
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES AND COUNCIL TAX
COMMITTEE,
HELD ON THURSDAY, 30TH JULY, 2026 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Chapman BEM (Chairman), Guglielmi, S Honeywood, Smith and G Stephenson
Also Present:	Councillor P Honeywood
In Attendance:	Katie Wilkins (Director (People)), Marcia Fuller (Acting Head of People), Debianné Messenger (Work Based Learning Manager), Bethany Jones (Democratic Services Officer) and Katie Koppenaal (Democratic Services Officer)

1. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman (Councillor Chapman BEM) welcomed the new Members (Councillors S Honeywood and Smith) to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Calver (Vice-Chairman) (with no substitution).

3. 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 Monday 2 March 2026, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

5. 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.

6. CAREER TRACK - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on the work of Career Track and watched a video involving three previous apprentices who answered the following questions:-

- *What is your name, your apprenticeship and where is your work location?;*
- *What is something you can do now, that you could not do when you first started?;*
- *How has your apprenticeship help progress in your career?;*
- *Who has supported you the most throughout your journey, and how have they helped?; and*

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- *What would you say to someone thinking about applying for an apprenticeship?*

Councillor Guglielmi, on behalf of the Committee, told Officers of their continued appreciation to the Career Track team for their work and achievements.

The Committee noted the forgoing.

7. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) - A.1 - WORKFORCE UPDATE

The Committee heard that the Officer report (A.1) provided Members with an overview of the Council's workforce profile, which drew on current data and compared it with both local and national benchmarks. It formed part of the standard reporting cycle to the Human Resources and Council Tax Committee.

Members were told that, as at the 31 May 2026, the reporting date used for the data collation, Tendring District Council (TDC) employed 783 individuals, including casual workers and apprentices, which equated to 501.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles. That comprised of 427 full-time and 149 part-time staff, alongside 18 apprentices and 189 casual workers. The number of casual staff reflected seasonal appointments including Seafront Staff, Leisure Attendants and Theatre Staff.

Officers informed the Committee that recruitment and retention remained stable, with no significant impact currently being seen from the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Council continued to attract strong levels of interest in vacancies, and recruitment and turnover trends were being closely monitored to ensure that any emerging workforce risks or changes in workforce trends could be identified and addressed at an early stage.

The Committee was made aware that, despite ongoing national recruitment challenges, as highlighted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) Labour Market Outlook, which had reported that 34% of public sector employers experienced hard-to-fill vacancies, the Council had continued to recruit successfully to a number of roles that had historically been difficult to fill. Recent appointments had 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.

Members noted that the Council's workforce spanned a broad range, from ages 16 to 81. Whilst retention levels remained strong across the organisation, effective workforce planning remained important to ensure that skills, knowledge and experience were retained, succession risks were managed, and service resilience was maintained over the longer term.

The Committee was also told that there had been no change in the reported workforce diversity since the last reporting period. Currently, 1.3% of contracted staff identified as being from an ethnic minority background, compared to 3.8% within the wider Tendring population. Similarly, 13 employees had declared a disability, which was slightly higher than previously reported, although those figures might be under-represented due to the voluntary nature of disclosure.

The Council maintained a broadly balanced gender profile. Among full-time employees, 47.5% identified as male and 52.5% as female. At senior management level, gender

representation was 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 was 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, the 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.

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

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Workforce Update Report.

8. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (PEOPLE) - A.2 - EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

The Committee heard that the Employments Rights Act 2025 had received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025 and that it had introduced a significant programme of employment law reform, with provisions being implemented in phases during 2026 and 2027.

Members were told that, in response, the Council had undertaken a comprehensive compliance audit of its employment policies, procedures and working practices. That had ensured the current requirements were reflected, areas that had required further action had been identified and preparations were in place for forthcoming legislative changes where implementation dates, regulations or statutory guidance were still awaited.

Officers informed the Committee that the audit had resulted in a prioritised action plan to manage compliance risk and support timely policy review. A number of core employment policies had 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 Committee was made aware that the key implementation dates for the phased introduction of the Employment Rights Act 2025 were summarised below, based on the Government's published implementation timeline. Future implementation dates remained subject to commencement regulations, consultation and/or further statutory guidance where applicable.

6 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 died within the first year of the child's life;
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) – removing the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) and waiting period; and
- 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.

7 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; and
- 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 would continue to be assessed by employment tribunals by reference to actual and projected losses evidenced by the claimant.

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; and
- Introduction of the right to guaranteed hours, reasonable notice of shifts and short notice payments.

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

RESOLVED that:-

- a) the contents of the Officer report (A.2) 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.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.16 pm

Chairman