

EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

18 July 2017

HR POLICIES

Report of the Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	Sound Financial and Workforce Planning	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr O Hemsley, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources	
Contact Officer(s):	Debbie Mogg, Director for Resources	01572 758358 dmogg@rutland.gov.uk
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Ward Councillors		

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Employment and Appeals Committee:

1. Consider and approve the Recruitment Policy (Appendix A)
2. Consider and approve the Job Evaluation Policy (Appendix B)
3. Consider and approve the Social Media Policy (Appendix C)
4. Consider and approve the Code of Conduct (Appendix D)
5. Consider and approve the Early Retirement Policy (Appendix E)

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for updated HR policies with regard to (a) Recruitment (b) Job Evaluation (c) Social Media (d) Code of Conduct and (e) Early Retirement Policy.

2 RECRUITMENT POLICY

- 2.1 The review of this policy has focussed on ensuring that the Council's approach to recruitment and selection enable us to appoint high quality candidates able to

deliver high quality services, in the most effective and efficient way. Also to ensure that the process is fair, open and transparent and promotes equality of opportunity to all groups throughout the community.

- 2.2 The policy developed in 2013 incorporated a high level of detail regarding procedure and guidance. However, since then we have developed more user friendly toolkits for managers regarding procedural aspects of each stage for example (a) attraction and marketing (b) selection and assessment and (c) appointment. This has enabled us to develop and evolve approaches where a more creative and innovative style has been required – a good example of this is the ‘Get Closer’ marketing campaign targeting qualified social workers, supplemented with a streamlined assessment process that enabled us to secure candidates within two weeks of advertising. In addition, we received a nomination for a national award for ‘Social Media Campaign of the Year’.
- 2.3 There have been no fundamental changes to ‘policy’ and therefore the key amendments are:
 - 2.3.1 Reduction from 92 pages to 11 pages – reflecting a streamlined approach and style to our policies and also the removal of the detailed procedural elements
 - 2.3.2 Provision to appoint an individual to a permanent post if the position moves from fixed term to permanent – subject to qualifying conditions (para 2.6 of the policy).

3 JOB EVALUATION POLICY

- 3.1 A Job Evaluation scheme provides a fair and consistent approach to determining the relative ‘worth’ of a job through analysis of the demands and challenges of the role against a set of common criteria. This in turns provides a score that then determines the grade and ultimately the pay range. Whilst the existence of a scheme does not provide 100% protection from equal pay claims, by having a robust, consistent, gender neutral scheme, enables organisations to check and demonstrate we are providing equal pay for equal work – ie. meeting our legal obligations with regard to Equal Pay under the Equality Act.
- 3.2 The Council uses an analytical scheme provided by Northgate; this enables us to analyse jobs against a range of factors which include the impact of the role, knowledge and experience, problem solving, freedom to act and decision making, communication and interpersonal skills, exposure to physical demands or emotional/traumatic situations, managing staff, managing budgets/financial accountability.
- 3.3 We have had a policy for some time and this was last reviewed in 2014. Since then we have sought to streamline the process to ensure we can promptly process any regrading requests or evaluate new jobs as part of a service review. In 2016 we processed 54 evaluations given that we had a number of service reviews including Property Services, Revenues and Benefits, Youth Service and Adult and Children’s Social care.
- 3.4 Whilst the general principle and policy remains unchanged, the improvements we have implemented are:
 - 3.4.1 Analysis and evaluation is carried out by experienced role analysts within HR to enable consistency of assessment against a set of conventions

- 3.4.2 HR quality assures job descriptions and works with line managers to ensure they are fit for purpose
- 3.4.3 More use of job matching/benchmarking enabling more speedy evaluations ie. comparisons between roles where the principles and demands of the role are similar
- 3.4.4 Use of 'virtual' Steering Groups – ie. Directorate representatives who oversee the overall evaluation rather than co-ordinating meetings across a number of diaries
- 3.4.5 A more focussed, but less stages, in an appeals process that enables any challenges to be dealt with speedily; ensures the appeal has sound reasons and is transparent and thorough.
- 3.4.6 Clarity regarding implications of a post being down-graded and a post going up a grade and where the employee is placed on the salary scale (para 3 – Regrading).

4 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

- 4.1 The Social Media Policy was approved in 2015 and, given the continual pace of change in social media and digitalisation, has remained current and valid. We have not had no formal conduct/disciplinary issues for breach of this policy and the existence of the policy has enabled us to provide guidance and advice more clearly and to provide periodic reminders to staff eg. use of Facebook or other social media in relation to service provision.
- 4.2 Amendments to this policy include:
 - 4.2.1 Further reference to potential impact on the Council or its representatives (para 5.3)
 - 4.2.2 Inclusion of a statement that Managers will periodically remind staff of the policy and ensure that the risks of using social media for work related purposes have been fully assessed and managed (para 6.1). The Head of HR and the Strategic Communications Adviser will carry out audits from time to time to ensure risk assessments have been carried out in key/ vulnerable areas.
 - 4.2.3 Further clarity regarding the use of social media in the recruitment process (para 9.2)

5 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 5.1 The Code of Conduct was developed in 2013 through consultation with the Constitution Working Group and incorporated into contracts of employment. All new employees to the Council receive a copy on appointment and are required to 'sign' that they have read and understood the content. The updates are not considered sufficient to require us to republish and request 'signature' in the same way. Staff will though be notified of the updates through the staff newsletter and briefings.
- 5.2 The purpose is to ensure that the Council has firmly outlined its expectations of staff in delivering high standards of conduct and service to the public.
- 5.3 The review has been 'light touch' with the following additions/ variations:

- 5.3.1 Reference to the Local Public Services Senior Managers Code of Ethics (section 2 Accountability)
- 5.3.2 Updated paragraph 9.2 – Registration of Interests to include some examples of financial and non-financial interests
- 5.3.3 Additional paragraph to Gifts and Hospitality – paras 15.1 and 15.2
- 5.3.4 Inclusion of reference to the Driving and Riding for Work policy (para 17.4)

6 EARLY RETIREMENT POLICY

- 6.1 The refresh of the policy has been to incorporate the Flexible Retirement policy which currently sits outside of this policy. There are no changes to pension benefit or provision and these remain as provided by the Local Government Pension Scheme.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Where policies have required consultation with the recognised Trade Unions – this has taken place with Unison and agreement has been reached.

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 8.1 Policies, procedures and guidance provide clear and important frameworks that serve to protect and manage a level of risk and exposure through employee challenge and potential employment tribunal claims. The policies as presented are considered to be in line with the public/private sector and represent robust procedures for Rutland Council.
- 8.2 The absence of such policies would remove clarity and consistency in the application of conduct/disciplinary issues that could result in claims for unfair dismissal or discrimination resulting in lengthy and costly defence in court.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Whilst there are no significant costs associated with the management and implementation of these policies, failure to follow them will present risks at employment tribunal which could be costly plus the additional cost of management time and legal fees.
- 9.2 Where costs are associated with a specific policy, eg. pay increases arising from re-evaluation of posts, these are met from existing budgets as far as possible. In the event that a pressure is anticipated then separate approval would be required.

10 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 The Council must be compliant with relevant employment law and regulations.
- 10.2 Delegated authority in relation to organisational decisions is defined in the Council's Constitution – policies are aligned with this framework.

11 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. No adverse or other

significant issues were found. A copy of the EqIA can be obtained from the Report's Contact Officers.

12 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no Community Safety implications arising from this report.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific Health and Wellbeing implications to these particular policies but the Council has an overall duty of care to its employees which means taking all steps which are reasonably possible to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing. Clear and fair policies and procedures can also be a key factor in building trust and reinforcing commitment to our staff and help improve staff retention, productivity and performance and greater employee engagement.

14 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Consultation has taken place with the recognised Trade Unions as required.

14.2 Briefings will be provided to managers to ensure they are aware of the updated policies.

15 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Once approved by Employment and Appeals Committee, the Council will communicate these policies to all staff and ensure copies of the Policies are available on the Council's intranet.

15.2 The Human Resources team will carry out briefings with Line Managers to ensure they are aware of the policies.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

17 APPENDICES

Appendix A – Recruitment Policy

Appendix B – Job Evaluation Policy

Appendix C – Social Media Policy

Appendix D – Code of Conduct

Appendix E – Early Retirement Policy

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