

Record of Officer's Decision

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Date of Decision:	21 July 2026
Decision Maker (Officer):	Katie Wilkins, Director of People
Authority for Delegated Decision (Cabinet/Committee Decision or Scheme of Delegation – provide reference):	This decision is made under the delegated authority granted to the Director of People, as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution and the relevant Scheme of Delegation to Officers. Consultation has been undertaken with the Head of Paid Service and the Chair of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee, in accordance with the Council's constitutional requirements.
Identify which Portfolio Holder(s)/Committee Chairman consulted?	Cllr Jayne Chapman – Chair of the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee.
Ward Member(s) consulted?	N/A
Is it a Key Decision?	No
Is it subject to call-in?	No
Decision Made:	• To formally approve and adopt the revised Probationary Procedure, attached as Appendix A, including the reduction of the standard probationary period from six months to three months, with provision for extensions where appropriate. • To authorise implementation of the revised Probationary Procedure and the associated communication and guidance arrangements necessary to support its introduction. • To keep the implementation and effectiveness of the revised Probationary Procedure under review as further provisions of the Employment Rights Act 2025 are brought into force and to make any consequential amendments required, in accordance with the Director of People's delegated authority. •
Reason for Decision (if a report was produced to support the Decision, refer to or attach it):	The decision is made following a review of the Council's Probationary Procedure, as detailed in the accompanying report. The revised procedure is required to ensure the Council's approach remains legally compliant, fair and operationally effective in light of forthcoming employment legislation, including changes to unfair dismissal qualifying rights. The revised

	procedure supports earlier, structured probation reviews, timely feedback and decision-making, and appropriate support for employees and managers.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	Legal, finance, equality and risk considerations are set out in the accompanying report. In summary, the revised procedure supports compliance with current and forthcoming employment legislation, has no direct budgetary implications, must be applied consistently with equality obligations, and supports employees and managers through clear expectations, timely feedback and appropriate support, while also reducing the risk of employment disputes arising from delayed or poorly evidenced probation decisions.
NEW: Details of Local Government Reorganisation and/or Devolution considerations	There are no direct Local Government Reorganisation or Devolution implications arising from this decision. However, maintaining legally compliant employment procedures supports workforce stability and good governance during any period of organisational change. These changes have also been considered in consultation with Colchester and Braintree councils.
Details of any Alternative Options Considered and rejected (together with reasons):	The option of retaining the existing six-month probationary period was considered but rejected for the reasons set out in the accompanying report, principally because earlier structured review points are required to ensure fair, supportive timely and legally compliant decision-making.
Details of any declarations of interest (by Portfolio Holder/Committee Chairman who was consulted by the officer, which related to the decision). If relevant, a note of the dispensation granted by the Monitoring Officer:	N/A
Reason Decision, or supporting Report, is not published: <i>Tick one or more of the specific exemptions, and give more information in the final box with regards to why the exemption applies and outweighs the public interest test.</i>	Not applicable – Decision and supporting material to be published YES
	If Report is not to be published – tick one of the following boxes:
	The report supporting the Decision contains confidential information
	The Report supporting the Decision falls within an exemption pursuant to Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 Information:
	Relates to an individual

	Likely to reveal the identity of an individual
	Relating to financial or business affairs of a person or organisation
	Relates to a claim for legal professional privilege in legal proceedings
	Reveals that the Council proposes to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or to make an order or direction under any enactment
	Relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime
	And is exempt if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information Reasons: N/A – decision to be published.

Officers

Katie Wilkins Title: **Director of People**

In consultation with:

Ian Davidson Title: **Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service**

Dated: 21 July 2026