

Personnel Committee - 24 January 2022

Code of Conduct for Employees / Workers

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Personnel Committee approval for the revised Code of Conduct for Employees / Workers (appendix 1).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Personnel Committee is recommended to approve the Code of Conduct for Employees / Workers (appendix 1), endorsed by CMT at its meeting of 06 January 2022.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Code of Conduct was last reviewed in 2019 and is regularly updated to ensure alignment with other employment policies as well as wider council policies and priorities. In particular this review has specifically focused on updates that promote consistency across the council in the following areas (based on consultation feedback from senior managers and audit):
- ways of working (remote/blended working practices approaches);
 - equalities, diversity and inclusion;
 - links to other new policies referenced e.g. menopause policy;
 - GDPR;
 - declarations of interest.

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. The Code of Conduct has been reviewed to ensure it is up to date, fit for purpose and continues to align to the priorities of the council, reinforcing the council's standards and behaviour framework.

Know

- 3.3 The main changes proposed in this policy review are outlined below:
- Scope changed to include workers (casuals and temporary agency workers) as well as employees (appendix 1 section 2.1);
 - Accountabilities updated, clarifying the requirement to complete a declaration of interest form and strengthening the adherence to GDPR and disclosure (appendix 1 section 4.0);
 - Dress code updated to reference remote/blended working (appendix 1 section 5.2.4);

- Equalities updated to reference equalities, diversity and inclusion and strengthen the council's position relating to zero tolerance to discrimination (appendix 1 section 5.2.5);
- Mobile phone use and cost clarified following proposed removal of this from the existing expenses policy (appendix 1 section 5.4.2)
- Clarification that any financial or non-financial interest should be declared using the declaration of interest form sign by the employees line manager, and authorised by the Executive Director and council's Monitoring Officer (appendix 1 section 5.5.3);
- Inserted inappropriate access to information (appendix 1 section 5.5.7);
- The foreword has been refreshed by the Chief Executive.

Council corporate plan priorities

- 3.4 The policy is directly aligned to the internal focus priority within the Corporate Plan, delivering services that are efficient and effective and supports the delivery of the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan.

Response

- 3.5 Subject to approval, HR will finalise all associated guidance/forms (where relevant) and prepare communications and implementation plan for publication of the policy.

Review

- 3.6 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 financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal Considerations

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

6. Risk Management

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment is attached (Appendix 2).

7. People

- 7.1 The revised WPP policy principles include a scope section in all employment policies (where applicable) and each policy clearly sets out who the policy applies to and who it does not (appendix 1 section 2).
- 7.2 There is no direct impact on our citizens as a result of the Code of Conduct. However, the policy is part of the employment framework that

helps to ensure the residents of Walsall get the best possible service from council employees.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Specific collaboration with the following colleagues has also taken place to aid the revision of the Code of Conduct; Finance, Legal, Communications and Information Governance prior to a draft version going out to consultation.
- 8.2 The Code of Conduct was formally consulted upon with senior managers and trade unions colleagues across the council between 2 and 25 November 2021.
- 8.3 Feedback from senior managers led to a number of minor changes / clarification of wording.
- 8.4 Trade union colleague's recommendations have been incorporated into the Code of Conduct review where applicable. There were no outstanding recommendations or queries that trade union colleagues made that were not either addressed or incorporated into the Code of Conduct for Employees / Workers.
- 8.5 The Code of Conduct was endorsed by CMT at its meeting of 06 January 2022.

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