

Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 29th March 2016
Lead Member / Officer: Councillor Barbara Smith
Report Author: Catrin Roberts / Andrea Malam
Title: **Employment Policies**

1. What is the report about?

There are a number of employment policies which have been develop/revised which have been to LJCC and they have been recommended for adoption by Cabinet. The policies are listed below:

- Probationary Period Policy (revised)
- Exit and Leavers Policy (revised)
- Equality Opportunities in Employment Policy (new)
- Social Media Policy (new)
- Psychometric Policy (new)
- Fixed Term Contracts Policy (revised)
- The Standard Policy Statement Document (new)
- Grievance Policy (revised)

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To recommend that Cabinet adopt these policies.

3. What are the Recommendations?

To gain approval for Cabinet to adopt these policies.

4. Report details

Probationary Period Policy

This is a revised policy and now includes timescales, roles and responsibilities.

This policy clarifies the roles and responsibilities with regards to probationary periods, in particular what is expected from a manager in the following the process. The policy is more in-depth and explains what is to happen at each of the 3 stages (3 month, 5month and 6 month review). Template letters have also been created and are also attached to the policy. These templates will ensure consistency and enable managers to inform employees of the relevant information. The policy includes more detailed information with regards to the potential outcomes at the review stages of 3, 5 and 6 months.

Exit and Leavers Policy

This is a revised policy which is more specific with regards to timescales, roles and responsibilities. The policy includes a clear flowchart for the leaver/exit process for an employee. The policy is divided into two sections:

- a) guidance for managers
- b) guidance for employees.

Managers are to continue to complete the leavers form as usual. There is a new exit questionnaire which can be accessed via an online link and also can be accessed on paper for employees who do not have access to a PC. Employees regardless of the reason for leaving are asked to complete a questionnaire.

Employees are also given the option to request an 'Exit Interview' which will take place with their line manager or a suitable alternative person if they so wish. This interview will be to discuss any additional information that the employee feels they did not put in the questionnaire or to talk things through in more detail.

Completion of the exit questionnaire and exit interviews are voluntary but employees should be encouraged to complete them as feedback is important for reviewing the post and to address any concerns etc.

Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

This is a new policy focusing on employment and equalities only. The policy includes timescales, roles and responsibilities. It has been agreed with Keith Amos (Equality Officer) that this policy is required and is to be separated from the standard Equality policy/statement that is produced within for corporate equalities.

This policy is concerned with equal opportunities in employment, including recruitment. It will help managers and employees understand their role and includes information on the legal framework and the Equality Act 2010. The policy also highlights all of the protected characteristics in detail and concentrates on the different types of discrimination and how this can be avoided.

Social Media Policy

This is a new policy and was created to outline the requirements for the personal use of social media during work time. This policy identifies the acceptable use of social media and social networking, including clear guidelines for employees and aims to assist managers in terms of managing performance when dealing with matters associated with the use of social media.

This policy also aims to ensure that a fair and consistent approach is applied to all employees, Members and volunteers working on behalf of the council. But most of all, it considers the benefits of using social media as part of day to day work, but also highlights some of the pitfalls that need to be considered throughout day to day business.

Psychometric Policy

This is a new policy to be agreed. Within HR Direct, we have two members of staff who are qualified to carry out psychometric testing. More frequently we are now using numerous psychometric assessments for recruitment purposes to assist in the selection process as an addition to the interview process.

We therefore we need a policy to ensure that potential/existing employees and managers are aware of psychometric testing and how it can be used to assist in the normal recruitment process.

The policy outlines roles and responsibilities, types of psychometric assessments available, the psychometric process and the security/disposal of the documents.

Fixed Term Contracts Policy

This is a revised policy and includes timescales, roles and responsibilities.

This policy has been updated and clarifies the whole process in a more structured way. Managers will now be clear on ending a fixed term contract, extending a fixed term contract or when making this role permanent. The policy also highlights that employees will become permanent after 4 years of successive fixed term contracts.

This amended policy includes a new element in that when a fixed term contract comes to an end, it is effectively a dismissal and therefore a procedure must be followed. Effectively the dismissal will be due to one of the two reasons below:

- a. Redundancy (where the requirement for the work to be undertaken has diminished or ceased). Examples of this may include an employee who is recruited on a fixed term contract to complete a specific project or task with an end date. An employee who has more than 2 years continuous service may be entitled to a redundancy payment.
- b. SOSR (some other substantial reason) where the requirement of the work undertaken has not reduced and the substantive post holder has returned to work or a permanent employee is recruited. Examples include employees recruited to cover maternity leave until the post holder returns to work or where someone is on long term sickness and the person is recruited on a fixed term basis to cover the period of sickness. The employee will not normally be entitled to a redundancy payment at the end of the contract but may be entitled to a loss of office payment if they have the qualifying service.

Standard Policy Document

The standard policy statement was created as an overarching document for all HR policies. Rather than duplicating the same information in each policy it was suggested that a document be created which covers all aspects of a policy, including legislation, definitions and standard processes which cover all policies.

Grievance Policy

The policy has been revised to include the standard paragraphs with regards to what happens if the grievance process is interrupted or raising an issues with regards to redundancy or disciplinary. The standard paragraphs will be put in the redundancy and Disciplinary policy also.

The policy also has been amended to make the informal and formal processes very clear in that informal processes will be encouraged in the first instance and a process is to be followed with regards to the outcomes. If the informal process does not prove satisfactory for the individual or they do not want to take this down the informal route, the formal option is to be followed.

Please refer to policies contained within the appendix. Please note that amendments to policies have not been highlighted as they have been reformatted into the new smart document and therefore any changes have been noted above.

1. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

All of the above policies will assist the Corporate Priorities by helping to modernise the council by ensuring that managers and employees are aware of their obligations in line with legislation and good practice.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

Additional resources are not required, therefore there won't be any costs attached to implementing these policies. There will be no particular impact on a particular department. The policies will apply to all staff (where stated).

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report

Please find the EQiA attached. There are no fundamental issues highlighted with the EQiA's.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

The policies have all been to Corporate Joint Meeting on Thursday 17th September and Wednesday 4th November for comments and have been emailed to CJM for feedback from the members of CJM who did not attend those meetings and so all members have been given an opportunity to feedback.

The policies have been recommended for Cabinet on 10th February although that particular LJCC was not quorate.

At LJCC, it was noted that, subject to the Psychometric Testing Policy including reference to written results being made available on request, no further amendments were requested to the employment policies detailed within the report. These amendments have been completed.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not applicable.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

The risks are only associated with not implementing the attached policies. The current versions of the policies are very out of date and new process and procedures require a policy/procedure to ensure they are being applied correctly and consistently.

11. Power to make the Decision

Not applicable