

Report for: **General Purposes Committee - 14th October 2024**

Item number:

Title: HR Policies

Report authorised by: Dan Paul, Chief People Officer

Lead Officer: Tanya Patchett, Head of Employee Relations, Business Partners and Reward

Ward(s) affected: N/A

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

1. Describe the issue under consideration

The report sets out the changes to the Grievance and Capability policies to ensure that they are in line with ACAS best practice, any legal/ statutory requirements and the Council's local requirements.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

That Committee consider and approve the changes to the Grievance and Capability policies.

4. Reason for Decision

Review of policies is done on a cycle basis however priority has been given this year to reviewing the key policies in most frequent use as part of our improvement to managing employee relations cases and simplifying the policies for all managers and employees. The change to policies is to make the management of people more effective.

5. Alternative Options Considered

Not applicable.

6. Background information

- 6.1 Human Resources (HR) has consulted/ engaged with Trade Unions, Staff Networks and other stakeholders via our policy collaboration process to ensure we have fit for purpose and legally compliant policies.
- 6.2 The new Grievance and Capability Policies have been drafted in line with ACAS best practice (with reference to XpertHR), any legal/ statutory requirements and the Council's local requirements.
- 6.3 The Grievance Policy has been updated as follows:
- 6.3.1 Principles section has been updated in line with other Council policies.
- 6.3.2 The reference to practice notes has been removed and the following contents has been amalgamated from the Grievance practice notes into the policy:
- Policy not applicable to agency workers.
 - Section 1.1 renamed to include 'Early Intervention' and included the associated wording.
 - Additional wording included on the definition of Mediation.
 - Paragraph added to section 1.3 on how to raise a formal grievance.
 - The various types of support available for employees has been added at section 4.
 - Timescales on submitting an appeal and clear explanation of the appeal hearing.
- 6.3.3 A paragraph describing the role of a Trade Union representative has been added (section 1.8).
- 6.4 The Capability Policy has been updated as follows:
- 6.4.1 Principles section has been updated in line with other Council policies.
- 6.4.2 The reference to practice notes has been removed and the following contents has been amalgamated from the Capability practice notes into the policy:
- Additional wording included with reference to the second formal meeting and notice time to be given.
 - Wording added regarding details of what must be in an invite letter to an employee. Refer to section 7.1.
 - Hearing Format, including Reasonable Adjustments & Virtual Hearings information added at section 7.2.
 - Additional wording included on the rearrangement of a meeting. See section 7.3.
 - Failure or refusing to attend added at section 9.
 - Redeployment and Capability section added at section 10.
 - The various types of support available for employees has been added at section 14.
 - Improvement Plan Guidance included at appendix 1 and flowchart of process at appendix 3 of the policy.
- 6.5 We propose to introduce a domestic abuse policy to ensure we are offering sufficient support and guidance to anybody in our workforce who may be experiencing domestic abuse. The aim of the policy is to set out a framework of support for colleagues who may be experiencing

domestic abuse; this includes both practical support including paid time off and also signposting to services.

- 6.6 HR proposes to bring the following policies to the next committee meeting in January 2025:
1. Probation Policy
 2. Organisational Change policy
 3. Ill Health Retirement Policy

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

The review and amendments to policies are done in order to ensure we are operating within best practice for human resources and in supporting the organisation to achieve its' objectives. Policies under review are also done so in order to maximise the efficiency of workforce management.

8. Statutory Officers' comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

There are no financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

8.2 Head of Legal and Governance

The AD of Legal and Governance has read the report and supplied comments to the revisions proposed to the Grievance and Capability Policies to ensure that the revisions are compliant with the legal standards of practice. Additionally, the Council's proposes to introduce a Domestic Abuse Policy. The introduction of such a Policy is consistent with current Government directions and non statutory guidance issued to employers concerning the subject.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix A - Grievance Policy
Appendix B - Capability Policy
Appendix C - Domestic Abuse Policy

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.