
Meeting: General Purposes Committee
Date: 17 December 2009
Subject: Adoption of the Managing Change Policy,
Redundancy/Redeployment Guidelines, Work Life
Balance Policy and Flexible Retirement Policy
Report of: Acting Assistant Director, Human Resources & Organisational
Development
Summary: The report is to seek Members' agreement that these HR policies be
adopted for all non schools based employees of Central Bedfordshire.

Advising Officer: Gordon McFarlane, Acting Assistant Director of Human
Resources & Organisational Development.
Contact Officer: Catherine Jones, Head of HR Strategy & Policy
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: n/a
Function of: Council
Key Decision No
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)** n/a

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

These policies continue to contribute to the Harmonisation project to establish a single set of HR employment policies covering all (non schools based) employees of Central Bedfordshire which will assist with developing a new culture and providing a consistent approach to dealing with HR matters.

Financial:

None specifically although the implementation of these policies may incur costs which would be reported separately.

Legal:

The policies comply with employment legislation and where appropriate the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations.

Risk Management:

None resulting from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Trade unions have been consulted on the newly developed HR policies for Central Bedfordshire and will continue to be consulted.

Equalities/Human Rights:

All policies referred to in this report comply with employment and equality legislation and take account of human rights.

Community Safety:

n/a

Sustainability:

n/a

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

- n/a

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. that the Committee**
 - (a) adopts the Managing Change Policy for non schools based employees with immediate effect**
 - (b) adopts the Redundancy/Redeployment Guidelines for non schools based employees with immediate effect**
 - (c) adopts the Work Life Balance Policy for non schools based employees with immediate effect**
 - (d) adopts the Flexible Retirement Policy for non schools based employees with immediate effect.**

Reason for Recommendation(s): So that the HR policies referred to above can be 'rolled out' to all Central Bedfordshire non schools based employees to provide a consistent and fair approach to HR matters.

Background

1. An important part of establishing the same terms and conditions of employment for central Bedfordshire employees is the establishment of new HR policies for all non schools based employees.

2. An initial set of policies were adopted by the General Purposes Committee in May and subsequently these have now been 'rolled out' to all non schools based employees, and training for managers on these policies is now taking place.
3. This report covers a further set of HR policies which are attached as appendices as follows:

Appendix A – Managing Change Policy

Appendix B – Redundancy/Redeployment Guidelines

Appendix C – Work Life Balance and Flexible Working Policy

Appendix D – Flexible Retirement Policy

These policies were presented to the Employee Partnership Committee on 17 November 2009 and the Committee unanimously agreed that they be recommended to the General Purposes Committee for adoption.

Managing Change Policy – Appendix A

4. All three legacy authorities had slightly different Managing Change policies and it is important that when moving forwards we have one consistent approach for all employees particularly as many teams are made up of employees from all three legacy authorities.
5. This policy sets out the details around the important consultation process during any restructuring and in particular if there is any possibility of redundancies from that process. It also provides a consistent approach to appointing employees within the new structure and the protection of salary should an employee be appointed into a post following any restructuring that is at a lower salary than their current salary.
6. In the event that there is a redundancy situation or early retirement in the efficiency of the service, the policy provides a consistent approach to any compensatory payments.

Redundancy/Redeployment Guidelines

7. These guidelines sit closely alongside the Managing Change policy providing the necessary guidance to managers and employees when an employee is 'at risk' of redundancy and is looking to be redeployed into a suitable alternative position that may be vacant within the authority.

Work Life Balance and Flexible Working Policy

8. The Council recognises the importance of supporting employees balance their home and work life. The evidence from recent years has demonstrated that this ensures the Council is more able to recruit and retain good employees who are motivated to work and a more flexible approach also helps to deliver improved services and increases efficiency.

9. This policy document covers the statutory right to request to work flexibly and also requests from employees who are not covered by the legislation to request to work flexibly. The options that employees may consider are set out in Section 2.
10. The policy also includes under Section 3 information regarding 'Time off from Work' that reflect arrangements that are covered by employment legislation, for example, maternity leave.

Flexible Retirement Policy

11. Within the regulations of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) there is a discretion for flexible retirement, with the early release of pension benefits which is linked to a reduction in hours of work or grade subject to the agreement of the employer.
12. There is also a requirement that all authorities have in place a Flexible Retirement Policy.
13. We are aware that a number of employees are interested in exploring this option however there can in certain instances be a cost to either the employee because of the 'early payment' element and/or a cost to the employer. The table set out in Appendix 1 to this policy covers the different possible scenarios to give some guidance. Each application will have to be considered on its own merits by the Service areas as they arise.
14. Following concerns expressed by the unions regarding the lack of appeal under this particular policy, there has been discussions and agreement that this part of the policy has been amended to provide an appeal to the Service Director. As there are costs that will impact on the service, it is important that decisions are taken at a local service level especially as this is a discretionary policy.

Conclusion and Next Steps (optional)

14. Further HR policies will be presented to this Committee for review as they are finalised.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Managing Change Policy
Appendix B – Redundancy/Redeployment Guidelines
Appendix C – Work Life Balance Policy
Appendix D – Flexible Retirement Policy

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

Location of papers: