

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

19th August 2025

An extraordinary meeting of the Heath and Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Panel was held on Tuesday, 19th August 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton.

Present

Councillor S. Dhillon (Chair)

Councillors: J. Hartshorn (Vice-Chair), J. Bonner, T. Jenkins, B. Pandher, C. Smith, M. Wright (substituting for M. Kondakor) and Mrs D. Ross.

Apologies: Councillors S. Markham, W. Markham and M. Kondakor.

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

HCR 10 **Declarations of Interest**

RESOLVED that the declarations of interests are as set out in the Schedule which can be viewed on the Council website ([Councillor Schedule of Declarations of Interests for Meetings](#)).

HCR 11 **Skilled Migrant Workers Policy And Procedure**

The Assistant Director – Democracy and Governance advised the Panel that the decision of Cabinet on the 16th July 2025 regarding the Skilled Migrant Workers Policy And Procedure had been ‘called in’. The request for call in was received on 28th July 2025.

The call in had been assessed against Article 12: Principles of Decision Making as detailed within the Council’s Constitution. Following this assessment one of the three call in areas had been rejected as they fully complied with the Article 12 Principles.

The two areas relating to ‘Presumption in favour of openness’ and ‘Options offered for consideration will be explained’ were accepted for the OSP to review and consider.

The Panel discussed and asked questions on the following:

- The financial implications to Council of the policy, and whether a Skilled Migrant Worker would be on a higher or comparable salary, when taking into consideration relocation costs, visa’s etc.
 - Councillor Hey advised that this policy and procedure is not a plan to just solely recruit migrant workers. This is just an option available - another way to try and ‘fill gaps’. The Council is struggling to recruit to senior level vacancies, for example there have been numerous attempts to recruit Solicitors - but they have attracted no applicants. It was confirmed that the Council is not having issues filling vacancies with lower salaries.
 - The Council is therefore paying freelancers and agency staff, which ‘costs a fortune’. This new policy is a way to actually save money. Some agency Legal Advisers are

being paid up to £750 a day, as essential work needs to be carried out. However, this new policy is not the only solution, the Council is looking at other solutions such as working with other Local Authorities. Other Authorities around the Country are having the same issues and looking at similar options for higher level vacancy recruitment.

- Costs associated with this new policy will include the licence, visa's etc - but there is a payback scheme. The Council can allocate money in the budget in future years, but this will save money in the long term.
- The Strategic Director for Corporate Resources confirmed that this policy will be used as another option within the HR Recruitment process, and the cost to the Council would be in the region of a couple of thousand pounds per person – but taking into account the current Agency and Freelance fees this option would save the Council money.
- The Council would follow HR procedures and follow recruitment and selection processes. Any Skilled Migrant Workers would be paid within the band set for the job they applied for (in the same way current applicants are), and all applicants would have to evidence the required skills, qualifications and abilities.
- The policy doesn't specify how skills will be identified. For example verbal skills are important to communicate with members of the community. It is important that skills be identified and confirmed, along with relevant qualifications.
 - The People Services Manager confirmed that as a Public Authority the Council is covered by the Fluency Duty, and as such all vacancies within the Council require all applicants to be fluent in English - verbally and written. There is set criteria and skills people need to meet in order to apply and be selected for each position within the Council. If someone does not meet this set criteria they cannot be selected to fill a vacancy.
- Making reference to Home Office in policies – Visa's, National Insurance etc and being compliant
- Whether the payback clause can be enforced for those who leave NBBC early.
 - The People Services Manager advised that the payback clause is contractual, and will form part of the employment contract – similar to other schemes within the Council.

RESOLVED that the decision made by Cabinet be endorsed, allowing the decision to be carried out but under different timescales due to delay.