

## **Rutland County Council**

Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP

Telephone 01572 722577 Email: [governance@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rutland.gov.uk)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A meeting of the **EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE** will be held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP on **Tuesday, 15th November, 2022** commencing at 7.00 pm when it is hoped you will be able to attend.

Yours faithfully

Mark Andrews  
**Chief Executive**

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Although social distancing requirements have been lifted there is still limited available for members of the public. If you would like to reserve a seat please contact the Governance Team at [governance@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rutland.gov.uk). The audio of the meeting can also be listened to at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86494301241>

### **A G E N D A**

- 1) APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**
- 2) WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED**
- 3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Regulations, Members are invited to declare any disclosable interests under the Code of Conduct and the nature of those interests in respect of items on this Agenda and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them

- 4) MINUTES**

To confirm the Minutes of the Employment and Appeals Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and receive an update on actions agreed in the minutes of the

previous meeting.  
(Pages 5 - 10)

**5) PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

To receive any petitions, deputations and questions received from members of the public in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule 93.

The total time allowed for this shall be 30 minutes. Petitions, deputations and questions shall be dealt with in the order in which they are received.

Questions may also be submitted at short notice by giving a written copy to the Democratic Services Officer 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. The total time allowed for questions at short notice is 15 minutes out of the total time of 30 minutes.

Any petitions, deputations and questions which have been submitted with prior formal notice will take precedence over questions submitted at short notice. Any questions which are not considered within the time limit shall receive a written response after the meeting and be the subject of a report to the next meeting.

**6) QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

To consider any questions received from Members of the Council in accordance with the provisions of Procedure Rule 95.

**7) NOTICES OF MOTION**

To consider any Notices of Motion from Members submitted under Procedure Rule 97.

**8) APPRENTICESHIPS**

To receive Report No.179/2022 from the Strategic Director for Resources.  
(Pages 11 - 16)

**9) HR POLICY REVIEWS**

To receive Report No.180/2022 from the Strategic Director for Resources.  
(Pages 17 - 22)

**10) HR POLICIES**

To receive Report No.181/2022 from the Strategic Director for Resources.  
(Pages 23 - 28)

**11) ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

To receive items of urgent business which have previously been notified to the person presiding.

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**DISTRIBUTION**

**MEMBERS OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE:**

Councillor G Waller (Chairman)

Councillor J Dale

Councillor K Payne

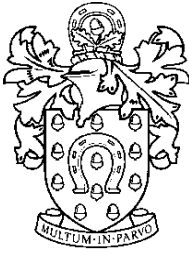
Councillor A Walters

Councillor J Fox

Councillor R Powell

Councillor S Harvey

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## **Rutland County Council**

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP

Telephone 01572 722577 Email: [governance@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rutland.gov.uk)

Minutes of the **MEETING of the EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmos, Oakham on Tuesday, 8th February, 2022 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:**

Councillor G Brown

Councillor K Bool

Councillor O Hemsley

Councillor G Waller

Councillor S Harvey

Councillor R Powell

**OFFICERS  
PRESENT:**

Carol Snell

Tom Delaney

Head of Human Resources  
Governance Manager

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor J Dale.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2021.

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held 26 October 2021 be **APPROVED**.

**4 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

**5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

No questions had been received from Members.

## 6 NOTICES OF MOTION

No notices of motion had been received.

## 7 FUTURE WAYS OF WORKING

Report No. 12/2022 was received from the Strategic Director of Resources. The Head of Human Resources, Carol Snell, presented the report which informed the Committee on the progression of the trial of the hybrid working model for staff, the lessons that had been learnt and how actions were being identified for moving forward. It was noted that returning to the original ways of working model pre Covid-19 was not desired or expected.

Following questions from Members, the Head of Human Resources confirmed that there had been no changes to terms and conditions of employee contracts and if employees were required to come into the office this would be acceptable contractually. The Council had already put in place a flexible working policy prior to the pandemic which broadly covered the way in which the Council was currently working. It was confirmed that there were roughly 100 employees whereby roles were predominantly based at an office location or in the community.

The Head of Human Resources confirmed that the objective was for a more defined model be issued in April 2022 with caveats dependant on organisational requirements and the Covid-19 pandemic. It was asked by Members whether consideration needed to be given in relation to new employees and if working remotely had a negative impact on their experience given the turnover figures in a later report, and the Head of Human Resources confirmed that this was a factor being looked into.

Concerns were raised by Members around employees predominately working from home in relation to any impacts on their mental health, how this would be measured, and how teams would continue to bond and work together effectively. The Head of Human Resources confirmed there would be opportunities for teams to come together under the Hybrid Model, but this needed to be managed safely alongside concerns on employee wellbeing. It is not the intention, in the current model, that an employee works at home for 100% of their time. In addition, the working model for services/teams is determined by the needs of the business and where the service needs to be delivered from.

The report highlighted the importance of flexible working models from a recruitment and retention perspective; also, that adjustments will be necessary to 'buildings' in order to support a flexible working arrangement for staff e.g., enabling people to collaborate and engage with others

### RESOLVED

That the Employee and Appeals Committee **NOTED** the report and its contents.

## 8 GRIEVANCE POLICY

Report No. 13/2022 was received from the Strategic Director of Resources. The Head of Human Resources, Carol Snell, presented the report which sought approval from the Committee for the updated Grievance Policy.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Human Resources explained that if a member of staff had a grievance with their own line manager, it was outlined in the Policy that the grievance could be raised with another line manager or Human Resources.

Following questions from Members the Head of Human Resources agreed to amend several parts of the policy following Committee to ensure that; confidentiality was outlined more predominantly in the policy, to clarify it was not always Human Resources who undertook note-taking of grievance proceedings and amending the reference to 'Panel' in para 6.9.5. The Head of Human Resources is able to subsequently confirm that the issue of recording hearings is covered in the Policy at paragraph 9.4.5.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the updated Grievance Policy be **APPROVED** by the Employment and Appeals Committee.

## 9 RETENTION OF STAFF

Report No. 14/2022 was received from the Strategic Director of Resources. The Head of Human Resources, Carol Snell, presented the report which provided the Committee with a more focussed paper on loss of staff/turnover and in particular to understand more about reasons for leaving.

Members asked if employees could be asked within staff surveys what encouraged them to stay working for RCC. In response to Member suggestions the Head of Human Resources agreed that it would be useful to understand the underlying reasons as to what prompted employees to leave RCC for career development and further analysis around this would be useful. It was observed one to one meetings for employees were critical to help employees feel valued regarding their development and career progression.

The Head of Human Resources advised that whilst monitoring and reporting of data is useful and helps identify trends, from an employment perspective, data for the last two years is going to prove challenging from a comparator perspective given the unusual circumstances.

It was acknowledged the value of pursuing 'exit interview' information from staff on a statistical and qualitative basis.

The Head of Human Resources highlighted our success in promoting from within the organisation – this helps both our recruitment and retention and demonstrates our commitment to developing staff. She also highlighted the success of some of our trainee schemes e.g. Social Workers, Planners, Building Surveyors.

## RESOLVED

That the Employment and Appeals Committee **NOTED** the report and its contents.

## 10 NATIONAL PAY AWARD

The Head of Human Resources provided a verbal update on the latest situation with the National Pay Award.

In April 2020 a pay award of 2.75% had been awarded to employees. Negotiations for the 2021 award had still not reached agreement and regional briefings were next expected in March. At the end of 2021 the National Employers had submitted a final offer of 1.75% and the three trade unions had advised that they would proceed to ballot on consideration for strike action. The outcome of the ballot for Unison fell short of the minimum turnout of 50% due to only receiving 14.5% turnout; GMB had not proceeded to a formal strike ballot and the outcome for Unite was still being awaited.

There were some increasing pressures with the National Living Wage being increased to £9.50 on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. As RCC only had one employee on pay point 2 this was not a significant pressure. It was noted that inflation was rising, and it was likely that this would either rise again or stabilise at 5/6%. National Insurance Contributions were also due to rise in April 2022.

The Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives had recently agreed a pay award of 1.5% but (at the time of the meeting) the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers was still unknown. *(This has also subsequently been confirmed as 1.5% from April 2021)*

It was confirmed following Members' questions that employees were regularly informed of the updates and that the pay award would be backdated to April 2021. In response to a question regarding the level of National Insurance to be paid if the backpay is not made until after April 2022 – the Head of Human Resources has subsequently confirmed that the rate will be at the higher NI rate at the time of being paid i.e., 2022/23 rate.

The Chair thanked the Head of Human Resources for the update and would look forward to an update in March 2022 following the further regional briefings.

## 11 WORK PLAN

The Employment and Appeals Committee Work Plan was received, and it was suggested by the Chair that it would be useful to look at all of the employment policies and to understand where these stood in terms of review dates. Councillor G Waller also requested an item to be scheduled in relation to any updates on the National Pay Award.

## RESOLVED

- 1) That the Employment and Appeals Committee Work Plan be received and the expected items for future meetings were **NOTED**.



- 2) That a list of all employment policies, and their last and next review dates, be provided at a future meeting.
- 3) That an item regarding an update to the National Pay Award be scheduled for a future meeting.

## **12 ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair advised the Committee that a Chief Officer Appointments Panel had been scheduled in March 2022 for the appointment of the Monitoring Officer and the relevant Committee Members had been contacted.

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**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.28 pm.**

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## EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

15 November 2022

### APPRENTICESHIPS

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	A modern and effective Council	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr K Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation	
Contact Officer(s):	Saverio Della Rocca, Strategic Director for Resources (s.151 Officer)	01572 758159 sdrocca@rutland.gov.uk
	Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources	01572 720969 csnell@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors		

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the progress of our Apprenticeship programme and current position.

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 In February and July 2021, the Employment and Appeals Committee approved an Apprenticeship Strategy for the Council. Members are updated of our progress by this report.

## 2 APPRENTICESHIP LEVY AND PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICESHIP TARGET

- 2.1 The Apprenticeship Levy and Public Sector Apprenticeship Target placed a 'target' on prescribed groups and public sector bodies with 250 or more staff, to employ at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts each year.
- 2.2 However, the target came to an end on 31 March 2022 although public sector employers are asked to continue to gather and report on new apprenticeship starts and total number of apprentices.

### **3 UPDATE ON OUR STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

- 3.1 Members have been supportive of the Strategy in that it reflects Rutland's context as an employer. Over the past year, we have also provided updates on the challenges of recruitment and retention and the complexities of the job market that have emerged since the pandemic.
- 3.2 By way of recap of our Vision as outlined in the Strategy:
- To deliver an Apprenticeship programme that is available to individuals from all ages, from those who have limited or no work experience/qualifications to those wanting a career change.
  - To embed Apprenticeships within the workforce and as an integral part of local workforce planning.
  - Apprenticeships to be recognised across the organisation as a highly effective means for us to build our pipeline of skills and future talent.
- 3.3 As the past year has progressed, it became clear that the actions identified began to be more challenging - a combination of changes/turnover within the HR team that has hampered our ability to drive forward the actions, prioritisation of HR input into our evolving Ways of Working, and emerging recruitment and retention issues on a scale that we had not anticipated. This has regrettably had a detrimental impact on our ability to achieve as much as we had hoped.
- 3.4 Our ethos has always been about quality and outputs rather than chasing 'numbers'. It is important therefore to reflect on what we have been able to achieve and then reset our goals going forward.
- 3.5 What we have been able to do:
- Apply a level of scrutiny of vacancies across the organisation. We continue to ask the question and will continue to pursue pro-active support to recruiting managers.
  - Promote the use of apprentices as qualification/professional development for existing staff. See para 4.1 below for a schedule of existing Apprentices standards being supported.

### **4 OUR ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 4.1 The range of Apprentice programmes that we have supported has been wide ranging:

IT Application Specialist Level 2	IT Solutions Technical Level 3
Level 3 Advanced Health and Social Care	Level 2 Intermediate Health and Social Care
Level 2 Business Admin	Level 3 Business Admin
Public Service Operational Delivery Officer	Lead Adult Care Worker Level 3
Adult Care Worker Level 2	Adult Care Level 5
Social Worker Level 6	Chartered Surveyor Level 6
HR Consultant Partner Level 5	Accounting Taxation Level 7
Children Services Data Analyst	Team Leader/Supervisor Level 3

Creative Digital Design Level 6	Operations/Department Manager Level 5
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4.2 Our level of success has varied – with some staff not able to complete the programme or found it not as expected/too challenging.

4.3 As previously reported, some of our Apprentices struggled during 2020 and 2021 as the working environment shifted in response to the pandemic and they sought to pursue their career elsewhere. Currently we have two employees in **Apprenticeship positions**:

- IT Solutions Apprentice (IT)
- Design Officer (Learning and Skills – Virtual School) – this individual joined us in July 2021 on the Kick Start programme.

4.4 In addition, we have had the following success where individuals joining us as an Apprentice have gone onto other roles with the Council:

- Exams and Marketing Administrator - started as a RALS Business Administration Apprentice
- Trainee Planning Officer – commenced her time with Rutland as a Planning Support Apprentice and is now continuing her planning career and pursuing a Degree course as a Town Planner
- ICT Support Officer – progressed from ICT Apprentice to Assistant ICT Support Officer then to Support Assistant and now Support Officer
- Information Governance Support Officer – commenced employment with Rutland as a Business Administration Apprentice – has progressed his career in Administration and then promoted to Information Governance Support in January 2022

4.5 Most of our programmes are followed as **Apprenticeship standards** rather than Apprenticeship posts. Again, this is a good outcome and reflects the range and level of support we provide to staff as part of their development and growth and pursuit of further qualifications – see para 4.1. Our current active programmes are:

- Chartered Surveyor Level 6 – 2 employees
- Adult Care Worker Level 2 – 3 employees
- Social Worker Degree Level 6 – 3 employees
- HR Consultant Partner – 1 employee
- Children Services Data Analyst – 1 employee
- Adult Care Level 5 – 2 employees
- Town Planner – 1 employee

**TOTAL - 13**

## **5 NEXT STEPS**

5.1 We will continue, through our interaction with recruiting managers, to promote and encourage Apprenticeship roles wherever possible to develop our pipeline of 'trainees' into the organisation.

- 5.2 Support existing staff to pursue an Apprenticeship standard qualification as part of their ongoing development and growth.
- 5.3 Share and promote our good news stories through case studies and briefings across the organisation to demonstrate the success and benefit of both Apprenticeship posts and Apprenticeship standard qualifications.
- 5.4 Monitor and support the progress of existing learners to help them reach their goals and aspirations – and again showcase their positive experience.

Some recent feedback:

- “A is getting on really well. He has made links with a number of services and project at RCC and has always produced good work for them, correcting work when required and making changes when needed to. In terms of the course he is clearly enjoying it and says he is learning a lot. A met with his tutor in the first term and reported that his tutors seem very happy with how is getting on.”
  - “I have had quarterly meetings with B’s mentor on the course and she has been delighted with his progress. One of the projects he needs to complete will have real-life benefits for Rutland, in the form of more advanced analysis of certain aspects of children’s social care. He also has a formal exam coming up in a couple of weeks’ time and we have agreed study days as part of this. In this case I think our apprenticeship levy money has been well spent!”
  - “C has passed all her year one exams on the apprenticeship and will pass onto year 2 with no overhangs – her last two modules achieving 67% technology and 76% construction which we understand gives her a credit level grade.”
  - “D is doing extremely well on the course at the last academic review she was on target and had passed all assignments to date and attendance was 100%. We have another academic review in the next couple of weeks. She has just completed her first year placement and has passed she has now started her second year attending university.”
- 5.5 We will also keep a watching brief on the development of T Levels and look at opportunities to support students with work experience in the Council.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 None required.

## **7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 To not pursue Apprenticeship roles and qualifications. However, as paragraph 4, the Council considers, and has experienced the benefits of Apprenticeship roles and qualifications.

## **8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Not applicable in relation to this paper which is provided as an update and current position statement. Funds for Apprenticeship courses are funded through the

Apprenticeship Levy.

## **9 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 None.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## **11 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed as there are no equality issues arising from this paper.

## **12 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 None

## **13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 None

## **14 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 Human Resource implications – the provision of Apprenticeship roles and qualifications is a key part of the development of our workforce.

## **15 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1 There are no further recommendations arising from this report.

15.2 Whilst the Government has now ceased the Apprenticeship Target, the Council remains committed to Apprenticeship roles and supporting staff with Apprenticeship standard qualifications as a vital part of the development of our workforce.

## **16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **17 APPENDICES**

17.1 None.

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## EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

15 November 2022

### HR POLICY REVIEWS

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	A modern and effective Council		
Exempt Information		No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:		Cllr K Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation	
Contact Officer(s):	Saverio Della Rocca, Strategic Director for Resources (s.151 Officer)	01572 758159 sdrocca@rutland.gov.uk	
	Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources	01572 720969 csnell@rutland.gov.uk	
Ward Councillors			

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Notes the range of employment policies that the Council has and the process it follows by way of review and update.

### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Employment policies and procedures help to provide a decision-making framework to ensure integrity and fairness are adhered to when issues arise, as well as help minimise legal and safety risks for employers.
- 1.2 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development also quote “HR policies and procedures give guidance on a range of employment issues for employees, managers and others with responsibility for people. They play an important role in practically and effectively implementing an organisation’s HR strategy. They also provide consistency and transparency for employees and managers, helping to enhance the psychological contract and create a positive organisational culture.”
- 1.3 This report provides an overview for members of how Rutland Council as an employer, manages its range of employment policies.

## **2 OVERVIEW OF HR POLICIES - CONTEXT**

- 2.1 Whilst policies are often referred to as 'HR policies' – this does not mean they are 'owned' by the HR team – the HR function may facilitate the development of them on behalf of the organisation.
- 2.2 No matter their heading, they are a written source of guidance on how a wide range of issues should be handled within an organisation. They include a description of the principles, right and responsibilities for managers and employees.
- 2.3 Very few policies are legally required although there are important legislative provisions surrounding the setting out of formal disciplinary and grievance procedures. Given the complexity and legal terminology used in legislative documents, it would not be appropriate to solely rely on that media in an operational/ work context. Therefore, policies provide a level of accessibility, transparency and fair interpretation of the law.
- 2.4 Even where a policy or procedure is not specifically required by law, employers often find it helpful (and in some cases is best practice) to have a policy in place to provide clear guidelines that reflects the legal framework for handling specific issues – and it also helps employees to be clear about the organisation's stance on a particular subject, provision or benefit.
- 2.5 Employment legislation in the UK is varied and in some cases complex – for example:
- The Employment Rights Act 1996 - covers areas such as unfair dismissal, redundancy payments, protection of wages, zero-hour contracts, Sunday working, suspension from work, flexible working and termination of employment.
  - National Minimum Wage Act 1998 – sets out the minimum amounts of pay a worker is entitled to per hour. There is a legal requirement for employers to pay the national minimum wage.
  - Employment Relations Act 1999 – establishes a number of rights at work in several areas, some of which are covered by previous regulation. Particular areas here are Trade Union recognition, derecognition and industrial action ballots.
  - Maternity and Parental leave Regulations 1999 – specific regulations that govern the rights of employees for time off work due to maternal and parental obligations. These rights also apply for people adopting a child.
  - The Equality Act 2010 – prevents discrimination in the workplace and the recruitment process, but also in wider society protecting people from discrimination and victimisation.
- 2.6 The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) will also be mindful of internal policies and procedures when discharging their services. For example, they have a Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures, and they recommend this as the minimum an employer should follow for handling such issues in the workplace.

2.7 In the event that an employer does not follow its own procedure or acts outside of employment legislation, they may face a claim from an employee at an Employment Tribunal. Types of disputes heard by employment tribunals include:

- Unfair dismissal
- Wrongful dismissal
- Discrimination
- Equal pay
- Unlawful deductions from wages.

Employers may have to pay compensation or reinstate a claimant if they lose the case.

### 3 RUTLAND COUNCIL POLICIES

3.1 The Council has developed a suite of policies in order to:

- Demonstrate our compliance with employment legislation and regulation – the ‘do’s’ and ‘don’t’s’.
- Provide a clear statement of our policy and practice, demonstrating equity, fairness and consistency.

3.2 We also examine the minimum requirements of ACAS as a starting point and review other similar/model policies adopted by other organisations for best practice, eg. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

3.3 The process the Council is required to follow, having developed a draft policy that affects employee terms and conditions of employment, is consideration and approval by the Corporate Leadership Team, recognised Trade Unions and then Employment and Appeals Committee. Any new or updated policies are shared across the workforce and copies are held in HR folders within the Intranet so are fully accessible. Where necessary, we also undertake specific briefings or training for managers.

3.4 The **current** policies that have previously been approved as above, are as follows – along with the dates they were last reviewed:

Accessing your Personal Record – March 2019	Acting up and Additional Responsibility Allowance – January 2015
Capability – February 2017	Code of Conduct – January 2017
Disciplinary – March 2016	Early Retirement – July 2018
Employer Supported Volunteering - October 2015	Flexible Working - February 2017
Grievance – February 2022	Internal secondment – February 2017
Job Evaluation – July 2017	No Smoking – October 2015
Pay Policy (March 2022 and annually)	Probation – March 2019
Professional Development – February 2017	Recruitment – July 2017
Relocation – September 2020	Restructure – March 2016
Sickness Absence – July 2014	Social Media – July 2017
Umbrella Leave – Sept 2020	Umbrella Families – July 2018

(incorporates all types of leave, annual leave, special leave, time off for religious beliefs).	(incorporates maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave
Standby – February 2020	

3.5 The HR team undertook a range of **reviews and refresh** of policies in 2015-2017 to provide a policy position and style that would stand the test of time (subject to any legislative/regulatory review). Any subsequent reviews, refresh or modification therefore takes place as and when required – for example:

- changes to legislation or regulation
- in response to emerging case law that leads to a change of practice or application in order to minimise risk of challenge
- identified need for clarification or improved wording.

3.6 Over the past year our focus has been on the development of our Ways of Working practices – this has not, as yet, required any changes to existing policies such as Flexible Working.

## **4 CONSULTATION**

4.1 There are no consultation considerations arising from this paper.

4.2 As contained within the paper, consultation is required through the approval process of HR policies that affect employee Terms and Conditions of Employment.

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

5.1 The Council could consider reduced policies or no policies in certain areas – this would likely give rise to inconsistent practice and perceived different levels of treatment that could result in grievances and tribunal claims.

5.2 External ‘model’ policies could be adopted with no local nor Rutland Council consideration, ie. as produced by another organisation/authority. Our current approach is to review such model policies and then apply a level of Rutland specific content as necessary.

## **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None arising from this paper.

6.2 Failure to follow statutory employment legislation would render us liable to challenge at employment tribunal. The amount of an award is case specific but would include a fixed sum and further compensation for money lost.

## **7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 No further considerations other than those identified within this paper.

## **8 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## **9        EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1        An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed as there are no issues arising from this paper.

## **10        COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1        None

## **11        HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1        None

## **12        ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1        Human Resource implications – no further implications other than those already identified in this paper.

## **13        CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 13.1        Employment related policies have an important part to play in the organisation to both safeguard and protect the Council as an employer, and also the rights of our employees. This paper provides some context and explanation for Members to understand how they operate within the Council.

## **14        BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 14.1        None

## **15        APPENDICES**

- 15.1        None.

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## EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

15 November 2022

### HR POLICIES

#### Report of the Strategic Director Resources

Strategic Aim:	A modern and effective Council		
Exempt Information	No		
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Councillor Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation		
Contact Officer(s):	Saverio Della Rocca, Strategic Director for Resources	01572 758159	<a href="mailto:sdrocca@rutland.gov.uk">sdrocca@rutland.gov.uk</a>
	Carol Snell, Head of Human Resources	01572 720969	<a href="mailto:csnell@rutland.gov.uk">csnell@rutland.gov.uk</a>
Ward Councillors	All		

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. Approves a new policy of 'Fostering Friendly' for Rutland County Council employees (Appendix A)

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for a new Fostering Friendly Policy for the Council's employees.

## 2 FOSTERING FRIENDLY POLICY

- 2.1 The Strategic Director Children and Families has undertaken a review of fostering allowances and measures designed to increase the number of Rutland County Council foster carers. This has included a remodelling of the financial and wider support package that we offer foster carers to enable us to increase recruitment of foster carers and ensure that we have an appropriate package of support.
- 2.2 Aligned to this work (which was approved at Cabinet on 18 October 2022), has been the development of a policy and provision of support for our own employees who wish to become foster carers – a copy is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.3 A key feature of this policy is paid time off in any 12-month period as follows:

- assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer - up to three days
- attendance at panel for approval – one day
- placement of a child/young person, for example child review meetings, annual foster carer review meeting and training – up to five days per annum.

2.4 This policy is applicable to all Rutland County Council employees even if they are fostering from another region/authority.

2.5 In addition, if approved, the Council will be able to use an official Fostering Network branding across all our advertising channels as a 'Fostering Friendly' employer. This is an important message in our collaboration within the local business community to encourage them to support their employees who may wish to become foster carers.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

3.1 The Council is required to consult with the recognised Trade Unions for the consideration of employment policies. Unison have raised no comments nor concern with this policy.

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 There is no legal requirement for an employer to have a Fostering Friendly Policy. However, the adoption of such a policy demonstrates our commitment to supporting our staff who may be, or are considering, undertaking fostering support. In addition, the Council will then be able to use an official Fostering network branding.

### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct costs nor financial implications arising from this policy.

### **6 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 No further considerations.

### **7 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

### **8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been completed as there are no equality, diversity or inclusion issues arising from this policy.

### **9 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no community safety implications arising from this policy.

### **10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None.



## **11 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Human Resource implications – this policy is applicable to all employees of the Council and provides support where they may undertake foster care responsibilities.

## **12 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 The Council seeks to provide policies and procedures that both supports the working relationship between employees and the Council.
- 12.2 This policy as outlined will ensure provide support to employees who may also undertake foster care responsibilities.

## **13 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 13.1 There are no further additional background papers to the report.

## **14 APPENDICES**

- 14.1 Appendix A – Fostering Friendly policy

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Rutland Council recognises and values the contribution that foster carers make to society and especially the lives of children in care. We understand that foster carers who do other work in addition to fostering need some flexibility in their working arrangements to meet the needs of their fostered child.

1.2 We are committed to support any staff member who is a foster carer or an approved kinship carer.

1.4 The process of seeking approval to become foster carers is a lengthy one and places a number of reasonable but demanding expectations upon prospective carers, particularly in relation to the training, assessment and approval process.

1.5 We will extend the terms of this policy to prospective foster or kinship carers who have begun the formal process of seeking approval and registration as carers.

## **2. Aim**

2.1 In accordance with our Flexible Working Policy and Ways of Working, we offer staff the opportunity to work flexibly where this is compatible with the demands of their job. Our flexible working, emergency time off for dependents and parental leave policies all apply to foster carers and approved kinship carers.

2.2 This policy sets out the additional time off that we will offer prospective and existing foster carers and kinship carers.

## **3. Eligibility**

3.1 This policy applies to staff who:

- are applying to become foster carers
- are approved foster carers and have a child in placement (or have had a child in placement for 75% of the previous 12 months) or are an approved kinship carer
- and have three months or more employment service with Rutland Council.

## **4. Time off**

4.1 Rutland Council values and will support foster carers and approved kinship carers by giving paid time off in any 12-month period as follows:

- assessment and initial training prior to approval as a foster carer - up to three days
- attendance at panel for approval – one day
- placement of a child/young person, for example child review meetings, annual foster carer review meeting and training – up to five days per annum.

The employee's line manager will approve the leave and agree with the employee when it is to be taken, taking into account individual circumstances and operational requirements of the business. The leave will be considered and approved on a pro rata basis.

## **5. Procedure for requesting time off**

5.1 The request for leave should outline the reason and the amount of leave required.

5.2 Where more than the maximum entitlement of fostering friendly paid leave is requested (as outlined above), the line manager and the staff member should discuss other means available e.g. annual leave, time off in lieu.

5.2 The staff member should send the request for leave for authorisation by the line manager who should record the paid leave in Agresso.

5.3 If an employee has any queries or issues relating to their request, this should be raised with their line manager.

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