

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 13 JULY 2023

Present: Councillor Terry (Chair);
Councillors Brock (Vice-Chair), Ennis, Mpofu-Coles and R Singh

Apologies: Councillor Mitchell

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Chief Executive submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 15 June 2023.

3. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Committee considered a report presenting two Employment Policies which had been reviewed jointly and agreed with the Joint Trade Unions. The following documents were attached to the report:

Appendix A	Domestic Violence Policy
Appendix B	Employment Break Policy
Appendix C	Smoking at Work Policy
Appendix D	Flexible Workstyles Framework
Appendix E	Equality Impact Assessment

The report explained that the Domestic Violence Policy was a new policy that had been developed as part of the Council's commitment to support its workforce's health and wellbeing at work. The Employment Break Policy was also new, and had been developed to provide the basis for a clear understanding of the Employment Break Scheme for the benefit of both the organisation and the employee who wished to have a planned and agreed break from the workplace. The new Smoking at Work Policy conformed to the requirements of smoke-free legislation. The Flexible Workstyles Policy had originally been drafted in 2021, but the agile working principles had now been updated to reflect the aim of the Council's approach to Flexible Working.

The report explained that all employment policies had now been reviewed by the HR and Organisational Development team, following consultation and negotiation with the Joint Trade Unions. A communications plan was in place to communicate the revised policies to managers and employees.

Resolved: That the following revised HR policies, as set out in in Appendices A,B, C and D to the report, be approved:

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- Domestic Violence Policy;
- Employment Break Policy;
- Smoking at Work Policy;
- Flexible Workstyles Framework.

4. EDI STRATEGY AND THE WHOLE COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

The Committee considered a report which explained how the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and plan would be developed. The Council would be using a whole council engagement exercise to inform both the strategy and the plan. The strategy and plan would be drafted by September 2023 for submission to Personnel Committee for agreement on 16 November 2023.

The report explained that, further to a motion agreed at Council on 20 October 2020, (Minute 7 refers) attached to the report at Appendix 1, the Council had been working to develop a formal EDI Strategy setting out the Council's aims and ambitions for becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation, the priorities for achieving this and how progress and success would be measured. The scope of the strategy would encompass all protected characteristics as well as inclusion more generally

The report noted that achievements to date included a steady increase in the ethnic diversity of staff and a more representative senior leadership team (RSM Group). The report also set out a timetable for the development of the Strategy. In order to fully develop the Council's ambition in a meaningful way to improve EDI, it would be necessary to involve as many people as possible across the organisation in the development of the EDI, including teams, active staff groups, ambassadors, trades unions etc in a Whole Council engagement exercise. Plans were being put in place to engage with staff in teams that were historically less likely to respond to initiatives such as this one. The engagement exercise the Big Conversation, would be structured to include multiple channels with multiple stakeholders focussing on the following core questions:

- What do you think our equality, diversity and inclusion priorities should be?
- How do you want the Council to *feel* in the future?
- What would help your voice to be better heard?

Whilst this exercise would initially be limited to RBC staff, officers were also talking to Brighter Futures for Children about engaging their staff, including those working in schools.

The responses would then be analysed to identify areas of focus and external consultancy support would be used to enable development of the EDI Strategy. The EDI Strategy would have implications for a range of HR policies and processes requiring both a thorough review of these areas and a conscious decision about how the EDI Strategy would be supported going forward.

Resolved

- (1) That the process for the development of RBCs EDI strategy and plan including a whole council engagement exercise be noted;

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- (2) That the EDI strategy and plan be submitted to Personnel Committee in November 2023.

(The meeting closed at 7.24 pm)