

Report for: Staffing & Remuneration Committee

Title: Dignity at Work Policy

Report authorised by : Richard Grice – Director of Customers, Transformation and Resources

Lead Officer: Ian Morgan – Reward Strategy Manager

Ward(s) affected: n/a

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with recommendations for the Dignity at Work Policy to replace the existing policy on Bullying and Harassment.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

To approve the Dignity at Work Policy as set out in Appendix A.

4. Reason for Decision

The Council has a duty to ensure that the policies, practices and guidelines concerning its workforce are relevant and up to date.

The Dignity at Work Policy updates and extends the range of the existing policy on Bullying and Harassment to cover allegations of discrimination and victimisation.

The Council is mindful that periodic assessment of its HR policies, to reflect changes in legislation or clarification of the legal position through relevant case law; represents good practice and helps protect the robustness of its processes. To that end it has introduced a rolling review of workforce policies of which this is the latest iteration.

5. Alternative options considered

The alternative would be to maintain our existing HR policy on Bullying and Harassment which would not address recent changes to legislation or the latest interpretation of case law.

6. Background

- 6.1 Recent thinking has suggested that a policy regarding Dignity at Work, embodying the protection given to certain groups by the Equality Act 2010, can effectively replace existing individual policies covering Bullying and Harassment, resulting in a broader, stronger statement about the right of individuals to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect in the workplace.

- 6.2 The Dignity at Work policy sets out the Council's expectations from employees by which a supportive working environment can be built and sustained. The policy defines the standards, rights and responsibilities required from everyone involved in delivering and supporting our services. It is unequivocal in its wording and clear that the Council will not tolerate harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying of any kind.
- 6.3. The existing Bullying and Harassment Policy was last reviewed in February 2009. The draft Dignity at Work policy has been shared with colleagues and trades union representatives and their comments have been incorporated into the final version. The result embodies current thinking about what is considered best practice in this area. Our aim is that it will encourage discussions about what is seen as acceptable behaviour and alleged breaches to these standards will be able to be reported quickly to an appropriate level of management.
- 6.4 It is important that all employees understand the principles central to the Dignity at Work policy. To that end we plan a series of workshops, training sessions and practice notes to ensure the the policy is embedded into everyday practices within the Council and that advice from the HR team is practical and consistent.
- 7. Contribution to strategic outcomes**
Ensuring that our HR policies are relevant and up to date supports the Council's commitment to fair and transparent workforce practices.
- 8. Statutory Officers' comments**
- 8.1 Chief Finance Officer**
The cost of the planned workshops and training sessions for staff will be contained and managed within the existing HR resources. There are no other financial implications arising from this report
- 8.2 Assistant Director of Corporate Governance**
Legal comments
The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report. Legal services has been involved and has reviewed the proposed Dignity at Work policy and confirms that it complies with all relevant legislation.
- 9. Use of Appendices**
Appendix A – Dignity at Work Policy.
- 10. Local government (Access to Information) Act 1985**
Not applicable.