

Minutes

People and Culture Committee

Date: 3 July 2026

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present:

Cllr Walker (in the chair), Cllrs Booth, Crashley, Dodds (as substitute for Cllr Bruce), Garvani, Hardie, Patel, Rontree, Thewlis and Wood, (as substitute for Cllr Dresser)

Apologies:

Cllrs Ali, Bruce and Dresser

1. Minutes of meeting held on 27 March 2026

Resolved

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 March 2026 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2. Matters arising

The Head of Organisational Development Skills and Talent wished it to be noted that in answer to a Member query at the People and Culture Committee held on 27 March 2026 with regards to the Gender Pay Gap report at minute item 38, there has been a significant increase in females in operational roles which skews the pay gap because a greater number of female operational colleagues attract the lower pay rates.

3. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

4. Admission of the public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the public and press.

5. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Spotlight Ons

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to update Members on the work of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (EDI) team. This included a spotlight on the Employee Networks and Inclusive Practice and a spotlight on the Positive Action and Community Outreach and Engagement activities which took place during the period

Members noted the reports and received them positively. Members discussed and requested further information regarding the following:

- Fitness development, tests and standards across firefighters, help available to all staff, in particular female firefighters
- Statistics on progression to application stage from “have a go” days
- Productivity benefits of our diversity, equity and inclusion events
- Community engagement events
- Suicide prevention

Resolved

That the report be noted

7. People and Culture Activity Report

The Director of People and Culture submitted a report which advised Members of the key HR metrics, including establishment strength, sickness absence data and high-level discipline and grievance figures.

Members were pleased to learn that the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) team are working on the introduction of live data, to replace the current system of quarterly reporting.

Members sought clarification on the absence charts provided in the report and asked that their concerns about the lack of targets be recorded, noting that this limited their ability to hold the Authority to account. It was explained that the People and Culture Directorate is not target-driven; however, objective measures are in place and the overall goal is to reduce absence. Data is submitted quarterly to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), and benchmarking against other Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) and national figures is maintained. Members were advised that a dedicated project is currently reviewing absence management, including policies, benchmarking, the standardisation of absence codes, the introduction of live Power Apps, and weekly workstreams. Senior managers also meet weekly to review both long-term trends and short-term emerging pressures, and robust absence management processes are in place.

Members discussed the need for operational staff to maintain full fitness, the availability of occupational health, safety and wellbeing services, and the complexity of

many cases linked to an ageing workforce, partly due to austerity and greater awareness of mental wellbeing.

Further discussion took place on the figures for disciplinary cases, and Members' attention was drawn to the recent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report, which gave a very satisfied opinion of the disciplinary processes in place at WYFRS.

Resolved

That the report be noted

8. Equality Data Monitoring Report 2025

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to update Members on Equality Data Monitoring. This is a report published annually to fulfil WYFRS's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The report provided workforce data for the 2025/26 financial year on gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age, religion, disciplinary and grievance.

Members noted that the Public Sector Equality Duty places additional responsibilities on WYFRS and sought assurance that it makes a tangible difference, while also confirming that employment decisions are based on merit. It was acknowledged that measuring productivity, benefits and success can be complex; however, examples from operational response and prevention teams demonstrate that a workforce representative of the communities it serves helps to build trust and understanding.

Members challenged the report author on the "not declared" statistics within the workforce profile and raised concerns that those staff members may not be receiving the support they need. Members were advised that significant work is underway to support neurodiversity, noting that practical roles, such as firefighting, can attract applications from neurodiverse candidates.

Members were pleased to note that a significant number of young people not in employment, education or training who attended the recent Ignite campaign at Killingbeck Station subsequently applied for roles with WYFRS.

Members discussed future briefings for the Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Group Leader.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

9. Yorkshire and Humber Local Authority Employers' Association Minutes of Meetings held on 9 June 2026

Resolved

That the minutes be noted.

10. Quarterly Update on the People and Culture Strategy and Delivery Plan 2025 - 2028

The Director of People and Culture presented an update on the People Strategy 2025 - 2028.

Chair