

REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 9 July 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.30 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair

Councillor Neil Fawcett (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE
Councillor Gareth Epps
Councillor James Robertshaw

Officers:

Whole of meeting Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer; Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer; Cherie Cuthbertson, Director of HR and Cultural Change; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager.

Part of meeting

Agenda Item

Officer Attending

7

Louise Ward, Interim HR and Talent Consultant

10

Janet Cox, Interim Head of Operations

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting and decided as set out below. Except as insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and additional documents, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

12/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Graham.

13/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

14/25 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the following meetings were approved:

- the meeting held on 5 September 2024 and adjourned
- the resumed meeting held at 10:00 on 15 January 2025
- the meeting held at 10:10 on 15 January 2025
- the meeting held on 20 May 2025.

15/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

There were no requests to present a petition or speak.

16/25 ESTABLISHMENT OF A REMUNERATION SUB-COMMITTEE (APPRAISALS)

(Agenda No. 5)

Council amended the Constitution at its meeting on 10 December 2024 to add a delegation to the Remuneration Committee “to constitute an Appraisal Panel and undertake the appraisals for the Chief Executive, at least annually” (Part 5.1C Remuneration Committee, paragraph 3 (7)). The report before the committee proposed to formally establish a Sub-committee to undertake the appraisal process.

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report. She highlighted that the committee needed to decide on the membership of the sub-committee, assuming that they were content to form the sub-committee. She noted that in the past when the committee had formed sub-committees, it was customary for the whole committee to be on the sub-committee.

The Director of HR and Cultural Change added that officers were already preparing for an appraisal to take place in August and September. Training would be provided in advance of that.

The Chair proposed that all six members of the committee be on the sub-committee. This was agreed.

RESOLVED:

a) **to establish a subcommittee named the Remuneration Sub-Committee (Appraisals) to carry out the procedures delegated to the Remuneration Committee in the Council Constitution “to constitute an Appraisal Panel and undertake the appraisals for the Chief Executive, at least annually”; and**

b) **that all six members of the committee will form the sub-committee.**

17/25 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION - INCREASING STRATEGIC CAPACITY

(Agenda No. 6)

The committee considered a report in Addenda 2 setting out how the council was increasing its capacity to meet the commitments of the Devolution White Paper.

The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer presented the report which outlined why the council needed the new positions to manage its involvement in local government reform and devolution. There will be a need to recruit to other roles, whether that is done internally or through temporary positions.

The job evaluations were conducted in line with the Korn Ferry approach used in evaluating the positions in Tiers 1 to 4. Because the roles were temporary, it fell to the Chief Executive to approve them under the Constitution but the committee was asked to note the appointments.

Members asked the following:

- If there any funding coming from central government towards the £10m budgeted for this work, given that it was something they were imposing on the local councils.
- If there would be an impact of the contracts of the chief executives.

Officers responded as follows:

- The full cost of transitioning was estimated to be in the region of £20m. This was similar to the cost experienced by other councils. The initial work was to provide a business case to demonstrate what saving would be made with a move to a single unitary. The government had provided about £285,000 to be shared across the three lead councils for the three proposals.
- The chief executive contracts will not be affected until the transition happens.

Members commented that advice from other councils that have been through this process was that it was advantageous to do a lot of work in advance and avoid a dip in services if sufficient preparations have not been made.

Members agreed that the government had made this decision to reduce costs in local government and that this council had to provide the resources to prepare for it.

RESOLVED to:

- Note the establishment of the temporary roles of Programme Director – Local Government Reorganisation and Programme Director – Devolution; and**
- Note the remits of the job descriptions enclosed at Annex A.**

18/25 GENDER EQUALITY AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORT FOR 2024 – SUPPLEMENTARY DATA REQUEST

(Agenda No. 7)

In January 2025, this committee considered the Gender Equality and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for 2024. The committee asked for further information on how well the Council progresses individuals and retains talent of our apprentices as well as for qualitative data on why people exit the council.

The report was introduced by the Interim HR and Talent Consultant who invited questions. A number of questions were asked relating to data. The Director of HR and Cultural Change responded that the original report would be circulated to Members of the committee and there would be another opportunity to discuss this in September.

Members made a number of observations:

- This council was ahead of most in dealing with equality issues. There had been cross-party support for it. The council was in a good position to avoid any claims on equality grounds unlike some others.
- There was still a problem in that a high proportion of those in care posts were women. There was a need for job evaluations to be conducted in a sensitive way.
- A few women in very senior posts could disproportionately affect the statistics.

There was discussion around apprenticeships. It was agreed that the council was doing well on this and was spending a high proportion of the apprenticeship levy. Members supported making more effort to target under represented groups and care leavers.

Officers responded that there was pastoral care available for individuals some of whom had complex needs. They agreed that there was more work to be done to ensure that the council's demographics reflected the population.

Members noted that health and wellbeing were cited by many leavers as their reason for leaving the council's employment. Officers responded that they believed that the council was good at reacting to problems but needed to be more proactive. In that regard, a new head of service had just started and that would be a priority for them.

It was acknowledged that the organisational redesign would lead to an increase in stress for some. Heads of service were meeting the following week to discuss strategies to manage this.

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED to

- a) Note information about the journey of progression within the council to support the council's commitment to growing our own talent and inclusivity (focussed specifically on women, and colleagues who identify as Black, Asian, or of minority ethnicity background (under-represented groups).**
- b) Note information on the number of apprentices and their progression within the council based on age, gender, and ethnicity.**
- c) Note further data to gain a better understanding of what the qualitative data arising from exit interviews is telling the council and what is being done about it, particularly amongst women and colleagues who identify as Black, Asian, or of minority ethnicity background. (underrepresented groups)**

19/25 FOR INFORMATION: REVIEW OF APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

(Agenda No. 8)

The Audit and Governance Committee was due to consider a report at its meeting on 16 July 2025 on appointments to Outside Bodies. It was proposed that appointments to Category B bodies would in future be approved by the Audit and Governance Committee rather than by the Remuneration Committee. A Category B body was one that had not been identified by the Cabinet as strategic.

The report for the Audit & Governance Committee was provided to the Remuneration Committee for their awareness of the proposed change.

The Monitoring Officer summarised the report. It was believed that it was a better fit for the Audit & Governance Committee, which has more regular meetings, to oversee these appointments rather than the Remuneration Committee which generally dealt with personnel issues.

Members asked for a summary of the categories. Officers outlined that appointments to Category A 'Strategic' bodies were made by Cabinet at its first meeting after each Annual Council. The full list of bodies and appointments was in the agenda for the June Cabinet meeting.

Category B appointments currently fell to this committee to approve but it was proposed to move that responsibility to the Audit & Governance Committee. They would receive a full list of Category B bodies and appointments before their meeting the following week.

Category C bodies were local town and division bodies and appointments were delegated to the Monitoring Officer to approve. Officers had checked in with the Category A and B bodies since the election and the Category C list was next to be checked.

Members expressed concern about the lack of awareness of the outside bodies. It was likely that some representatives had insufficient awareness of their responsibilities. There was also a question around whether some of these bodies really needed a representative from the council.

The Monitoring Officer responded that guidance would be provided to Members on their responsibilities on outside bodies. The specific document on this – in an annex to the Audit & Governance Committee report – was insufficient in her view and she would ensure that more comprehensive guidance was provided.

Members were content with the proposed changes in responsibility for appointing to Category B bodies but wanted a thorough review of the whole issue. They welcomed providing stronger guidance to Members on their responsibilities.

20/25 EXEMPT MINUTES

(Agenda No. 9)

The Chair proposed that the public be excluded during the consideration of items 9 and 10 since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda. This was agreed.

The exempt minutes of the meeting held and adjourned on 5 September 2024 and the exempt minutes of the resumed meeting on 15 January 2025 were approved.

21/25 PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURING – TIERS 5 AND BELOW

(Agenda No. 10)

The committee had before it a report on restructuring Tier 5 and below which will follow the same agreed organisational design principles and for Tiers 1 to 4. Following discussion, the report was noted.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing