

To: **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**
14 December 2022

HR POLICY REVIEW – DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE/ABUSE AT WORK
Executive Director of Resources

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Human Resources team are undertaking a review of the HR policies with a view to update and, where applicable, rationalise the number required. A schedule has been established to undertake this work resulting in revisions to the Domestic Abuse and the Violence/Abuse at Work Policies.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Employment Committee review and agree the revised policies for Domestic Abuse and Violence/Abuse at Work.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation(S)

- 3.1 To enable revised policies to be provided to assist managers throughout the Council in effectively managing and, where necessary, support their workforce and to comply with legal requirements and best practice.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 To retain the existing policies and ignoring the updates provided for this review.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 It is recognised that the HR policies require review to ensure they remain up to date, follow best practice, effectively support managers in dealing with often complex cases and cover the Council's legal duties. As a result, a schedule has been established to review the current HR policies some of which have not been reviewed for some time.
- 5.2 A schedule has been established for the policy development work which has already seen updates to the Disciplinary, Grievance, Organisational Change and Agile Working procedures. The process for reviewing the policies has included engagement with stakeholders across the Council and trade unions.
- 5.3 The following amendments have been made to the policies:

1) Domestic Abuse

- Equality section amended
- amendment to scope
- confidentiality section added
- updated DA definition
- expanded on employee & manager responsibilities
- expanded on responding to disclosure section
- added section for when both victim and perpetrator work for the council,
- added appendix on types of abuse.

II) Violence/Abuse at work policy

- Updates to name of organisations/bodies.
- Reference to new policies - Equality and Dignity at Work Policy.
- Added statement about Cyberbullying and approaches to addressing this.
- Links to guidance/policy added for ease of reference.

5.4 It is recognised that the policy and procedure alone does not provide the confidence and competence to manage workforce situations. The HR/OD Team will be supporting the effective management of these procedures through a programme of development for managers.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

6.1 As a responsible employer it is incumbent upon the Council to ensure that it has in place policies and procedures which provide a framework for enabling it to discharge its legal responsibilities in the field of employment law. These responsibilities are framed around a need to ensure employees have access to fair and transparent processes HR processes. The updated policies provide a framework for decision making which (when followed) will mitigate the risk of successful legal challenges.

Financial Advice

6.2 Not required for this paper

Other Consultation Responses

6.3 The policies have been through a consultation exercise with trade unions. Any comments or suggestions received have either been incorporated into the policy or an explanation provided as to why it was felt inappropriate to do so.

Groups across the Council have had the opportunity to consider and comment on the policies including the Equalities Group.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 The performance of these policies is monitored annually and will be included with future monitoring reports.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 The policies being presented could have a significant impact on the Council where either poor people management or failure to follow due process could present legal challenges. This is aside the personal impact this can have on either individuals or wider teams where these important areas are not addressed well.

Climate Change Implications

6.6 The recommendations in Section 2 above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO₂.

The reasons the Council believes that this will have no impact on emissions are the fact that these are employment procedures in place to support attendance and fair treatment for staff at work.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.7 It is recognised that implementation of these procedures can create significant challenges for all staff involved. It is essential that consideration for the health and wellbeing for staff is always considered and the appropriate support is provided including involvement with occupational health

Background Papers

Domestic Abuse and Violence/Abuse at work Policy

Contact for further information

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