

12 MARCH 2026

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HR COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee held on Thursday, 12 March 2026

* Cllr Jill Cleary (Chairman)

* Cllr Steve Davies (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

Mark Clark
* Kate Crisell
Sean Cullen
* Jeremy Heron

Councillors:

* Colm McCarthy
* Alan O'Sullivan
* Joe Reilly

*Present

Officers Attending:

Heleana Aylett, Alan Bethune, Kirsty Farmer, James Loring, Zoe Ormerod and Lee Ellis

36 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2026 were confirmed by the Chairman as correct record.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

38 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

39 HR UPDATE REPORT

The Service Manager – Human Resources provided an overview of the work undertaken within the Human Resources service over and above the re-active casework.

RESOLVED:

That the report was noted.

40 GROWTH AND GOALS FEEDBACK

The Senior HR Advisor provided an overview of the updated learning commitments in the People Strategy and the new growth and goals conversations.

It was confirmed that the process was not linked to employee pay as employees received increments in annually, in April. If outstanding work had been undertaken

by an employee, then there were additional ways of recognising that contribution.

A Committee member was disappointed that the survey had only been completed by twenty-one respondents (15% of managers) and asked why only 3% had provided feedback under the question; 'Which aspect of the new process do you find most valuable'. In response, it was confirmed that this was a new process around meaningful conversations and the respondents were those who had so far used the form. The respondents reported that they found the meaningful conversations more valuable and it was felt that this was a result of the confidence in the skills that managers had in holding those conversations. HR Officers had been proactive in attending meetings, at different locations, to collate any constructive feedback on the process which hadn't been reported via the survey.

RESOLVED:

That the report was noted.

41 HR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED IN APRIL 2026 AS A RESULT OF THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT 2025

The Service Manager - Human Resources provided an overview of the HR policy changes required due to the Employees Rights Act 2025.

It was confirmed that the legislation required in relation to that part of the ERA had been passed and that element of the Act was now titled as, The Employment Rights Act 2025 (Parental and Paternity Leave) (Removal of Qualifying Periods, Etc) (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2026 and would come into effect from 6 April 2026.

Further changes to the Employment Rights Act would come into effect in October 2026 and during 2027.

A Committee member sought clarification regarding extending an employee's probation period beyond six months. It was confirmed by the Service Manager – Human Resources that after 6 April 2026, under the new legislation, the council would not be able to extend a probation period past six months except in very exceptional circumstances.

RESOLVED:

That the HR Committee noted the changes required to the Council's internal policies from 6 April 2026 as a result of the Employment Rights Act 2025.

42 QUARTERLY HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager provided an overview of the Quarterly Health and Safety Report.

It was confirmed that there was a small number of employees who had historic health concerns associated with vibration activity, although this did not need to be directly through work. Health surveillance was also provided for those teams who were most at risk from vibration at work such as ground maintenance employees, who used tools with a higher level of vibration.

A Committee member asked how the Council monitored the medical conditions of drivers within the grey fleet. It was confirmed that the Council was reliant on the employee reporting their health concerns or medical conditions via Human Resources, their Line Manager or the Health and Safety Team.

RESOLVED:

That the HR Committee:

- a) Supported the draft Vibration at Work Policy;
- b) Supported Draft Driving at Work Policy; and
- c) Noted the findings from the Quarter 3 Accident/Incident report.

43 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be approved.

CHAIRMAN