

EMPLOYMENT & APPEALS COMMITTEE

6 May 2014

HR POLICIES

Report of the Director of Resources

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present a number of Human Resources (HR) Policies that have been reviewed and updated as part of a rolling programme of policy reviews to ensure our HR policies and procedures are fit for purpose.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To consider and approve the following HR Policies (Appendices 1 – 6):

- (a) Absence Management Policy (Appendix 1) – an update to an existing policy but representing a clearer framework to management sickness absence and greater guidance for line managers. The absence ‘trigger’ points have been refined and there are specific stages for managing absence at an informal and formal level.
- (b) Grievance Policy (Appendix 2) - an updated policy which now combines the Grievance policy with the Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying policy to ensure equity of procedure.
- (c) Probation Policy (Appendix 3) – an updated policy placing in one document the procedure for managing performance during the probationary period.
- (d) Job Evaluation Appeals (Appendix 4) – an updated section of the Job Evaluation Policy to reflect that appeals are not heard by Members as amended in the Constitution.
- (e) Pension discretions (Local Government Pension Scheme) (Appendix 5) – an updated schedule of discretions in line with LGPS 2014.
- (f) Early Retirement Policy (Appendix 6) to reflect some changes to discretions and provisions within LGPS 2014.

2.2 To approve an update to the Flexible Working Policy (agreed at Full Council in January 2014) to reflect a legislative change effective from 30 June 2014.

On 30 June 2014, the Flexible Working Regulations will be amended under the Children and Families Act 2014 – this means that the right to request flexible working will be extended to cover all employees after 26 week’s service, rather than only those with children under the age of 17 (or 18 if the child is disabled) and certain carers.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Employment Committee and Full Council approved 12 employment policies during the period September 2013 to January 2014. In March 2014 the Council’s constitution was amended to delegate approval of employment policies to the Employment and Appeals Committee.
- 3.2 To supplement the updated policies for Absence, Grievance and Probation, we also have in place more comprehensive operational guidance notes for managers. Training will also be provided for all line managers in Absence Management prior to the policy being implemented.
- 3.3 The Pension Discretions reflect our requirement to publish and keep under review a statement of policy to explain how we will apply certain discretions allowed under the Pensions Regulations. New pension scheme rules came into effect on 1 April 2014 – known as LGPS 2014. Appendix 5 identifies the discretions for Member approval – these represent no additional cost to the Council and are in line with those determined by Leicestershire County Council who administers the LGPS on our behalf. The key change is item no.4 and relates to the provision that employees can now access their pension voluntarily without employer consent if they are over 55. We are required to agree and publish these discretions by 30 June.
- 3.4 The following updates have been made to the Early Retirement Policy in accordance with recent changes to pension provision:
- employees are able to access their pension voluntarily at age 55 (paragraph 2 of Appendix 6) – previously this was age 60.
 - an employee is required to have 2 years contributory membership before they become entitled to ill-health retirement – previously this was 3 months of continuous contributory membership (paragraph 4.2).

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications from the content of this report.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	Low	This report enables the Committee to approve HR policies for recommendation to Full Council. Current policies do not place the Council at risk.
Viability	Low	No issues identified.
Finance	Low	There are no direct financial implications arising from the report
Profile	Low	No specific issues relevant to the community

		regarding HR policies.
Equality and Diversity	Low	EIA screening indicates no specific issues arise from this report

Background Papers: None

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