

NEW EMPLOYMENT POLICY UPDATE

To: **Staffing and Appeals Committee**

Date: **6th March 2018**

From: **Martin Cox, HR Director**

Purpose: **To update the Committee on key employment policy reviews and developments planned for 2018.**

Recommendation: **Staffing and Appeals Committee is asked to note the update on key employment policy reviews and developments planned for 2018.**

| <i>Officer contact:</i> | | <i>Member contact</i> | |
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 As an employer the Council regularly review key employment policies and proactively seeks feedback from managers and employees on which opportunities will improve the workplace.
- 1.2 The Chief Executive has recently led an engagement and review of how we deal with workplace respect, bullying and harassment and LGSS HR and Policy teams have reviewed the existing Grievance Policy as part of ongoing project to enable improved employee relations.
- 1.3 As a result both of these areas will now have a significant shift in focus which is intended to lead to more effective outcomes. Strategic Management Team (SMT) have agreed these policies for launch in March after consultation with our recognised trade unions.

2.0 Resolving Workplace Concerns

- 2.1 The Grievance Procedure has been reviewed to refocus its aim to resolve workplace concerns quickly and effectively, and focus on a culture of resolution and less on formal conflict management. The policy is also now called *Resolving Workplace Concerns*, which covers the following:
 - Enables and makes managers responsible for employee concerns
 - Encourages resolution - quickly and fairly.
 - Allows managers to focus on early resolution to prevent escalation of issues, removing layers of process.
 - Uses an approach and language that moves away from the negative *raising a grievance* to *resolving workplace concerns* which is more positive and solution focussed.
- 2.2 This procedure provides a structured way to deal with concerns, and aims to address them promptly and effectively, rather than allowing matters to escalate unnecessarily. HR will be supporting the implementation of this policy and also start to work with managers on the skills and behaviour development that is important for this approach to work.

3.0 Respect in the Workplace

- 3.1 The existing Bullying and Harassment Policy has been reviewed to focus on ensuring we have an improved culture of mutual respect in the workplace.
- 3.2 Key Drivers for this review were:
 - Engaging and listening to individuals who have had personal experiences.
 - Low number of cases suggests people are not raising concerns.
 - Employee Survey results, where a specific question was asked.
 - Firm commitment from our Chief Executive to change the culture.
 - Representations from the trade unions.

3.3 The new approach and policy was:

- Developed with employee involvement from a series of focus groups.
- Is more accessible/less intimidating for people to use.
- Has a greater focus on positive, early and informal resolution.
- Encourages all employees to speak up if they witness poor behaviour.

3.4 A key component of the new policy is the following commitments;

As an employee of Cambridgeshire County Council:

- I will behave professionally, and treat others with dignity and respect at all times.
- I will be open to feedback from others, and open-minded in my responses.
- I will nurture a culture that is free from discrimination.
- I am willing to raise concerns, and to challenge any inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour that I see.

In addition, as a manager:

- I will lead by example.
- I will model expected standards of behaviour.
- I will deal promptly with issues that are raised.

3.5 Briefing sessions for all Heads' of Service management teams are being arranged for March, and a series of briefings open to all staff across the County will be rolled out in April, led by members of SMT.

4.0 Review & Monitoring

4.1 The new policies are included in Appendices 1 & 2.

4.2 The implementation of both will be regularly monitored and feedback taken on the changes and if the intended improvements are achieved.

| Source Documents | Location |
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| Grievance Policy Bullying and Harassment Policy | Martin Cox HR Director, LGSS Cambridgeshire County Council Box No: OCT 1106 Shire Hall Cambridge CB3 0AP MCox@Northamptonshire.gov.uk |