

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Strategy, Governance & Transformation
Maxine O'Mahony, Executive Director for Strategy & Governance & Monitoring Officer

To: Full Council, 19th January 2017

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Subject: HR Policy Handbook

Purpose: This report presents the newly drafted HR Policy Handbook. It compiles the key HR policies required as best practice; its aim is to mitigate risk, particularly in a shared management arrangement and application of policy across two Councils, to reduce review periods and updates following changes to employment legislation.

Recommendation(s):

- 1) That the HR Policy Handbook be approved to implement across Breckland District Council with the following delegations and consideration:
 - a) That should any amendment to policy be required as a result of legislative or constitutional change, of which we as an organisation have no jurisdiction, that this be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in order to ensure a prompt response to such changes and mitigate risk of application of said policy in line with employment law.
 - An information paper will be submitted to Full Council where legislative changes have occurred.
 - b) That permission is granted to implement Maternity Support Leave at Breckland District Council, again to provide additional support to new fathers/partners at the time of birth or adoption of their child. This is not a statutory/constitutional obligation but, if approved, will form part of the Councils' procedure.

Maternity support leave of up to 5 days with pay shall be granted, at or around the time of birth, to employees who are the child's father or partner of an expectant mother, or to any employee nominated as carer to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother.

This item has been presented to Overview and Scrutiny on 16 February 2017; Scrutiny agree recommendations to Full Council.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Presently there are 25 HR policies that exist across the Council, all of which includes a vast amount of information which subsequently forces continual review in line with changes to procedures, as opposed to simply changes to legislation or constitutional obligations. A summary identifying the statutory and constitutional requirements can be found in appendix B.
- 1.2 Some of the key policies are now out of date due to the aforementioned changes and outcomes of the Council's Shared Management arrangement and transformation programme. Therefore, each of the policies listed below have been updated in line with

statutory and constitutional requirements and have been reviewed by Andrew Brett, Solicitor at NPLaw.

- 1.3 Each policy outlines these legal principles only and any specific details will fall within procedures. This is to enable longevity of the policies are sustainable for a longer period of time, therefore reducing the review periods and mitigate the risk of non-compliance. Where changes to legislation or constitution arise, the policies will be amended accordingly.
- 1.4 **The Policy Handbook:**
The Policy Handbook contains the following policies:
 - Recruitment and Selection
 - Managing Attendance
 - Special Leave
 - Parental Rights
 - Managing and Supporting Change
 - Bullying and Harassment
 - Equal Opportunities
 - Capability
 - Grievance
 - Disciplinary
 - Training and Development
- 1.5 The review of these policies has provided the opportunity to amalgamate other supporting policies into those listed above to ensure that all information pertinent to the subject matter is held in one place for ease of access to managers and staff. Amalgamated policies include:
 - Criminal Record Checks
 - Probation
 - Induction
 - Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental and Shared Parental Leave
 - Redeployment, Redundancy, Relocation, TUPE and Pay Protection
- 1.6 In an attempt however, to make some simple alignments across both Councils and reduce risk within the management of the Shared Management arrangement, we request approval on recommendation 1b above. With a growing amount of shared officer roles coming into play, it is important that we seek some parity with these terms.
- 1.7 Each of the above policies, including those amalgamated have formal procedures which are also under review; with the aim of developing robust, consistent and sustainable procedures to meet the Council's corporate aims and ensure full compliance at all times.
- 1.8 When the proposed HR Policy Handbook is adopted, training will be required as part of its implementation. In addition, and particularly for performance management policies such as Managing Attendance, Disciplinary, Grievance and Capability, it is advised that all Senior Managers attend training in these subjects as a mandatory commitment to their role and responsibilities.
- 1.9 When the proposed HR Policy Handbook is adopted, all staff will be communicated with to raise awareness of its existence; the Staff Forum and Unison representatives have agreed to provide support in communicating this update. The Handbook will be available on the intranet of each Council, with supporting documents such as procedures and guidelines.

2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 Do Nothing

2.2 Approve the HR Policy Handbook for Breckland District Council with the recommendations.

2.3 Approve the HR Policy Handbook for Breckland District Council excluding the recommendations.

2.4 Approve the HR Policy Handbook for Breckland District Council with one/other of the recommendations.

3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 To mitigate risk, particularly in a shared management arrangement and application of policy across two Councils.

3.2 To increase response rate to changes in employment legislation and reduce review periods.

4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 To increase efficiency and turnaround in reviewing policies and therefore reducing response rate and implementation time in responding to any changes in legislation/constitution.

4.2 To mitigate risk in the application of policies.

4.3 To align, where possible, terms of policies across both Councils to provide further parity to staff, in particular shared staff.

4.4 To provide transparent, consistent and fair policies across the Council.

4.5 To actively support culture and change in a positive way

4.6 To improve the ways in which we recruit in line with implementation of iTrent (HR software).

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

5.2 **Constitution & Legal**

5.2.1 Amendments to relevant policies will be made as and where dictated by any change to constitutional or legal requirements.

5.2.2 The Policy Handbook is designed with the intention to reduce the risk of litigation against the Council

5.4 **Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 The proposals made with the intention of supporting the Councils' corporate priority of providing the right services, at the right time, in the right way by ensuring the recruitment of high calibre individuals are in place to help deliver the corporate vision.

5.6 **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 The proposed Policy Handbook is designed in compliance with Equality and Diversity as per the Equality Act 2010.

5.8 **Health & Wellbeing**

5.8.1 The proposed Policy Handbook is designed to promote health and well-being in the workplace and support all staff in a healthy return to work and sickness management process.

5.10 **Risk Management**

5.10.1 These proposals are made (in part) with the intention of reducing the risk of litigation against the Council. These proposals are made with the intention of supporting the Councils strategic position by enabling effective policy management appropriately within the bounds of the law.

5.11 **Safeguarding**

5.11.1 This policy has been updated to include further details surrounding Safer Recruitment in associated roles that fall under the exemptions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exemptions) Order 1975.

5.12 **Staffing**

5.12.1 These proposals are made in order to ensure the best possible infrastructure is in place recruit, select, retain and performance manage employees across the Council.

5.12.2 These proposals are made to ensure both staff and management are clear on relevant legislation, best practice and risk mitigation.

5.13 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.13.1 Consultation has taken place with Unison and the Staff Forum. A summary of feedback is provided in appendix C.

5.14 **Transformation Programme**

5.14.1 These proposals are made to support the Councils' Organisational Development programme

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Key Decision:	No
Exempt Decision:	Yes

This report refers to a Mandatory Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A	HR Policy Handbook
Appendix B	Summary of statutory and constitutional requirements
Appendix C	Unison and Staff Forum feedback