices.

As a Disability Confident Leader and Anchor organisation, the Council will continue to identify and facilitate ways to recruit individuals who may experience barriers to employment. The Council will also seek to encourage and work with local communities and employers to support inclusive employment practice more widely.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

Social value is defined through the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which requires public sector organisations and their suppliers to consider how commissioned and procured services can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area.

Although this report does not relate directly to a procurement exercise, the Council seeks to lead by example as a major local employer. This includes following recognised best practice, complying with employment legislation and supporting inclusive employment practices.

As a major local employer and service provider, the Council plays an important anchor role within the district, supporting local workforce development, contributing to the wider determinants of health and wellbeing, and promoting economic and social value.

IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Effective workforce monitoring is essential as the Council prepares for Local Government Reorganisation. By maintaining a clear and up-to-date understanding of workforce composition, skills, and capacity, the Council is better positioned to manage change, support staff through transition, and ensure continuity of service delivery. Monitoring also enables informed decision-making around resource planning, succession strategies, and the identification of potential risks or gaps during the reorganisation process.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2050

This report has no direct implications for the Council's aspiration to be net zero by 2050.

OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of this report in respect of the matters set out below. Any significant issues are identified where relevant.

Crime and Disorder	Not applicable.
Health Inequalities	Employment is a significant factor in supporting individual health and wellbeing. As a major local employer, the Council contributes to the wider determinants of health and wellbeing in the district.

Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	This report does not involve the provision of financial assistance or confer any economic advantage to external organisations; therefore, subsidy control considerations are not applicable in this instance.
Area or Ward affected	Not applicable.
ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION	
There is no additional relevant information arising from this report.	

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND
In April 2024, the Payroll and Human Resources teams implemented iTrent, a new integrated Payroll and HR software system. The system supports the monitoring and analysis of workforce data and enables statistical reports and workforce profiles to be generated. <u>Workforce Statistics</u> As at the 31st May 2026, of the total workforce of 783, Tendring employed 427 full-time staff. The gender balance of the full-time staff is: 203 males* (47.5%) and 224 females* (52.5%). For the remaining 149 part-time staff, 24 are males* (16.2%) and 125 are females* (83.8%). The remaining workforce are made up of 18 apprentices and 189 staff employed on a casual basis. (*The terms 'female' and 'male' used throughout this report refer to how individuals have identified themselves.) <u>Senior Management Gender Representation</u> As at 31 May 2026, there were 77 senior managers (Grade 9 and above) across the organisation, with 37 males* and 40 females*, indicating a balanced gender representation at leadership level. The Council's Management Team currently has a 28.6% female representation. <u>Staff Retention Data</u> Since the last Workforce Update report was submitted to the Committee in October 2025, a total of 66 individuals have been appointed to the organisation generated from advertised vacancies, up to 31st May 2026, of which 29 are males* and 37 are females* (some vacancies were advertised prior to the reporting period). Within those appointments, the following types of contract terms were issued: • 14 permanent employees • 9 temporary employees • 8 Career Track apprentices and 1 external apprentice • 35 casual workers

The People Team introduced a new recruitment module in December 2025, delivered through the MHR iTrent HR and Payroll system. This has replaced the previous recruitment and advertising process.

During the reporting period since the last Committee was held on 21st October 2025, until 31st May 2026, the People Team has advertised 57 vacant posts. These vacancies were advertised both externally on the Council's website and internally via the Council's intranet, where posts were considered suitable opportunities for internal staff progression. The advertised posts generated a total of 638 applications received by the People Team.

During this reporting period, 37 staff left the organisation, of which 27 were full-time and 10 were part-time, with 9 Career Track apprentices completing their training programme. Of these 9 apprentices, 7 gained further employment within the Council, one apprentice progressed to a Level 4 Apprenticeship, and one gained external employment. Some vacant posts are still open to recruitment, while others form part of minor structure changes to better meet the service demands of the organisation.

Workforce Changes

All proposed changes to the Council's established workforce structure must be approved through the Workforce Panel, via submission of a Workforce Approval Proforma. The panel, managed by the People Team, comprises the Corporate Director Finance and IT and the Acting Head of People, with permanent approvals authorised by Ian Davidson, Chief Executive. Between 1st October 2025 and 31st May 2026, 120 proformas have been processed, covering a range of employment changes and other contractual amendments. In addition, 15 Career Grade progression requests have been approved by the Acting Head of People since the previous Committee report.

The Council continues to promote the organisation as an employer of choice, supporting family-friendly practices including flexible working, hybrid working, being accredited by the Essex County Council Charter Accreditation Scheme for Family Friendly Employers, and implementing a Fostering Friendly Policy and Family Leave and Support Policy.

Disability Profile

Of the 576 contracted staff (excluding apprentices and casuals), 13 employees have self-declared that they have a disability, which shows a change of 4 additional self-declarations since the last Committee report. Members should be reminded that the declaration of a disability is discretionary by employees, and we are only able to report on data submitted.

Ethnic Diversity

The 2021 Census states that ethnic minority groups (i.e. all groups other than White) make up 18.3% of the population in England and Wales, and 3.8% of the Tendring population. The current representation at the Council is 1.6%. Members should note that 442 staff have chosen not to disclose their ethnicity, which limits the ability to provide an accurate representation of our workforce in this statistic.

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

Under legislation that came into effect in April 2017, UK employers with over 250 employees are required to publish their gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is a mathematical indicator of the gender balance within an organisation. It measures the difference between the average earnings of all male and female employees, irrespective of their role or seniority. It is different from equal pay, which is about ensuring that men and women are paid the same for carrying out work of equal value.

Tendring District Council is confident that as a result of regular analysis and monitoring, we meet our equal pay obligations. This includes ensuring that all officers are paid fairly, have equal access to jobs and that employment practices are supportive of families and work-life balance. Our gender pay gap figures have been calculated in line with the regulations set out in the gender pay gap reporting legislation.

As previously reported, the Council's gender pay gap remains below the UK average of 6.9% (ONS April 2025). An overview of Tendring's pay gap figures is as follows, with data based on the 'snapshot date' of 31 March 2025.

Tendring's figures for 2025/26 are as follows: -

- The male* mean** hourly rate is 4.0% (£0.70) higher than the female* mean hourly rate.
- The female* median*** hourly rate is 0.8% (£0.12) higher than the male* median hourly rate.

***The mean or average is determined by adding all the data points in a population and then dividing the total by the number of points.*

****The median is determined by arranging all the observations in order, from smallest to largest value, and the median is the middle value.*

Age Profile

As we are measuring a complete workforce, we can see a wider spectrum of ages across the organisation, with the employee age range being from 16 to 81. The highest proportion of staff falls within the 51 to 60 age brackets, with the next highest age range being 21 to 30 years. However, this is closely followed by the age range of 41 to 50 years. This indicates that the Council is retaining staff at all ages.

Sickness Absence

The reported absence figure for this reporting period is 6.44 days absence per employee, which shows the rate to be above the indicated national level at 4.4 days per employee. This may be reflected by the reporting period which includes the winter months of the year.

Sickness absence is closely monitored via the HR database system, iTrent, which enables any potential long-term ill health cases to be identified at an early stage. The top three system-recorded reasons for absence during the reporting period were viral illness, stomach-related illness, and cold/influenza.

In addition, the Council has supported seven employees with long-term ill health conditions, including cancer treatment, heart conditions and scheduled operations. Employees' general health and wellbeing continues to be supported through a fully funded Employee Assistance

Programme, flexible working options, Council-subsidised gym membership, flu vaccinations and access to Occupational Health support.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE ETC.

Not applicable – this report provides an update only.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

Office for National Statistics: Census 2021 – [Census - Office for National Statistics](#)
Gender Pay Gap Report - [GPG - 2025 - 26 Reporting Year.pdf](#)

APPENDICES

None.

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Name	Marcia Fuller
Job Title	Acting Head of People
Email/Telephone	mfuller@tendringdc.gov.uk

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HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE

30th JULY 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

A.2 EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION REPORT

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update Members of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee on the implications of the Employment Rights Act 2025 for the Council's employment policies, procedures and working practices. The report outlines the action being taken to maintain compliance with current and forthcoming employment legislation and to support consistent, fair and effective people management across the Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Employment Rights Act 2025 received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025 and introduces a significant programme of employment law reform, with provisions being implemented in phases during 2026 and 2027.

In response, the Council has undertaken a comprehensive compliance audit of its employment policies, procedures and working practices. This has ensured that current requirements are reflected, areas requiring further action have been identified, and preparations are in place for forthcoming legislative changes where implementation dates, regulations or statutory guidance are still awaited.

The audit resulted in a prioritised action plan to manage compliance risk and support timely policy review. A number of core employment policies have already been updated to address identified gaps, reflect changes now in force, and prepare for further reforms expected in October 2026, January 2027 and later during 2027.

The key implementation dates for the phased introduction of the Employment Rights Act 2025 are summarised below, based on the Government's published implementation timeline. Future implementation dates remain subject to commencement regulations, consultation and/or further statutory guidance where applicable.

6th April 2026

- Collective redundancy protective award – doubling the maximum period of protective award from 90 days to 180 days.
- Day 1 Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave.
- Strengthened protection for workers who 'blow the whistle' on sexual harassment.
- Bereaved Partners' Paternity Leave – enabling bereaved fathers and partners to take up to 52 weeks' leave if the mother or primary adopter dies within the first year of the child's life.
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) – removing the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) and waiting period.
- Action plans on gender equality, with employers with 250 or more employees encouraged to publish steps being taken to reduce the gender pay gap and support employees experiencing menopause.

7th April 2026

- The establishment of the Fair Work Agency.

August 2026 (subject to commencement and/or further statutory guidance)

- Electronic and workplace balloting for Statutory Trade Union Ballots.

October 2026 (subject to commencement and/or further statutory guidance)

- The duty to inform workers of the right to join a Trade Union.
- Requiring employers to take 'all reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of their employees.
- Introducing employer obligations in relation to third-party harassment.
- Employment tribunal time limits.

January 2027 (subject to commencement and/or further statutory guidance)

- Reduction of the unfair dismissal qualifying period from two years to six months for dismissals from 1 January 2027, alongside changes to compensatory awards for successful unfair dismissal claims, including removal of the statutory cap. Compensation will continue to be assessed by employment tribunals by reference to actual and projected losses evidenced by the claimant.
- Fire and rehire protections.

During 2027 (subject to commencement and/or further statutory guidance)

- Mandatory gender equality action plans and menopause action plans, following the voluntary action plan arrangements introduced from April 2026.
- Enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant women and new mothers.
- Commencement of regulations setting out specific steps that employers must take to prevent sexual harassment, following consultation.
- Collective redundancy consultation threshold changes.
- Flexible working reforms.
- Bereavement leave, including pregnancy loss.
- Introduction of the right to guaranteed hours, reasonable notice of shifts and short notice payments.

Further detail on the Council's employment policies updated as part of this work is included in the Background section of this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S)**It is recommended that:**

- (a) the contents of this report be noted, including the actions taken to date under the relevant officer delegation arrangements to ensure the Council's employment policies, procedures and working practices remain compliant with the Employment Rights Act 2025; and**
- (b) the Committee notes that Officers will continue to review and update the Council's employment policies, procedures and working practices as further provisions of the Employment Rights Act 2025 are implemented during 2026 and 2027, and that further informatives will be provided, as necessary, to the Human Resources and**

Council Tax Committee on resulting policy changes in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is important that the Council's employment policies, procedures and working practices remain compliant with the Employment Rights Act 2025 as the new provisions are introduced throughout 2026 and 2027. Keeping these policies up to date will support fair, consistent and legally compliant decision-making, provide clear guidance to managers and employees, and help ensure that employees are supported through clear information about their statutory entitlements and the procedures that apply at key points in their working lives. This includes areas such as sickness absence, family leave, bereavement, whistleblowing, harassment prevention and probationary processes.

If the legislative changes are not reflected in policy and practice, the Council could be exposed to increased employment disputes, tribunal claims, financial penalties and reputational risk. It could also create operational difficulties in applying employment processes consistently once the new requirements are in force, particularly in areas such as payroll administration, sickness absence management, family leave, probationary processes, harassment prevention and case management.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There is no option to take no action, as the Council must comply with the relevant legislative requirements once they are brought into force.

This report is presented to support transparency and appropriate Member oversight of the Council's employment policy response to the new legislation.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

A revised Corporate Plan and Vision were approved by Full Council at its meeting on 28 November 2023. One of the six included themes is Financial Sustainability and Openness, with a commitment to continue to deliver effective services and get things done whilst looking after the public purse; that means carefully planning what we do, managing capacity and prioritising what we focus our time, money and assets on.

The proposals in this report align with:

The Council's Our Vision (Corporate Plan) 2024/28 priorities of:

- Working with partners to improve quality of life
- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities

By supporting our employees—many of whom are also residents—we contribute positively to both workforce wellbeing and the wider community.

Tendring District Council's People Strategy 2024 – 2029 by ensuring that:

- The organisation complies with the legislative and best practice requirements for employment;

- Managers are appropriately knowledgeable and skilled in people management in addition to their professional expertise;
- Human Resources and Organisational Development practitioners are appropriately skilled and qualified to provide professional advice and guidance on operational and strategic development and practice.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

The Council is required to comply with current employment legislation, including the Employment Rights Act 2025. The Act received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025 and introduces additions and amendments to existing employment legislation, including the Employment Rights Act 1996. The relevant provisions are being commenced in phases during 2026 and 2027, and the Council's policies, procedures and working practices are being reviewed and updated to reflect the requirements as they come into force.

The Human Resources and Council Tax Committee has responsibility for the discharge of relevant non-executive functions, including those set out in Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, as amended, and as reflected in Appendix 1 to Part 3 of the Council's Constitution. This includes decision-making on key Human Resource and Personnel issues not reserved to Council or delegated to officers.

Part 3 of the Constitution also provides that decisions may be made by officers, including where appropriate in consultation with Members, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation to Officers. Operational employment policy and procedure changes required to ensure compliance with legislation and recognised good practice may therefore be implemented through officer delegation, including by the Director of People, in consultation with the Head of Paid Service and the Chair of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee where appropriate.

On that basis, the policy changes set out in this report are being progressed under the relevant constitutional delegation arrangements and are presented to the Committee for noting and oversight.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, which is provided as an update. However, failure to implement the required legislative changes could increase the risk of employment disputes, tribunal claims and associated costs.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

This report does not require additional resources.

The following comments are provided in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;

There are no direct financial implications arising from the introduction of the Employment Rights Act 2025, other than the potential risk of litigation or associated costs arising from non-compliance.

B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks.

The Council ensures strong governance through informed decision-making, effective risk management, and alignment with legal requirements. Regular monitoring and updating

	of the authority's people practices and policies in line with recognised best practice helps the Council remain compliant with new and upcoming employment legislation.
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.	Compliance with the Employment Rights Act 2025 supports the Council's economy, efficiency and effectiveness by reducing employment risk, promoting consistent people management, and ensuring policies remain clear, current and fairly applied. This helps minimise disputes, tribunal claims, financial and reputational costs, while supporting workforce stability and continued service delivery.
MILESTONES AND DELIVERY	
(a) Management Team 14 th July 2026. (b) Human Resources and Council Tax Committee 30 th July 2026.	
ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION	
Failure to update the Council's policies and procedures in response to the Employment Rights Act 2025 may expose the Council to an increased risk of employment disputes, tribunal claims and associated financial and reputational consequences. This risk will be mitigated through the adoption of updated procedures, clear guidance to managers, and evidence-based decision-making.	
OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT	
The local UNISON Branch has been updated and consulted on changes to the Council's employment policies and procedures.	
EQUALITIES	
Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a Public Sector Equality Duty on the Council. In exercising its functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to: a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not; and c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership is also a protected characteristic for the purpose of eliminating unlawful discrimination. The employment policy updates outlined in this report support the Council's existing commitment to fair, consistent and legally compliant treatment of employees and workers. In particular, the changes relating to family leave, sickness absence, whistleblowing, harassment prevention and pregnancy and maternity protections help ensure that the Council's established employment practices remain current, inclusive and aligned with the latest legislative requirements.	

No adverse equality impacts have been identified from the matters set out in this report. Where individual policy changes require further assessment, equality considerations will continue to be reviewed as part of the Council's normal policy development and consultation processes.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public sector organisations, when procuring relevant services, to consider how what is being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

The Council seeks to lead by example as a major local employer. This includes following recognised best practice and ensuring full compliance with legislation.

The Council is also an anchor organisation. Anchor organisations are usually large organisations which are local to place and have the leverage to maximise social value through their role as workplace developers, employers and procurers, their core business and the linkages they have to the place in which they operate.

IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Some of the legislative changes outlined in this report will take effect on the dates prescribed by Parliament, and the Council's employment policies are being updated to reflect these requirements. In preparation for working together within a unitary authority, the Council is working closely with Colchester City Council and Braintree District Council to ensure that updated and amended employment policies are aligned wherever possible. This collaborative approach will support greater consistency across the existing councils and help to identify opportunities to develop shared approaches as Local Government Reorganisation progresses.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2050

This report has no direct implications for the Council's aspiration to be net zero by 2050.

OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder	Not applicable.
Health Inequalities	Employment is known to be a significant factor supporting the health of individuals. The Council is a major employer in the area contributing to the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	This report does not involve the provision of financial assistance or confer any economic advantage on external organisations; therefore, subsidy control considerations are not applicable in this instance.
Area or Ward affected	Not applicable.

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

None

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

A comprehensive compliance audit was carried out in March 2026 in response to the Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Government's published implementation timeline. The audit considered the Council's employment policies, procedures and working practices against the provisions already in force and those expected to be commenced during 2026 and 2027. It identified areas where policy updates were required to maintain legal compliance, reduce employment risk and provide clear operational guidance to managers and employees.

Sickness Absence Policy and Agency and Casual Worker Policy

From 6 April 2026, statutory sick pay is payable from the first day of sickness absence, with the former waiting period removed and the Lower Earnings Limit no longer applying. This means that workers who previously earned below the qualifying threshold may now be entitled to statutory sick pay. The relevant policies have been updated to reflect the revised statutory entitlement and to support consistent application across the workforce.

Whistleblowing Policy

From 6 April 2026, whistleblowing protections have been strengthened to expressly cover protected disclosures relating to workplace sexual harassment. The Whistleblowing Policy has been updated to reflect this legal position, signpost relevant disclosures as protected, and clarify reporting routes, confidentiality arrangements and support available to workers.

Family Leave and Support Policy

From 6 April 2026, paternity leave became a day one right and the previous requirement for 26 weeks' continuous service was removed. The restriction on taking paternity leave after shared parental leave has also been removed. The Family Leave and Support Policy has been updated to reflect these statutory changes and to include provisions for bereaved partner's paternity leave, including entitlement, eligibility, notice and evidence requirements.

Shared Parental Leave Policy

From 6 April 2026, unpaid parental leave became a day one right, removing the previous requirement for one year's service. The Shared Parental Leave Policy has been updated to reflect this change and to remove outdated restrictions relating to the sequencing of paternity leave and shared parental leave.

Time Off for Dependants

The Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026 provide for up to 52 weeks' unpaid leave where the child's mother or primary adopter dies within the first year of the child's life. The Time Off for Dependants provisions have been reviewed alongside the wider family leave policy updates to ensure that managers and employees have clear guidance on the available statutory and policy support.

Probationary Procedure

The unfair dismissal qualifying period is expected to reduce from two years to six months for dismissals from 1 January 2027, subject to commencement and any further regulations or

guidance. To reduce employment risk and support timely suitability decisions, the Council's probationary period has been reduced to three months, with any extension limited to one month. This approach ensures that probationary decisions are made well within the anticipated statutory window and aligns with recognised employment practice and the approach being developed with partner authorities.

Harassment and Bullying Policy

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 introduced a preventative duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees. The Employment Rights Act 2025 further strengthens this duty by requiring employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and introduces additional employer obligations in relation to third-party harassment, with relevant provisions expected to take effect from October 2026.

The Harassment and Bullying Policy has been updated to reflect the strengthened preventative duty, including the Council's approach to third-party harassment, reporting channels, management responsibilities, employee support and the potential consequences of inappropriate conduct.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY COUNCIL/CABINET/COMMITTEE ETC.

Officer decision records relating to the updated employment policies will be retained in accordance with the Council's governance requirements outlined above.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Employment Rights Act 2025
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Plan to Make Work Pay and Employment Rights Act: timeline update
- ACAS Employment Rights Act 2025 guidance
- Equality Act 2010, including Section 149 Public Sector Equality Duty
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012
- Subsidy Control Act 2022 and associated statutory guidance

APPENDICES

None.

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Name	Marcia Fuller
Job Title	Acting Head of People
Email/Telephone	mfuller@tendringdc.gov.uk