

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



9 October 2026

Our Ref Joint Staff Consultative Committee 21
October 2026
Contact. Committee Services
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To: The Chair and Members of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee of North Hertfordshire District Council

District Councillors: Val Bryant (Chair) Claire Strong (Vice Chair) Ian Albert, Keith Hoskins and Bryony May.

Substitutes Councillors: Sadie Billing, Ruth Brown, Joe Graziano and Nigel Mason.

UNISON Representatives: Debbie Ealand and Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews.

Staff Consultation Forum Representatives: Christina Corr, Melanie Ferdaous, Louis Franklin, Christine Howe, Tiranana Straughan, Katie Thomas and Martin Trotter.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

to be held as a Virtual Meeting

VIA ZOOM

On

WEDNESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2026 AT 10.00 AM

Yours sincerely,

Isabelle Alajooz
Director – Governance

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL
AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION
ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda Part I

Item		Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting. Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
2. MINUTES - 24 JUNE 2026	To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 24 June 2026.	(Pages 5 - 12)
3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
4. STAFF CONSULTATION FORUM MINUTES	To receive the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forums from July and August 2026.	(Pages 13 - 20)
5. HR INFORMATION NOTE	INFORMATION NOTE OF THE HR SERVICES MANAGER To update the Joint Staff Consultative Committee on the progress made in the last quarter completing HR work and projects and supporting people issues.	(Pages 21 - 26)
6. UPDATE PAPER - EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT	To receive an update paper on the Employment Rights Act.	(Pages 27 - 30)
7. DISCUSSION PAPER - PEOPLE STRATEGY	To receive a discussion paper on the People Strategy.	(Pages 31 - 44)
8. SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS	To consider topics for discussion at a future meeting of the Committee.	(Pages 45 - 46)

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE VIA ZOOM
ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH JUNE, 2026 AT 10.00 AM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Val Bryant (Chair), Claire Strong (Vice-Chair), Ian Albert, Keith Hoskins and Bryony May*

In attendance: *Luca Benedito (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Ian Couper (Director - Resources), Robert Filby (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Anthony Roche (Chief Executive) and Rebecca Webb (HR Services Manager)*

UNISON: *Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews*

Staff Consultation *Louis Franklin*

Forum :

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting there were no members of the public present.*

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 31 seconds

There were no apologies for absence received.

2 MINUTES - 22 APRIL 2026

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 42 seconds

Councillor Val Bryant, as Chair, moved the Minutes for approval and, following consensus from Members, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 22 April 2026 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 44 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

4 SCF MINUTES

Audio recording – 4 minutes 6 seconds

The Director – Resources presented the item entitled 'SCF Minutes' alongside the Minutes of the meetings from May and June 2026 and highlighted the following:

- Two sets of SCF minutes were provided due to meeting timings.
- The minutes followed the usual structure of service updates and responses to questions raised by Forum members.
- At the May Forum, a presentation and discussion took place on the MSU and Parking Services restructure, which had now completed the restructure process.
- At the June Forum, there was a request for UNISON provided information to staff on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the support available. This session was scheduled for lunchtime on the day of the Committee meeting.
- Other HR-related updates would be covered separately by the HR Services Manager.

The Chair confirmed that no Members objected to the approval of the SCF Minutes and, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Minutes of the Staff Consultation Forums for May and June 2026.

5 HR INFORMATION NOTE

Audio recording – 6 minutes 13 seconds

The HR Services Manager presented the Information Note entitled 'HR Update', and highlighted the following:

- Recruitment outcomes in Quarter 4 had improved with all vacancies filled and 91% first-attempt fill rate, significantly above the 75% target.
- Although leavers had increased in recent months, overall turnover remained comparable with April 2025, with no immediate concerns.
- Short-term absence had reduced by around one-third, and long-term absence cases had also reduced; mental health and musculoskeletal absences continued to form a significant proportion.
- The new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) launched in April was fully operational, with positive early feedback from candidates and managers.
- Unions had rejected the national employers' 3.3% pay offer for 2026/27, and some were consulting members on industrial action. The pay award offer had been accepted for Chief Officers, which covered Director positions.
- Apprentice and graduate schemes continued, with several apprentices moving into permanent or external roles, and graduates had progressed into roles both within and out of the Council.
- Learning and development support continued ahead of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), including resources on resilience, communication skills and neurodiversity.
- The LGR Workforce workstream was looking to establish a countywide Employee Change Network, with a good number of volunteers from North Herts expressing interest in supporting this work.
- Early feedback on the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was positive, with around 50 downloads of the wellbeing app.
- The first Employee Women's Network session, focused on imposter syndrome and confidence, had taken place and received excellent feedback.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Keith Hoskins
- Councillor Bryony May
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to questions, the HR Service Manager advised that:

- Graduates rotated across departments throughout their placements. The graduate who stayed on is now in the Policy Team. One graduate had left following their placement, one remained in role and a new graduate would join in the autumn.
- Details of the specific roles apprentices progressed into would be provided after the meeting.
- 18 volunteers came forward to volunteer for the Employee Change Network, representing a wide range of grades and departments. They would receive training next month and the purpose of the role would be to support staff, gather questions, and feed issues into the Workforce Workstream.
- Neurodiversity awareness work was ongoing, with webinars and resources shared to help managers support staff effectively.
- The wellbeing app used by staff was part of the EAP and was different from the app offered to residents.
- Concerns about mandatory training volume were not widespread.
- Completion rates of mandatory training had increased since the introduction of the new Learning Management System (LMS).
- Staff have a set period to complete training, managers can view completion status of their staff on the LMS, and Leadership Team received reports to follow up on gaps.

The Chair thanked the HR Services Manager for their presentation of the information note.

6 UPDATE PAPER - DRAFT EHRC CODE OF PRACTICE ON SINGLE SEX SPACES

Audio recording – 21 minutes 1 second

The HR Services Manager presented the Update Paper entitled 'Draft EHRC Code of Practice on Single Sex Spaces' and highlighted the following:

- The draft code reflected the Supreme Court judgment confirming that, for Equality Act purposes, sex means biological sex.
- The draft code does not remove Equality Act protections for trans people, who remain protected under the characteristics of gender reassignment.
- Although the code primarily concerns services, public functions and associations, there were practical implications for the Councils as both an employer and a public authority.
- The Council would need to take a careful, evidence-based approach balancing legal compliance with dignity, respect and inclusion of staff.
- The draft was still within the 40-day parliamentary period, and the Council would monitor parliamentary progress and the commencement date.
- Guidance from the LGA for local authorities was expected and would be reviewed once published.
- Workplace facilities, HR policies, workforce data arrangements and staff guidance would be reviewed once the final position is confirmed.
- Any changes would be supported by clear communication, manager guidance, and appropriate equality impact assessments.
- Services have been asked to identify any operational areas where facilities, service provision or risk assessments may need review.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Val Bryant
- Councillor Bryony May

In response to questions, the HR Services Manager advised that:

- Staff were the primary focus of the HR review, but feedback would be provided to ensure clear communication to members of the public, particularly those who may feel hesitant about using Council facilities.
- Staff and members of the public would be treated consistently, and the Council would apply the law as set out in the final guidance.
- No particular staff concerns had been raised to date. HR had been able to support individuals and managers where questions have arisen, and work continued while awaiting confirmation of the final code.

In response to questions, the Director – resources advised that:

- Discussions were ongoing with the Leadership Team on adapting services and spaces to comply with the legislation, and wider communication would follow to both this Committee and more generally to staff.
- Work was underway to address this due to the recent release of draft guidance; clarification will depend on parliamentary progress and LGA guidance.

The Chair confirmed that no Members objected and, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Update Paper on Draft EHRC Code of Practice on Single Sex Spaces.

7 DISCUSSION PAPER - MENOPAUSE AT WORK

Audio recording – 28 minutes 59 seconds

The HR Services Manager presented the Discussion Paper entitled 'Menopause and Work' and highlighted the following:

- Menopause was a normal stage of life, but symptoms can significantly affect attendance, performance, confidence and well-being for some employees.
- The aim was to ensure managers and staff understand what support is available and that the Council responded consistently and sensitively.
- Symptoms can vary widely; for some they are manageable, while for others they may affect sleep, concentration, attendance, or how they experience work.
- A supportive approach helped employees remain well, stay at work and continue contributing effectively, and supported wider aims around inclusion, well-being and retention.
- Menopause was not itself a protected characteristic under the Equality Act, but poor handling can create risks linked to sex, age or disability discrimination.
- In some cases, symptoms may amount to a disability if they have a substantial and long-term impact on day-to-day activities, meaning managers must take concerns seriously, consider reasonable adjustments and apply processes fairly.
- National guidance increasingly framed menopause as a workplace issue, emphasising visibility of support, good manager conversations, access to adjustments, partnership working and fair processes.

- The Council already has a strong base of support including intranet information, HR guidance, staff communications, awareness activity, menopause resources, occupational health, the Employee Assistance Programme, GP helpline and flexible working options.
- Next steps included developing a Menopause Action Plan, reviewing visibility and accessibility of existing support, refreshing guidance, and considering management awareness-raising and training on supportive conversations, reasonable adjustments and fair handling of attendance and performance issues.
- Positive steps had already been taken, but the action plan would strengthen the approach and ensure employees experiencing menopause are treated with dignity, supported appropriately and able to contribute fully.

The following Members raised points on the Discussion Paper:

- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Bryony May
- Councillor Claire Strong

The following points were raised as part of the discussion:

- The information provided in the paper on the actions already taken by the Council, as well as the proposals for future development, were welcomed and marked a huge change from how the menopause was previously dealt with by organisations.
- It was important for managers to feel confident to have one to one conversations with employees experiencing menopause to understand what support was required.
- Some consideration should be given to Council employees who have other families members experiencing menopause.
- The menopause journey was different for all women and the symptoms experienced and timing can vary.
- It was important for women to understand menopause, but it was equally important that men understood the symptoms and impact of menopause symptoms.
- Previously menopause had not been discussed at work or with managers, but it was good to see that it was now acceptable.

In response to points raised, the HR Services Manager advised that:

- Support for employees affected by another member of their family experiencing menopause was already included in intranet information and will continue to form part of guidance.
- The Women's Network was expected to discuss menopause, and the Menopause Network had been running for nearly two years, which provided a space for staff experiencing menopause or supporting others.

The Chair confirmed that no Members objected and, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Discussion Paper on Menopause At Work.

8 SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS

Audio recording – 40 minutes 52 seconds

The Chair led a discussion on future topics for the Committee to consider. The following Members, UNISON Representatives, and SCF Staff Representatives took part in the discussion:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Ian Albert
- Councillor Bryony May
- Louis Franklin
- Anthony Roche

The following points were made as part of the discussion:

- Given the current heatwave experienced, some consideration should be given to how working from home arrangements were managed.
- Psychological safety at Work would be a potentially interesting topic to explore, but further clarification on what this entailed would be needed.
- There was potential for a discussion around the Employment Rights Bill and specifically any impact on Council staff.
- Whilst it was discussed at other Committees, it might be appropriate for this Committee to consider the training offer for staff to assist with the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process.
- It may be timely to discuss how SCF should operate under Local Government Reorganisation, as different authorities may have different approaches.

In response to points raised, the HR Services Manager advised that:

- A summary of items arising from the Employment Rights Bill could be provided, including impacts so far and upcoming changes.
- Psychological safety at work related to organisational culture, enabling staff to be themselves, make mistakes, and avoid blame-based environments.
- Future training plans to support LGR could be covered within the HR Information Note to allow space for other discussion papers.

In response to points raised, the Director – Resources advised that:

- Exit interviews had always been carried out and were about finding out why people had chosen to leave. 'Stay Interviews' were referenced in the new People Strategy and were different and focussed on why people remained with the Council and what could be done to help that continue.
- The People Strategy would be brought to the Committee once adopted.

In response to points raised, the Chief Executive advised that:

- Consideration of the future of this Committee could be presented to the next Committee meeting.
- JSCC and SCF would continue until 31 March 2028, when NHDC ceased to exist. The Committee may wish to consider how its role pivots to support LGR and what the future unitary authority should adopt as an equivalent forum.
- The Shadow Authority would be elected in May 2027.

Wednesday, 24th June, 2026

Following discussion, Members agreed on two discussion topics on 'Employment Rights Bill' and the 'People Strategy' for the next meeting of the Committee.

It was further requested that a discussion take place on the future of the Staff Consultation Forum as part of the Staff Consultation Forum minutes approval item and that information relating to staff training provisions be included in the HR Information Note.

The meeting closed at 10.54 am

Chair

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Staff Consultation Forum Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 1st July 2026

Via Teams

Present:

Director- Resources: Ian Couper

HR Services Manager: Rebecca Webb

Staff representatives: Tiranah Straughan, Louis Franklin, Christina Corr, Christine Howe, Katie Thomas, Melanie Ferdaous

Technical Operations Manager: Mark Robinson (for IT update)

Union representative: Dee Levett

Notes: Fallon Rumball-Nunan

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Louis Franklin

1 Apologies

Christine Howe, Tiranah Straughan

2 IT update

A phishing awareness campaign has recently been conducted. The results highlighted some areas for improvement and are currently being reviewed with the Director and then will be presented to Leadership Team. Appropriate follow-up measures will be implemented.

Question: Are the phishing emails the same for everyone?

Response: No. While the emails may be based on the same theme or concept, different versions are distributed to provide a more accurate assessment of user awareness and responses to phishing attempts.

3 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

- **Training Requirements:** Concerns were raised regarding the volume and relevance of mandatory training, including both e-learning and face-to-face sessions, particularly for employees in non-public-facing roles. IC has reviewed this with the Safeguarding Team, who advised that the face-to-face training is only required once every three years and that all training requirements are considered proportionate to the level of risk associated.
- **Accessibility:** Difficulties were reported with independently accessing parts of the building, particularly the Arc. The matter has been referred to Property Services and HR for further investigation and discussion with the individual concerned to identify any appropriate support or adjustments.

4 NHC Update (including HR and Staff Wellbeing Update)

- **Pay Negotiations:** There has been no further progress regarding the pay award. Trade unions are currently balloting members on potential industrial action.
- **Probation Period:** In light of the forthcoming changes introduced through the Employment Rights Bill, particularly in relation to unfair dismissal rights, the probationary period for new starters is being amended. The standard probation period will be reduced to four months, with updated policy/guidance due to be published shortly.
- **Personal Development Morning:** Scheduled for 3 July, the morning will focus on *Navigating Change* and is designed to offer something for everyone, with a mix of short introductory sessions and opportunities for more in-depth learning.
- **LGR Change Network:** Thanks were extended to those who volunteered to participate in the LGR Change Network. The response has been very positive, and the network is expected to be established in the autumn.
- **Union LGR Update Meeting:** Presentation slides from the recent union update meeting are available and can be accessed [here](#).
- **LGR Outcome Notification:** Employees have the option to sign up to the IT text messaging service to receive notifications regarding the LGR outcome. To be added to the service, please submit a new IT incident requesting access to TextAnywhere and ensure that you include your mobile telephone number. Information will also be communicated through the usual organisational communication channels.

Question: Is that the same as the IT text messaging service used when system issues arise?

Response: Yes, this is the same IT text messaging service that is used to communicate alerts and updates relating to system issues. Employees can sign up to receive the LGR decision notification through this service, alongside communications issued through the usual channels.

Question: Do you think the situation in central government will impact the decision date?

Response: The message we have received so far is that there will be no change to the decision date. We have not been advised of any delays and will continue to communicate any updates should the position change.

5

[Inclusion Group Update](#)

- Next meeting scheduled for 5 August 2026

6 Employee Queries

None

7 Green Update

[7 Sustainability Briefing July 2026](#)

8 Ideas/Suggestions

- **Future of SCF:** A meeting between SCF representatives has been arranged for 16 July to discuss the future of the SCF and consider potential next steps.
- **New Starter Catch-Up:** A representative will attend the new starter catch-up session on 2 July to provide an overview of the SCF and encourage engagement.
- **LGR Updates:** SCF previously agreed that AR was not needed at SCF unless there were key LGR updates, given a clash with another regular meeting. RW raised whether AR should attend future SCF meetings to provide updates on LGR, once the decision on number of Unitary Authorities had been confirmed. If this is agreed, meeting dates and timings may need to be reviewed to accommodate attendance. The group agreed to discuss this further at the subgroup meeting and feedback.

9

Any other business

None

Next Meeting

Chair: Christina Corr

Have something to say?

If you have an issue that you think should be brought to the attention of the SCF, please contact any SCF representative via phone, email or in person. They will raise your issue at the next meeting. You will not be identified unless you want to be.

Issues relating to property e.g., broken lift, non-flushing toilets, etc. must always be reported to Property Services in the first instance: propertyservices@north-herts.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can send any issues to the SCF inbox - SCF@north-herts.gov.uk.

Representatives (and phone extension):

Christina Corr #4325 - Senior Technical Officer

Louis Franklin #4262 – Digital Services Officer

Tiranan Straughan #4842 – Housing Policy Officer

Katie Thomas #5021 – Digital and Customer Service Apprentice

Martin Trotter #4541 - Shared Service Contract Officer – Waste

Christine Howe#4832 - Client Services Support Officer

Melanie Ferdaous#4324 – Admin Support Officer

Staff Consultation Forum Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 5th August 2026

Via Teams

Present:

Director- Resources: Ian Couper
HR Services Manager: Rebecca Webb
Staff representatives: Tiranah Straughan, Louis Franklin, Christina Corr, Christine Howe, Melanie Ferdaous
Technical Operations Manager: Mark Robinson (for IT update)
Union representative: Dee Levett
Notes: Shareese Smith

Circulation: Global

Chair for Meeting: Christina Corr

1 Apologies

Katie Thomas

2 IT update

Ongoing work on the LGR programme, with changes to the technical workstream. MR will be taking on additional responsibilities within LGR related work. Cyber improvements implemented following Microsoft recommendations. Updates to Microsoft teams meeting access, only invited attendees can now automatically join meetings. Future update expected on staff phishing awareness training.

3 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

No matters raised from previous meeting notes.

4 NHC Update (including HR and Staff Wellbeing Update)

- **Pay Negotiations:** There has been no further progress regarding the pay award. Trade Unions are currently balloting members on potential industrial action.
- [HolidayFlex](#): Now open for applications until 31st August
- **Personal Development Morning:** Scheduled for Friday 7th August – this is a generic session, with no focus, to allow staff to catch up on mandatory or other learning.
- **All staff Event:** Save the date notifications have been published (10th Sept - AM, 22nd Sept - AM, 28th Sept - PM) more details on how to book on a session will follow soon – staff only need to attend one session.
- [RPR](#): We are re-introducing a collection window for RPR's – initial information has already been communicated to managers, with further

information to follow shortly – there will be transition period once the collection window is introduced. The window will be September to November for returning those RPR's. The form has now been updated to link directly to the priorities, vision, and values, and the questions have been revised to better facilitate productive career and development discussions.

- **LGR Update:** A new [staff hub](#) (microsite) has been launched. Upcoming there will be a LGR workforce staff survey coming mid-August. Change ambassadors are now active, more information will follow.

Inclusion Group Update

5

A proposal was discussed to introduce an Inclusion Flag at Hitchin Town Hall, as it is considered more representative than the flags currently in use. As the flag is not government approved, planning permission would be required before implementation. Consideration is also being given to potential public perception and the impact on staff.

Questions: Have you had any new members in the inclusion group?

Response: There is still a core group of members and then the others are more fluid attendance can depend on people's availability and topic due to be covered.,

6 Employee Queries

- **LGR Updates and Representation:** Request for LGR to be included as a standing agenda item at future SCF meetings. Clarification is also sought on current LGR representation, including whether an appointed ambassador attends SCF meetings and if there is an agreed deputy or alternative representative when they are unavailable.

Action: MF will act as the representative between both the LGR ambassadors and SCF ensuring ongoing communication and consistent representations at meetings. Including LGR as a standing agenda item is supported; however, LGR updates should primarily be communicated through Staff Briefings.

- **Safeguarding training feedback:** Concerns were raised again that the six-hour training session can feel lengthy and intensive. Some staff felt the content was not always relevant to their role, while others noted that sensitive topics were not clearly signposted in advance. The requirement to attend in person was also highlighted as potentially inconvenient for some employees.

Action: IC will seek further information and raise these issues for consideration.

7 Green Update

7 Sustainability Briefing July 2026

8 Ideas/Suggestions

- **Future of SCF:** Aim to recruit 4-6 new members, but current terms of reference state 8 reps' total. May need review before expanding. Focus on improving

representation across departments. Updating SCF webpage, recruitment posters and insight articles to help with this.

- **SCF/LGR Updates:** Meetings will be moved to the first Tuesday of each month at 11:00am, effective from 6 October, to accommodate AR's attendance
- **New Starter Meetings:** a standard script or set of key discussion points be developed for representatives attending new starter meetings, ensuring a consistent approach and message regardless of who is attending.

Any other business

9

None

Next Meeting

Chair: Christina Corr

Have something to say?

If you have an issue that you think should be brought to the attention of the SCF, please contact any SCF representative via phone, email or in person. They will raise your issue at the next meeting. You will not be identified unless you want to be.

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Katie Thomas #5021 – Digital and Customer Service Apprentice

Martin Trotter #4541 - Shared Service Contract Officer – Waste

Christine Howe#4832 - Client Services Support Officer

Melanie Ferdaous#4324 – Admin Support Officer

JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

21 October 2026

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: HR UPDATE
INFORMATION NOTE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES MANAGER

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the Joint Staff Consultative Committee on the progress made during the last quarter in delivering People Strategy projects and addressing workforce matters.

2. STEPS TO DATE

- 2.1 The information note contains updates regarding the significant and strategic activities from the People Strategy and HR service plan.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

- 3.1 The terms of reference for the Joint Staff Consultative Committee are to be the corporate interface with employees on major Human Resources issues and to be the Strategic HR Forum for North Herts Council Members.

3.2 Recruitment & Retention

The table below shows the number of vacancies filled first time in Quarter 1 April – June 2026, with a comparison with the same period in the previous years.

	Vacancies	Filled at first attempt	Filled (total)	Unfilled	% filled first attempt	Target
Q1: April-June 2023	21	19	19	2	90.5%	75%
Q1: April-June 2024	10	7	7	3	70.0%	75%
Q1: April-June 2025	20	17	17	3	85.0%	75%
Q1: April-June 2026	26	24	22	2	92.3%	75%

During Quarter 1, we saw an increase in the number of vacancies compared to the same period in previous years. The vacancies which were not filled during this quarter include an Information Officer and Trainee Electoral Services Officer.

Overall, we continue to see a good response to our job adverts with the majority of our vacancies being filled. The vacancies successfully filled this period include:

- 4 apprenticeships – HR, IT, Climate Change and Revenues

- Assistant Marketing Officer
- Homelessness and Housing Officer
- HR Support Officer
- Insurance Officer
- Communications Assistant

3.3 Leavers and Turnover

Turnover figures exclude redundancies, retirement, apprenticeships, and fixed term contracts.

Rolling 12 months	Turnover	
	Leavers	Monthly
Sep-25	3	0.82%
Oct-25	3	0.82%
Nov-25	1	0.27%
Dec-25	1	0.27%
Jan-26	4	1.08%
Feb-26	0	0.00%
Mar-26	3	0.80%
Apr-26	4	1.06%
May-26	4	1.05%
Jun-26	1	0.26%
Jul-26	3	0.78%
Aug-26	5	1.32%
Total	32	8.53%

The turnover has dropped slightly compared to August 2025 (9.8%) but has fluctuated in the intervening months, with the rolling figure dipping to 7.04% in March and increasing to 9.15% in May. Overall, the average turnover across the past couple of years at 8.47% has remained broadly favourable, compared to 22-23 and 23-24 where the average turnover was over 11%.

Unplanned exits from the council (such as resignations and dismissals) are the focus of the turnover calculation which does not include figures related to planned exits such as retirements and the end of fixed term contracts (eg apprentices, and maternity cover).

3.4 Absence

The absence figures are shown below as absence days lost per employee on a rolling basis.

Monthly rolling absence: days lost per employee			
	Long-term	Short-term	Total
Sep-25	3.47	4.29	7.76
Oct-25	3.46	4.49	7.95
Nov-25	3.56	4.50	8.05
Dec-25	3.56	4.48	8.04
Jan-26	3.78	4.47	8.25
Feb-26	4.17	4.46	8.63
Mar-26	4.42	4.45	8.86
Apr-26	4.65	4.30	8.95
May-26	4.55	4.42	8.97
Jun-26	4.89	4.54	9.43
Jul-26	5.11	4.65	9.76
Aug-26	5.19	4.71	9.89

Summary of absence reasons:

June - August 2026 Absence reasons	Occasions of absence		
	Up to 1 week	1-3 weeks	Over 3 weeks
COVID 19 - suspected	0	0	0
Ear, Nose and Throat (Inc Cold/Flu)	25	1	1
Headaches (inc migraine)	11	0	0
Mental health (inc stress, depression)	2	8	8
Musculoskeletal	2	3	2
Other (inc Surgery)	32	10	6
Sickness / Vomiting / Gastro	21	0	0
Total	93	22	17

There has been a similar level of short-term absences alongside a small increase in the number of other cases compared to the previous period. The number of mental health related absences has increased for both 1–3-week absences and the long-term absences.

Our HR Business Partners work with line managers providing advice and support for longer term absences, including OH referrals to help prevent absences and to seek advice on phased hours and reasonable adjustments to assist employees when they are ready to return to work.

3.5 National pay bargaining 2026/27 – National Joint Council (NJC)

The pay offer of 3.3% was agreed in August 2026.

The regional pay briefings will take place in the coming months regarding the 2027 pay award.

3.6 Apprenticeships

We have recently advertised 3 apprentice roles in Community Wellbeing, Cultural Services and Democratic Services. Across the three roles there were 134 applications.

We continue to promote apprenticeships as a developmental pathway for existing staff to allow them to continue to upskill in readiness for the potential changes ahead.

3.7 National Graduate Scheme

Our newest graduate started with this month, and our existing graduate has moved into their third rotation, after providing valuable support for a Greenspace Consultation during his previous placement. We ensure that we provide continuing support to our graduates to help them develop into the role including providing a mentor when they have settled into the programme.

3.8 Learning and Development

We continue to provide regular resources to help staff navigate the uncertainty surrounding Local Government Reorganisation. Alongside this support, we remain focused on developing core skills through a variety of methods. Our personal development mornings have covered topics including cyber security, unconscious bias and navigating change. We have also run training for managers on neurodiversity, and coaching conversations.

3.9 Regular Performance Reviews

We have reviewed the Regular Performance Review (RPR) process to ensure there is a clear framework for meaningful conversations about future roles and development needs. As part of the review, we have reintroduced the return window to support straightforward reporting, alongside timely awareness-raising and guidance.

3.10 Annual Staff Events

Our annual staff events were arranged to take place in September. These have been postponed in light of the LGR pause and will be rearranged for a later date.

3.11 Change Network

All Change Ambassadors have attended an initial induction event. The group now meets regularly, enabling members to support one another during the ongoing uncertainty surrounding LGR.

We will continue to develop the Ambassadors' transferable skills, supporting both their personal development and the effectiveness of the Change Network as the position becomes clearer.

3.12 Employee Wellbeing

We recognise that the pause in Local Government Reorganisation may have a further impact on staff wellbeing. We are therefore continuing to highlight the support available and encourage colleagues to seek help when needed.

The wellbeing room continues to receive positive feedback from both existing staff and new starters.

On World Suicide Prevention Day, 10th September, we shared support resources with staff. This year's message reinforced that suicidal thoughts can be interrupted and that simple acts of kindness, concern and connection can make a meaningful difference and help to start a conversation.

The Social Team is arranging a programme of walks in the new year to encourage staff to explore the district and spend time outdoors. Even 10–15 minutes outside can help to reduce stress, improve mood and restore mental focus.

3.13 Inclusion

Members of the Inclusion Group shared an update at the September staff briefing, highlighting progress and achievements to date. Inclusion Champions have continued to raise awareness by sharing resources for National Inclusion Week and contributing an article on Black History Month in Insight.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Progress against the People Strategy and HR service plan will be reported to quarterly JSCC Meetings.
- 4.2 This Committee receives this update, as well as getting to choose one or more discussion topics for each meeting. There is also the opportunity for the Committee to comment on what information is included in this report to help it act as the “strategic HR forum” (from Terms of Reference for the Committee).

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JSCC Update Paper: Employment Rights Act 2025

The Employment Rights Act 2025 received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025 and is being implemented in phases. Several measures are already in force, including the extended employment tribunal time limit from 1 October 2026. Further changes have confirmed commencement dates in October 2026 and January 2027, while other reforms remain subject to regulations, consultation and parliamentary process.

The table below describes the changes, date of change and expected impact.

Changes already in force

Date	Change	Impact
18 December 2025	The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 was repealed.	Limited direct impact on NHC.
18 February 2026	Most Trade Union Act 2016 restrictions were repealed or simplified. Industrial action notice reduced to 10 days and ballot mandates last 12 months. The requirement for public-sector employers to publish facility-time information and the 12-week limit on protection from dismissal for taking part in industrial action were removed. Changes to statutory recognition thresholds followed in April 2026.	Potential for faster and more sustained industrial action. Employee-relations arrangements should reflect the revised recognition and protection framework.
6 April 2026	Statutory Sick Pay became payable from the first qualifying day of incapacity for work. The Lower Earnings Limit was removed, and payment is 80% of average weekly earnings or the statutory flat rate, whichever is lower.	Limited impact on NHC due to occupational sick pay arrangements; payroll and eligibility processes remain compliant.
6 April 2026	Paternity leave and unpaid parental leave became day-one rights.	Policies, procedures and forms updated. HR to provide clear guidance on eligibility.
6 April 2026	The maximum protective award for failure to comply with collective redundancy consultation doubled to 180 days' pay per affected employee.	Limited immediate impact under current practice. Early planning and robust consultation remain essential.

6 April 2026	Disclosure of sexual harassment became a qualifying whistleblowing disclosure.	Whistleblowing and complaint investigation routes must align and protect workers from detriment.
6 April 2026	Employers must keep adequate records demonstrating compliance with annual-leave entitlement and holiday-pay requirements for six years from the date each record is made.	HR and payroll systems evidence compliance and retain the relevant records for six years.
7 April 2026	The Fair Work Agency launched to simplify enforcement of specified employment rights and support employer compliance. Its enforcement functions are being expanded progressively.	Limited immediate operational impact, but stronger enforcement highlights the importance of reliable records, clear ownership and timely compliance.
April 2026	Voluntary gender-equality and menopause action plans, supported by government menopause guidance, were introduced.	Formal action plan being developed in preparation for future mandatory requirements.
25 August 2026	Electronic and workplace balloting became available for statutory trade union ballots.	Potential to make statutory ballots more accessible and quicker to administer. Continue constructive engagement and monitor any effect on local employee-relations arrangements.
1 October 2026	The ordinary time limit for bringing an employment tribunal claim increased from three months to six months where the relevant act, omission or termination occurred on or after 1 October 2026.	Record-retention arrangements are under review.

Upcoming changes

Expected timing	Change	Impact/ action
30 October 2026, subject to parliamentary process	Employers will be required to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. Employers will also be obliged not to permit harassment of employees by third parties within the statutory scope.	Reviewing existing measures and agree a clear, documented action plan.

30 October 2026, subject to parliamentary process	Further trade union reforms, including a statutory right of workplace access, earlier access during recognition processes, rights for workplace representatives to paid time off and facilities, and protection from detriment for industrial action.	Limited impact under current arrangements. Maintain constructive relationships and align the emerging LGR employee-relations framework across councils.
1 January 2027	Ordinary unfair dismissal protection will apply after six months' service rather than two years.	The probation policy has been updated to change from 6 months to 4 months, with additional guidance for managers of new starters.
1 January 2027	Employers will be required to give workers a written statement informing them of their right to join a trade union. Existing workers must receive the statement, or be directed to an accessible version, by 5 April 2027, followed by annual provision or reminders.	Awaiting confirmation of compliant wording. To consider delivery arrangements for new starters and the existing workforce, with a process for annual provision or reminders.
Expected in 2027; date and detail subject to regulations	Flexible-working refusals will require consultation and an explanation of why refusal on one or more existing statutory business grounds is reasonable.	Manager decisions will require strong evidence, consistency and consideration of alternatives. Policy updates and further manager awareness and guidance required. This will have a lesser impact on NHC given our current approach to flexibility.
Expected in 2027 or later; detail subject to regulations	Guaranteed-hours offers for qualifying zero- and low-hours workers, reasonable notice of shifts, and compensation for cancelled, moved or curtailed shifts, including corresponding rights for agency workers.	Review casual and low-hours posts, rostering arrangements and affected services.
Expected in 2027; detail	Restrictions on dismissal and re-engagement will make dismissal	Limited immediate impact under current practice.

subject to regulations	for refusing certain contractual changes automatically unfair.	
Further regulations anticipated	Enhanced dismissal protection during pregnancy and following family leave, statutory bereavement leave, and possible mandatory gender-equality and menopause action-plan requirements.	Continue to monitor regulations and implementation guidance. Review policies, systems and workforce reporting once the final requirements and dates are confirmed.

JSCC Discussion Paper – People Strategy

The Council was due to have a refreshed People Strategy in 2020, but that was changed to a Covid-19 People Recovery Plan to reflect the change to how we worked following the pandemic. The plan for an ongoing people strategy was then affected by Government plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The attached strategy was developed in that context and has a relatively short time horizon. It is also slightly less ambitious, as it doesn't seek to make fundamental changes that may ultimately be reversed by a successor Council. It reflects available capacity, LGR will require a lot of HR input so that reduces the capacity for other HR related changes. However, it does seek to build on what the Council does well and what staff value, with the intention of providing something that a new Unitary Council could adopt and build on.

Even if there was a longer LGR pause or it did not take place, then the core content of the Strategy would still be relevant. An update could add further actions, subject to available resources (e.g. delivery capacity and affordability).

The Strategy deliberately focuses on staff feedback, especially results from staff surveys. It considers the challenges that we face as an employer, and how we can address them. It develops three key themes: retain and attract, develop and engage, and inclusion and wellbeing. It is supported by an action plan and underpinned by our Values.

Appendix A- People Strategy

Appendix B- People Strategy Action Plan

The Committee may want to consider the following:

- Does the Strategy reflect what the Council does well? This can help motivate staff if there is alignment between what they value and what the Council will continue to do. It can also help sell the organisation to potential recruits if they value our offer.
- Does the Strategy set reasonable goals for what we could do better?
- What would you add to the Strategy if there was more resource (delivery capacity or available funding)?

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NHC People Strategy 2026 onwards

Foreword from Anthony Roche, Chief Executive

Our people are fundamental to the quality of the services that we provide and our ability to adapt to change. This People Strategy sets out how we will retain, attract, develop and support our workforce through the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) transition. It aims to ensure that people are informed, engaged, and equipped to deliver before, during, and after reorganisation.

We recognise that change brings uncertainty and emotional impact. Our goal is to continue to take a people first approach to build a resilient, confident, and well-supported workforce who can deliver for North Hertfordshire and thrive in the future.

The strategy is underpinned by our **Council Priorities, Our Values and feedback from employees.**

Council Priorities:

- Thriving communities
- Accessible services
- Responsible growth
- Sustainability

Our values:

As an organisation we strive to be:

- **ADAPTABLE:** We are adaptable in finding solutions for each other, our partners and our customers
- **LEARNING:** We learn from others and are open to change
- **LISTENING:** We listen to and consider the views of each other, our partners and our customers
- **INCLUSIVE:** We are inclusive and value diversity
- **TOGETHER:** We work together and support each other to deliver the best we can

We are: ALL In Together

Our People and how we work together

We employ approximately 440 people, working together in a wide variety of roles and in several locations to make a difference to the communities of North Hertfordshire.

39% of our employees work part time hours. 68% of our employees are female. 57% of our staff are aged 45+ and over 30% of our employees have 10 or more years service with us.

We employ both apprentices and graduates, working across various service areas. Several apprentices have achieved permanent roles with the Council, supporting succession planning and highlighting our commitment to development.

We offer flexibility in how our employees work wherever possible, with many hybrid roles and flexible working patterns, which is proving to be a core retention tool.

What our people say

Our 2024 staff survey showed that 90% of staff would recommend us as an employer and this is reflected in our turnover rate, which was only 8.5% for 2025/6. This is the lowest level it has been for over 18 years.

Feedback from the 2025/6 Corporate Peer Challenge shows that employees are committed to providing a good service and enjoy working for North Herts Council. The review recognised a happy workforce who feel supported to do their jobs and have access to learning and development opportunities.

This has also been reflected in our 2026 short survey, where employees say they feel well supported by managers. This survey indicates employees feel well informed about the LGR process but also highlights that uncertainty is becoming a concern.

Opportunities & Challenges

Culture and Leadership

The 2024 staff survey feedback indicated that our Leadership team could be more approachable/accessible. Various actions were put in place to respond to this concern and 2025 saw changes in our Leadership team with an additional Director role and redistributed directorates. More recently, there has been positive feedback about transparent and open communication from Leadership Team, which we will continue to build on.

Our values define how we work together and shape our behaviour at work every day. In times of instability, it's even more important that our people work well together and we will be working to further integrate our values.

Recruitment and retention

Like many local authorities, we have a number of hard-to-fill roles across several service areas, often reflecting national skills shortages. This includes posts in Environmental Health, Planning, Legal and IT.

Although our retention rates are good, we recognise that uncertainty in the period leading up to LGR may increase turnover across the Council, which could reduce our capacity to deliver services, increase pressure on remaining staff, and heighten risks to employee wellbeing. We

need to retain skills and knowledge to deliver services now, but also for the future Unitary Councils.

Our apprenticeship scheme is having a positive impact by supporting succession planning and building capability for the future. We will continue to develop clear career pathways through career-graded posts and continuing our established approach to graduate and apprenticeship schemes.

We have well-developed flexible working arrangements, which not only meet candidates and employees expectations, but also provide a broader recruitment reach. It is crucial that we continue to support positive work-life balance to recruit, retain and support high-quality people.

Employee Wellbeing

Employee wellbeing is a priority for us; we have various resources available for support including our Employee Assistance programme, and signposting on the Hub and e-learning to support positive mental health and build resilience. Flexible working arrangements and work-life balance are also key contributors to wellbeing. This focus will become even more important as we navigate a period of change.

We know from staff surveys that increased workloads impact employee wellbeing, and we understand the importance of building capacity to deliver the LGR project and continue to provide services.

Skills

Digital development continues to change how we work. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into our processes, we will support employees to build the skills and confidence to use new tools effectively within their service areas, creating more capacity for work that adds value for our communities.

LGR represents the biggest change local government has experienced in recent years. We will therefore provide our managers with change management skills so they can support their teams effectively through uncertainty.

We want our people to be delivering services and preparing themselves for the future. We understand that this will look different for each person and good quality conversations to support learning and development are vital.

We have committed to additional funding for training and development. This will allow our people to put themselves and their future employer in best possible place to deliver services.

Equalities and Inclusion & HR Policies

Our commitment to Inclusion is embedded in the culture of North Herts Council. Inclusion forms part of our Values and this is reflected in the day to day activities of our employees. It is also evidenced in our 2024 staff survey with 79% believing the Council values equality and diversity. Our Inclusion group has been in place since 2021 and works to continue to develop understanding, acceptance and a workplace that encourages every employee to bring their whole selves to work.

Our Gender Pay Gap for 2025 is 12.2%, which is a significant improvement since 2017, when the gap was 25%. However, we recognise that it remains too high. We will continue to address this through our Inclusion Group and associated action plans, including activity to increase the

representation of women at middle and senior management levels. We have already greatly increased the number of women in Director roles.

The Employment Rights Act introduces the most significant changes to employment law in years. We will ensure that our policies and practices are updated to reflect the changes coming into effect from 2026 onwards.

Our people priorities

Our people priorities are split into themes and describe our approach to employees at North Herts Council.

Theme	We will/ we will continue to:
Retain and attract	Develop skills and knowledge to maintain services Provide a fair reward package Attract high-quality candidates Focus on recruiting hard to fill roles
Develop and engage	Develop future capacity through career graded posts, apprenticeships and graduate opportunities Develop skilled and confident managers who work with integrity and build strong teams Strengthen employee engagement by continuing to obtain, listen and act on employee feedback Develop a resilient workforce and support people to be adaptable through uncertainty Prepare employees for the future Maintain trust and clarity through transparent dialogue
Inclusion and wellbeing	Prioritise mental health and wellbeing & support employees through uncertainty Promote and support positive work life balance Foster an inclusive workforce where everyone can be themselves. Support each other through collaboration and engagement.

Our People themes will be translated into actions and a service delivery plan each year, which sets out the detailed actions and timescales. Progress on the People Strategy will be monitored

and measured through reporting to Leadership Team, staff groups (e.g. Staff Briefings and Staff Consultation Forum) and the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.



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People strategy – themes and work plan 2026 onwards

Theme	We will/ we will continue to:
Retain and attract	- Develop skills and knowledge to maintain services - Provide a fair reward package - Attract high-quality candidates - Focus on recruiting hard to fill roles
Develop and engage	- Develop future capacity through career graded posts, apprenticeships and graduate opportunities - Develop skilled and confident managers who work with integrity and build strong teams - Strengthen employee engagement by continuing to obtain, listen and act on employee feedback - Develop a resilient workforce and support people to be adaptable through uncertainty - Prepare employees for the transition to Unitary Councils - Maintain trust and clarity through transparent dialogue
Inclusion and wellbeing	- Prioritise mental health and wellbeing - Promote and support positive work life balance - Foster an inclusive workforce where everyone can be themselves. Support each other through collaboration and engagement.

Theme	We will/ we will continue to:	Actions
Retain and attract	Develop skills and knowledge to maintain services	- Monitor turnover and review leavers data regularly and consider initiatives to improve. Report to LT quarterly (ongoing) - Review workforce to highlight high risk roles/ areas and put plans in place to mitigate (Winter 2026/7) - Gather information to establish what employees like about working for NHC and what might cause them to leave through specific stay questionnaires (Spring 2026 and ongoing)

	Provide a fair reward package, including non-financial benefits	Continue to provide a variety of non-financial benefits (ongoing) Launch Electric Vehicle lease scheme (Spring 2026) Benchmarking of pay and benefits as part of Local Government Reorganisation process
	Attract high-quality candidates	Deliver a new applicant tracking system to support a better candidate experience, streamlined processes and automation (Spring 2026) Review and improve usage of social media and website for candidates (Autumn 2026) Ensure HR policies underpin fair and consistent recruitment (Autumn 2026) Use feedback to develop our job advertising and recruitment processes (ongoing).
	Focus on recruiting hard to fill roles	Further develop social media and website, making use of different media types and increasing reach of adverts (Autumn 2026) Support grow-your-own strategies, including developing existing staff (ongoing)
Develop and engage	Create clear development pathways and develop future capacity	Continue to recruit apprentice and graduates, ensuring appropriate opportunities to support their development (ongoing) Consider future capacity needs and make best use of skills of NHC employees (Winter 2026/7) Promote the development of career graded posts and support their implementation (ongoing) Promote use of apprenticeship levy for employees (ongoing)

	Develop and support skilled and confident managers who work with integrity and build strong teams	Develop change management skills for managers (ongoing) Run bitesize sessions for managers on key skill areas to support effective management of absence, performance and conduct (ongoing) Develop manager coaching skills (Autumn 2026) Develop a programme of development for senior managers (Summer 2026)
	Strengthen employee engagement by continuing to obtain, listen and act on feedback	Implement regular short employee surveys & act on feedback (ongoing) Form, develop and engage a group of Employee Change Champions for Local Government Reorganisation (Autumn 2026)
	Develop a resilient workforce and support people to be adaptable through uncertainty	Offer a variety of development opportunities to equip employees with skills and mindset to handle change and challenges effectively (ongoing)
	Prepare employees for the future	Review our Regular Performance review process to ensure framework for quality conversations about future roles and development required (Spring 2026) Continue to encourage and develop digital skills through awareness raising and training (Digital strategy, ongoing)
	Maintain trust and clarity through transparent dialogue	Run annual all staff events (ongoing) Regular opportunities for information and feedback at staff briefings (ongoing) Provide clear, accessible HR guidance to support consistent treatment and early resolution (ongoing) Ensure HR policies are updated in line with the Employment Rights Act (Spring 2026 onwards)

	Prioritise mental health and wellbeing & support employees through uncertainty	Review our health and wellbeing support (ongoing) Embed supportive approaches to absence management that promote wellbeing and early support (ongoing) Equip managers to confidently manage absence, including early intervention (ongoing) Create and launch a wellbeing room (monitoring ongoing) Awareness and signposting to support employee wellbeing, including our Mental Health First Aiders (ongoing) Events and training to support employee wellbeing (ongoing) ‘How are you?’ bitesize sessions for managers (Autumn 2026)
Inclusion and wellbeing	Promote and support a positive work life balance	Design roles that support flexibility and encourage managers to consider how flexibility could be developed in their teams (ongoing) Awareness raising around the positive impacts of flexibility (ongoing)
	Work together to develop an inclusive workforce where everyone can be themselves. Support each other through collaboration and engagement.	Aim to reduce our Gender Pay Gap through an annual action plan (ongoing) Continue the development of the Inclusion group and associated networks (ongoing) Provide training on unconscious bias for all managers (Winter 2026) Offer a variety of training and resources to increase awareness on EDI (ongoing)

		Ensure HR policies reflect our commitment to fairness, inclusion, respect and dignity at work (ongoing) Further develop our Values to provide clarity on how we demonstrate our values at work everyday (Autumn 26)
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Date of JSCC		Discussion topic
2024	March	Long term absence management
	March	Face to face vs online learning- striking a balance
	June	Recruitment update
	October	Coaching
2025	January	Supporting mental health
	March	Neurodiversity in the workplace
	March	Staff survey update
	June	Microaggressions and unconscious bias
	June	Succession planning and future proofing
	October	The Employer value proposition
2026	January	Change management
	April	Recruitment and retention in times of uncertainty
	June	Menopause and work
	June	An update on the Supreme Court ruling on sex
	October	NHC People Strategy
	October	Employment Rights Act 2025

Suggested discussion topics for future meetings
Managing short term absence
Flexible and hybrid working
Social media for recruitment
Careers coaching
Psychological safety at work
Learning from leavers feedback

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