

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 23 September 2025.

PRESENT: Ms L Kemkaran (Chair), Mr B Collins, Mr M Ellis, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mr M Harrison, Mr M A J Hood (Substitute for Rich Lehmann), Ms I Kemp, Miss D Morton, Ms C Nolan, Mr H Rayner and Mr P Webb

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Chief Executive), Mr P Royel (Director of HR & OD), Ms D Christie (Assistant Director People Operations), Mrs K Hunter (Head of People Strategy), Ms J Clayton (HR & OD Manager) and Mrs A Taylor (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny))

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 1)

Apologies were received from Mr Hook and Mr Lehmann for whom Mr Hood was substituting.

2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.

(Item 2)

There were none for this meeting.

3. Annual Workforce Profile Report

(Item 3)

1. Diane Christie introduced this report which provided full year information on the staffing levels in the various sectors of the Authority's workforce, together with comparative information from recent years. The report also provided information on the demographics of the current workforce.
2. In response to a question about agency staff Ms Christie confirmed that there was a long term trend in relation to agency staff but the costs of this were reducing. The use of agency staff was particularly focused in the Children, Young People and Education Directorate.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the latest annual workforce profile for 2024-25.

4. Annual Employee Relations Activity Report

(Item 4)

1. Jane Clayton introduced this report which updated Committee Members on employee relations case work activity for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
2. The report reflected the range of Employee Relations cases being managed by KCC managers and provided a comparison of the level of case activity over the last three years.
3. There had been an increase in the overall number of formal cases that were supported by the HR/OD Team during 2024/25 in comparison to the previous year. The highest proportion of cases were managed in the CYPE (48%) and ASCH (33%) Directorates – these directorates also have the largest number of staff.
4. In response to a question about the action taken when proper processes were not followed Mrs Clayton explained that any such issues would be escalated through management with independent reviews at the appropriate time within the process. It was considered that the numbers set out within the report demonstrated that KCC was robust in employee relations case activity.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the report of employee relations activity including senior officer appeals hearings and Employment Tribunal claims.

5. People Strategy Evaluation

(Item 5)

1. Kerena Hunter introduced this report which set out the third-year assessment of the People Strategy, with an indication of activity that had been undertaken within each of the core themes.
2. The People Strategy provided an overarching strategic statement of intent and aspiration for KCC as an employer. Within the Strategy were four core themes:
 - a. Maximising organisational capacity, capability, and development
 - b. Creating an environment for people to thrive
 - c. Supporting our people as individuals
 - d. Attracting, retaining, and maximising our talent.
3. Ms Hunter responded to the questions of detail and noted comments, which included the following:
 - a. In relation to secondments, these were well used and the authority also looked at workforce planning and succession planning in relation to managerial roles.
 - b. The report confirmed that at March 2025 there had been 175 new apprenticeship training starts in the non-schools workforce, in the previous year. In response to a question Ms Christie explained that KCC was part of a national apprenticeship group which worked across the public sector to review targets and track the number of starts against the benchmark figure, KCC performed well in relation to this. The apprenticeship levy sharing pot provided positive benchmarking with other organisations.

- c. In relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Ms Hunter explained that this informed future planning discussions but further details were expected following the November submission deadline. In relation to apprenticeships KCC was reviewing what might remain possible and was continuing proactively, there would still be hard to recruit to roles such as social workers and there was a need to ensure work continued in relation to this.
- d. Following a question about retention of staff, Ms Christie stated that Corporate Management Team (CMT) had worked hard to provide consistent messages to staff in relation to LGR ensuring there was understanding and clarity around the next steps.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the progress of the People Strategy in its third year and the detailed analysis.

6. Exclusion of the Press and Public

(Item 6)

RESOLVED that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(Open minutes)

7. Discretionary Payments

(Item 7)

1. Paul Royel introduced this report which provided an annual update on how discretionary payments had been applied across the organisation for the previous financial year.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee note the use of discretionary payments.

8. Chief Executive Recruitment Update

(Item 8)

Paul Royel introduced this report which provided an update on the recruitment process to secure the next Chief Executive Officer.

Mr Royel responded to questions of detail and noted comments made by Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Personnel Committee:

1. Note the approach and timetable for the recruitment of Chief Executive Officer.
2. Note the further extension to the contract for Amanda Beer to remain in post until March 2026.

9. Senior Management Structure

(Item 9)

1. Amanda Beer gave an update on staffing arrangements in relation to the Senior Management Structure.

RESOLVED that Personnel Committee:

1. Approve the terms outlined in the paper
2. Delegate responsibility for next steps to the Chief Executive.