

HR COMMITTEE – 12 March 2026

HR Update Report

Purpose	For information
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	The report provides an overview of the work undertaken within the HR Service over and above the re-active casework.
Recommendation(s)	That members note the ongoing work within the HR Service
Reasons for recommendation(s)	Much of the work supports the council ambition to be an Employer of Choice and the corporate LEAF values
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Services.
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INTRODUCTION

1. This report gives an update on HR matters since the last HR Committee. These matters are in addition to the reactive caseload which includes job evaluations, restructuring advice, grievances, disciplinaries and sickness absence matters.
2. We also continue to provide Payroll, HR Advisory services and Health and Safety advice to the National Park Authority.

RECRUITMENT UPDATE

3. Recruitment Update

There has continued to be a high level of recruitment activity. In the last 3 months we have had 43 live recruitment campaigns. Just over 50% (22 no) related to the introduction of the new waste

service. Other campaigns included LGR backfill resource in ICT, casual CCTV operators, mobile cleaners and a new multi-site depot supervisor.

We have received a total of 506 applications.

The highest number of applicants were for Coastal Scientist and Project Manager, both of which attracted over 50 applications.

We had the highest number of applicants for a Grounds Maintenance role that we have ever received, with 36 applications. We believe that this was down to using different external advertising which hasn't been used before. This consisted of being advertised in CV library, an Indeed Sponsored advert and a website designated for Grounds Maintenance jobs.

LEARNING

LGA Equality Impact Assessment Leadership and Report Authors Training.

4. The LGA delivered Equality Impact Assessment Leadership and Report Authors Training across two sessions, attended by 33 colleagues (including a representative from the NPA). Led by senior advisers Luann Donald and Alison Leitch, the practical and interactive half-day sessions built participants' confidence in planning inclusive policies, services and events, and in meeting the needs of diverse staff, service users and stakeholders.

The training provided a clear understanding of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, including NFDC's framework, legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, and good practice principles. Participants explored how to assess impact on different groups, mitigate risks, involve the right people at each stage, and use NFDC's documentation effectively. Group exercises enabled attendees to apply learning to real NFDC projects.

Those attending included leaders, senior colleagues, report authors and staff involved in frontline service delivery or service changes.

How to Handle Challenging Conversations – Webinar from October last year – 85 Watched

5. This training was arranged following concerns about the phase 3 rollout and feedback from Enforcement that admin staff are increasingly handling confrontational or distressed callers. To support teams affected by ongoing organisational changes—and to offer a useful refresher—we've scheduled a session on managing difficult conversations.

The webinar focuses on building resilience, identifying the root cause of issues, showing empathy, structuring challenging conversations, using appropriate assertiveness, gaining confidence, and applying wellbeing strategies to maintain resilience.

Young Local Authority of the Year

6. This is an annual team competition enhancing the professional development of people in the early stages of their local government careers. A highlight of the charity run Young Programme's calendar, the event exists to improve communication skills and build confidence. It is also a valuable opportunity to meet others in similar positions across the UK, and it provides a creative and inspiring environment for the exchange of ideas and experiences away from the demands of everyday professional life.

We are supporting Ros Cavell and Millie Hicks to attend this event taking place in March in Crewe.

External Opportunities

7. Solace Springboard 2026 – Dean Brunton successful in his application – commences March

DCN Staff Programme 2026 – Kim Gray successful in her application

We have signed up to Tri Sector Challenge again (not until October) – attendees TBC.

LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK

8. The LGBTQ+ Network continue to meet regularly on a quarterly basis, hosting drop ins for staff to grow their network and support the workforce. The group have a chair, vice chair and secretary who support the group to agree discussion topics and focus for any drop-in sessions that are organised.

The LGBTQ+ Network has been developing a renewed strategy aimed at strengthening visibility, engagement, and participation across the council. As part of this approach, the Network will be increasing the number of drop-in sessions available to colleagues and acknowledging key awareness days through tailored initiatives designed to promote learning and encourage open conversation. The council will also continue to fly the LGBTQ+ flag at appropriate points throughout the year to demonstrate its commitment to inclusion.

In addition, the Network are recently offering pin badges for colleagues who wish to visibly express their allyship. Collectively,

these initiatives are designed to broaden awareness of the Network's purpose, foster a more inclusive workplace culture, and encourage greater uptake in membership and involvement.

The Network contributes directly to the EDI group providing valuable support in this area, as well as continuing to plan how to expand and raise awareness for both groups across the Council.

EDI GROUP

9. The EDI group continue to meet quarterly, discussing various work issues, commenting on policy and contributing to upcoming initiatives that support our inclusive culture.

The group continues to focus on policy updates, new initiatives across the Council, and celebrating areas of success. Members are also keen to gather feedback from colleagues who are part of the group but do not regularly attend meetings, in order to understand any barriers to participation. This will help ensure that the group's overall aims are consistently met and that it remains representative of staff across the Council.

At the most recent meeting, the group held a dedicated discussion on digital inclusion for operational teams, with senior colleagues from Waste, Transformation, IT and HR in attendance to share their insights. This conversation expanded into the wider 'Digital Skills for All' project, with the group agreeing that receiving updates and having the opportunity to contribute feedback is valuable to their role and the broader aims of the initiative.

The group also considered internal communications and recognition activity led by the Transformation team, followed by updates from several employee sub-groups, including the Women's Group, Early Careers, and Neurodiversity networks).

The next meeting is scheduled for 21 May 2026.

SUPPORT TO OPERATIONAL DEPOTS

10. We regularly attend the operational depots to give support to both managers and employees. In addition we have recently instigated a monthly arrangement with our depots to ensure that there is support available from Payroll, HR Advisory and HR Admin on site to answer any queries or concerns the first Wednesday after payday.

This has been well received by staff and works particularly well having all three teams available at the same time.

BRIEF BITES

11. We continue to offer Brief Bite training to managers, typically delivering two sessions per topic each year. These sessions include Bullying and Harassment, Sickness Absence, Performance Management and Recruitment. The next upcoming sessions include Bullying and Harassment and our newest brief bite of investigations. Managers can book onto these brief bites via the LMS, and if any problems, the Learning Team are on hand to support.
12. The HR Team continues to monitor attendance for these sessions through the LMS and issues regular communications, including reminder emails, to encourage participation.

UPDATED HR POLICIES

13. As a result of the Employment Rights Act there will be further policy changes necessary before October. These will be presented to HR Committee in due course.

Corporate plan priorities

14. Much of the work undertaken by the HR Service supports the council's ambition to be an employer of choice.

Options appraisal

15. Not Applicable

Consultation undertaken

16. Not Applicable

Financial and resource implications

17. None

Legal implications

18. As the Employment Rights Bill progresses there will need to be changes made to some policies to ensure we remain compliant.

Risk assessment

19. There are no risks associated with the recommendation.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

20. None

Equalities implications

21. None from this report, however future changes in legislation may have implications but these will be reported as each policy changes.

Crime and disorder implications

22. None

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

23. None

Appendices

None

Background Papers:

None