



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Practices Committee
Wednesday 13 May 2026
7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs Marie Montoya (Chairman), Paul Berry (until Min 30/26), Sandy Duck, Craig Gale, Craig Jones, Anna Rhodes, Kate Rowbottom and Doug Waller.

In attendance:

G Burt, Clerk to the Council

19/26 Chairman's announcements

1. That the meeting was being streamed to the internet.
2. Cllrs wishing to speak should raise their hand and speak loudly and clearly.
3. Mobile 'phones should either be switched off or silenced.

20/26 Apologies

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr James Marchant for an approved reason. On the proposal of Cllr Craig Gale, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller **RESOLVED** to accept the apology and reason given.

21/26 To receive Declarations of Interest and Notification of Changes to Members' Interests

Cllr Paul Berry declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Min 30/26 as his wife is an employee of the Council.

22/26 Public Session

None

23/26 Approval of the minutes of the Working Practices Committee meeting held on 18 February 2026, previously circulated.

On the proposal of Cllr Marie Montoya, seconded by Cllr Doug Waller, **RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed as a correct record accordingly.

The Chairman asked if there had been any progress on the retention of meeting recordings offline after 6 months? The Clerk advised this was still being investigated.

The Chairman asked if the annual leave decision had been recorded/conveyed? The Clerk advised that it been conveyed to affected staff, and would in due course be included in the updated Staff Handbook. It could also be a specific stand-alone policy to provide visibility in order to ensure it is correctly applied

24/26 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised that he hoped to make more use of this agenda item in future and invited Cllrs to let him know of any updates required so he could give them in this *slot*.

25/26 To review protocol for when meetings might not be quorate.

Council of 6 May 2026 asked the Committee to review quorums at meetings. This is an extract from Standing Orders. Being in **bold** means it is mandatory and cannot be altered. *No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.*

The Committee discussed the rare occasions when meetings had to be abandoned due to apologies not being given and the meeting therefore being inquorate due to there being less than three Cllrs present. It was agreed that the current standing order was quite clear and needed no addition. Since the most recent occasion this had occurred, all Cllrs had been reminded of the importance to tend apologies. The Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee confirmed that the Committee would be looking at a protocol in the event of such a re-occurrence given the tight deadlines for the submission of planning comments.

26/26 To review practice of Chairman of Council not usually also being a Chair of a Committee.

Council of 6 May 2026 asked the Committee to review this current practice which is based on precedent and is not in the Council's Standing Orders.

Cllrs felt that the current practice was sound in that it stopped the Council being seen as a *one person show* and also encouraged other Cllrs to take on positions.

On the proposal of Cllr Doug Waller seconded by Cllr Kate Rowbottom, **RECOMMEND** (to full Council) that this be incorporated into Standing Orders accordingly.

Following comment from Cllrs, the Clerk would look at the format of the current Standing Orders so they looked less untidy and would also incorporate other suggestions as to consistency etc, without changing any meaning etc.

27/26 Exclusion of Press & Public

On the proposal of Cllr Sandy Duck seconded by Cllr Craig Gale, **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted (staffing), the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.

28/26 2026-27 Pay Award.

Negotiations on the 2026-27 national pay award had still not yet been agreed. **NOTED.**

29/26 EOY Reviews

These were complete and been reviewed by Cllr Craig Gale. He had also undertaken the Clerk's EOY Review and outlined some of the targets agreed. **NOTED**

Cllr Paul Berry left the meeting.

30/26 To consider proposed pay increases for staff.

Members spoke in support of two proposals for pay increases as tabled by the Clerk.

On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Anna Rhodes **RESOLVED** that the first member of staff referred to in the confidential report progress to SCP27 in accordance with the policy that all staff be on a SCP rather than mid-points.

On the proposal of Cllr Craig Jones seconded by Cllr Doug Waller **RECOMMEND** (to the F&GP Committee as budgetary provision was required) that the second member of staff referred to in the confidential report progress to SCP25, progressing to SCP28 by 2029 subject to meeting agreed objectives each year.

[Members agreed that a policy to guide consideration of future pay-increase requests would be useful.]

31/26 Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 23 September 2026

Meeting closed at 7.54pm.

Chairman

Date