

## **Personnel Committee – 23 November 2020**

### **Employment Policies Review – Phase 6**

#### **1. Purpose of the report**

1.1 To gain Personnel Committee approval for the revised employment policies (detailed below) endorsed by CMT at their meeting of 01 October 2020.

#### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Personnel Committee is recommended to approve the following employment policies (detailed below) endorsed by CMT (01 October 2020).

#### **3. Background Information**

3.1 This report covers the revision of 2 existing employment policies, as follows;

a) Relocation and Temporary Accommodation Expenses Policy (revised policy) – (Appendix 1)

b) Recovery of Overpayment of Salary Policy (revised policy) – (Appendix 2)

#### *Aim*

3.2 In order to ensure the Council is enabled to deliver against its priorities it is imperative that the council has an effective employment framework of policies, procedures and guidance and that these align to the vision and values of the Council. It has been agreed that the current suite of employment policies be reviewed across the board to provide the opportunity to ensure they are up to date, fit for purpose and support and enable the development of the Walsall Proud Programme (WPP) ensuring a consistent approach that reinforces the councils standards and behavioural framework. This report covers phase 6 of the employment policies review and includes specifically 2 policies outlined in section 3.1. As part of the review all of the policies have been re-formatted and/or designed to reflect the following principles;

- Alignment with Walsall Proud Programme and vision;
- Clear identification of accountabilities in line with behaviours;
- Clear, consistent and concise policy containing easily identifiable principles and procedure;
- Streamlined detail in the policy document with more in-depth guidance provided in the supporting documents where applicable.

## *Know*

3.3 Policy a) Relocation and Temporary Accommodation Expenses Policy, this is a review of the existing procedure (last revised in 2014) and has been designed in line with WPP principles and best practice, the main changes are as follows;

- The removal of a basic (15%) and enhance (25%) option for the relocation allowance for managers to choose from, which has been replaced with just one option allowing for 20% (capped at £15,000) relocation allowance as a maximum. This simplifies the process for managers as the option of applying discretion always resulted in the higher category being selected and so the two option approach was not utilised as initially intended. The policy now reads, 'The maximum level of relocation assistance provided by the council will not exceed a total value equivalent to 20% of the employees starting salary and will not exceed a maximum amount of £15,000'. In addition the introduction of a maximum capped value limits relocation costs (Appendix 1, section 3.6).
- An update on the taxation section in line with HMRC guidelines (Appendix 1, section 5.2).
- Clarity on what can and cannot be claimed for (Appendix 1, section 5.1) and what approvals are required for all posts claiming relocation assistance including the Chief Executive (Appendix 1, section 3.1, 3.2).
- A revised repayment schedule which simplifies the approach for claiming back relocation allowance in the event an employee leaves their employment (Appendix 1, section 5.4)

3.4 Policy b) Recovery of Overpayment of Salary Policy has no significant amendments and has primarily been reviewed and updated in line with WPP principles. The policy was last reviewed in 2014 therefore even though there were no significant changes it has been consulted on with Senior Managers and Trade Union Colleagues.

## *Council corporate plan priorities*

3.5 These policy reviews are directly aligned to the internal focus priority within the Corporate Plan, reference I2, developing 'a resilient council'.

## *Response*

3.6 Subject to approval, HR/Payroll will finalise all associated guidance/forms (where applicable) and prepare a workforce communications and implementation plan ready for publication.

## *Review*

3.7 Employment policies will usually be reviewed on a three yearly cycle, unless legislation or internal organisational need prompt a review earlier.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no anticipated financial issues arising from this report. Relocation expenses will be met by the individual service area's budgets.

#### **5. Legal Considerations**

- 5.1 There are no anticipated legal issues arising from this report.

#### **6. Risk Management**

- 6.1 Relevant equality impact assessments are attached as follows;
- EqlA Relocation and Temporary Accommodation Expenses Policy (Appendix 3)
- EqlA Recovery of Overpayment of Salary Policy (Appendix 4)

#### **7. People**

- 7.1 The revised WPP policy principles include a scope section in all employment policies (where applicable) and in each policy clearly sets out who the policy applies to and who it doesn't (reference section 2.0 of Appendices 1 & 2).
- 7.2 There is no direct impact on our citizens as a result of these policies. However the policies are part of the employment framework that's helps to ensure that the residents of Walsall get the best possible service from council employees.

#### **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 Relocation and Temporary Accommodation Expenses Policy was consulted upon with senior managers and trade unions colleagues across the council between 3 August 2020 and 18 August 2020. Trade Union colleagues raised no specific issues or concerns with the policy revision.
- 8.2 Recovery of Overpayment of Salary Policy, was consulted upon with senior managers and trade unions colleagues across the council between 31 July 2020 and 19 August 2020. Trade union colleagues raised no specific issues or concerns with the policy revision.

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