

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 3 October 2017 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)  
J D McLean (Vice-Chairman)

D Ashby  
J R Astill  
M D Booth

H Drury  
A Harrison  
J L King

A M Newton  
J L Reynolds  
E J Sneath

In Attendance: The Executive Manager - People and Public Protection, the Executive Manager Governance, the HR Manager, the Health and Safety Advisor and the Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors F Biggadike, R Clark, L J Eldridge and J Tyrrell.

**11. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Development Panel held on 25 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

**12. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**13. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6**

There were no questions asked under Standing Order 6.

**14. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no tracking of recommendations to consider.

**15. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL**

There were no items referred from the Performance Monitoring Panel.

**16. KEY DECISION PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan published on 11 September 2017.

Action By

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**AGREED:**

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

**17. POLICY REGISTER**

The Panel gave consideration to the Policy Register that was dated 5 September 2017.

Members raised the following issues:

- The Panel was pleased to see that progress was being made on bringing the register up to date.
- When reviewing the Equalities Policy, the Panel felt that detail within it should be succinct, signposting the rules and regulations which the Authority had to abide by.
- Consideration should be given to the basis upon which policies were classified as statutory or non statutory.

**AGREED:**

That the Policy Register be noted.

**18. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY 2017**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager People and Public Protection, which requested consideration of the revised Health and Safety Policy by the Panel, prior to its submission to Cabinet for approval and adoption.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 imposed a number of duties on the Authority as an employer. The existing Health and Safety Policy had been in force since 2015 and was now due for review. The proposed revised policy had been amended to take account of changes within the Authority's Corporate Structure.

The Panel thanked officers for producing a clear and informative report and policy.

**AGREED:**

That the Policy Development Panel recommend the Corporate Health and Safety Policy for approval and adoption by the Cabinet.

**19. VEXATIOUS AND UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager

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Governance which requested consideration of a draft policy for dealing with unreasonably persistent complaints and customer behaviour and vexatious requests.

The Council did not currently have a policy or a procedure to deal with these circumstances. The proposed policy dealt with unreasonable customer behaviour generally, unreasonable customer complaints relating, for example, to service issues or standards complaints about elected members, and finally it covered vexatious requests.

The purpose of the document was to define unreasonable customer behaviour, explain what was considered to be unreasonable customer behaviour and how it would be dealt with, to define vexatious requests and explain what was considered to be a vexatious request and how it would be dealt with.

The purpose of the Policy was to provide a framework for dealing with a very small number of such issues in a fair, open and transparent way.

Members raised the following issues:

- Members felt that suggestions for the process, as detailed within the report, were reasonable.
- A slight rewording of section 1, item 3 (Definition of Unreasonable Behaviour) paragraph 2 was required in order to ensure clarity.
- Members suggested that use of the Policy be reported to the Panel on a quarterly basis in order that the Panel could review its progress and to increase transparency.
- It was agreed that the flowchart mentioned in section 1.5 of the report be distributed to members once it had been completed.

MS, SW

CM, MS,  
SW

**AGREED:**

That subject to the comments made by the Panel, the proposed policy attached at Appendix A to the report be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

**20. DATA PROTECTION/DATA RETENTION**

The Executive Manager Governance was in attendance to provide members with a verbal update on the current situation regarding data protection and retention, in light of the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation, due to come into force in May 2018.

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Members were advised that a review of the data retention schedule had been completed however, in light of significant changes from the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation that would come into effect in May 2018, the retention schedule needed to be looked at in a wider context.

The Executive Manager - Governance provided a brief outline of the changes. Some work had already been undertaken by the Council in relation to these changes, including the commissioning of a gap-analysis, and a re-written Data Protection Policy would be presented to the Panel in April 2018, prior to its submission to Cabinet. Members were asked whether they wanted further engagement in this piece of work before it was presented to the Panel in April.

- Some members questioned whether they would have the depth of knowledge required to effectively contribute to this area of work. The Executive Manager - Governance suggested that Members may wish to contribute to developing the policy in light of issues raised in the gap analysis and legislative changes. Members were minded to establish a Task Group for this purpose.
- Training for Members on Data Protection, encompassing the forthcoming changes was required. The Executive Manager – Governance advised that Data Protection Champions had been identified and would receive training first. Once there was more clarity over the impact of the changes, the Executive Manager – Governance would work with the Portfolio Holder and Chairman of the Councillor Development Working Group to source suitable member training.
- Councillors H Drury, J D McLean, A M Newton and A R Woolf agreed to be members of the Task Group.

**AGREED:**

- a) That the verbal update provided by the Executive Manager Governance be noted; and
- b) That a Task Group be set up to consider the implications of forthcoming changes to the Data Protection Policy as follows:
  - i. The role of the Task Group would be to develop the new policy in light of issues raised in the gap analysis and legislative changes and that a more detailed suggested scope would be circulated prior to the first Task Group meeting; and

CM, MS

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- ii. Membership of the Task Group would include Councillors H Drury, J D McLean, A M Newton and A R Woolf.

**21. OFFICER CODE OF CONDUCT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager People and Public Protection which presented an update on the Officer Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct was a common reference document for all employees that defined the minimum standards of conduct that employees were expected to observe when carrying out their duties. It was produced in the light of challenges employees faced in the current, and more commercially orientated, environment.

The changes made to the Code of Conduct, which had last been refreshed in 2012, had been shared with the Staff Forum and Unison representatives, with both agreeing to provide support in communicating these updates.

The key changes made to each section were highlighted within the covering report, with the full revised document attached at Appendix A.

**AGREED:**

That the updated Code of Conduct, including changes highlighted in Section 2.0 of the report, be recommended to Council for adoption.

PA, CB, LE

**22. APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager People and Public Protection which presented proposals for an Apprenticeship Programme.

A new Apprenticeship Levy was implemented by the Government from April 2017, with the aim of funding three million start up apprenticeships in the UK by 2020. The Government had committed to boosting productivity by investing in people and there was a pledge to develop vocational skills and to increase the quantity and quality of apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships would now offer much more flexibility, and the proposal was to offer three routes into an apprenticeship scheme – a Business Apprenticeship Scheme, a Specialist

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Apprenticeship, and a Talent Apprenticeship.

The following issues were raised:

- The introduction of an apprenticeship scheme within the Authority was an area that Councillor J McLean had previously raised an interest in, and it was agreed that officers would involve him in the way forward.
- Members asked whether any apprenticeships within the Authority had yet been identified and were advised that there had been interest from a range of services.

**AGREED:**

That the Apprenticeship Programme, as described in the report and appendix, be recommended to full Council for approval.

PA, CB, LE

**23. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager – Governance, which set out the Work Programme of the Policy Development Panel. The Work Programme consisted of two separate sections, the first setting out the dates of the future Panel meetings along with proposed items for consideration, and the second setting out the Task Groups that had been identified by the Panel.

**AGREED:**

That both sections of the Panel's Work Programme, as set out in the report of the Executive Manager – Governance, be noted.

**24. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT.**

There were no urgent items.

(The meeting ended at 7.40 pm)

(End of minutes)