



<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Policy Development Panel
<b>DATE:</b>	6 February 2024
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Review of HR Policies
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To seek Policy Development Panel's views on the proposed HR policies prior to report to Council.
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	N/A
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	Councillor Jim Astill, Portfolio Holder – Corporate, Governance and Communications
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	Rachel Robinson, Group Manager – Organisational Development
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	N/A
<b>EXEMPT REPORT?</b>	No

## SUMMARY

HR policies require regular review to ensure they are within the legal framework and reflect best practice.

This report brings forward HR policies for review. The Policies have been developed by Public Sector Partnership Services, as the Councils' HR providers; with input from a Readers' Panel consisting of Officers and trade unions. The Readers' Panel have confirmed that operationally the policies are practical to implement. In addition, the policies have the support of trade unions.

The Business Case for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership identifies the opportunity to align policy in several areas of the Councils and adopting the policies as set out will create that alignment.

The policies will require approval at Council post Policy Development Panel.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Panel considers the Policies and provides feedback and comments.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- HR policies need to be regularly updated to ensure they reflect best practice and are within the legal framework. This review has provided the opportunity to seek consistency in HR policy across the Partnership. This recommendation ensures the Panel has the opportunity to input into the final policy set prior to consideration by Council.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- None.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** SHDC's HR Policies are due for refresh.
- 1.2** When the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership formed it identified an opportunity to align several areas of Policy across the Partnership.
- 1.3** It is important HR Policies are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate, reflect legislation and best practice and enable the Head of Paid Service to effectively manage the workforce.

## 2. REPORT

- 2.1.** At present, each Council within the Partnership has slight variations in its HR policies.
- 2.2.** Having a single set of shared HR policies for each Council will ensure consistency in the way the Partnership's workforces are managed. Given many services across the Councils are already working together this is becoming increasingly important. There is also the benefit to Public Sector Partnership Services of a single HR Policy set for each of the three Councils as it means rather than HR Advisors administering three different policy sets, they only need to administer one.
- 2.3.** This report brings forward a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy (Appendix A) as well as tweaks to existing aligned policies after a review of their implementation (Appendix B – F). For the tweaked policies, feedback is only being sought on the amendments as outlined in the table at 2.5 and not the whole policies.
- 2.4.** The policies – as presented in the appendices – have been reviewed by an internal Readers' Panel of Officers (from across the Partnership); trade unions and Leadership Team. The policies have their support.

**2.5. The policies appended to this report are:**

New Policy

Appendix	Policy Name	Matter	Current Policy	New
Appendix A	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	Policy (to replace two existing policies)	(1) Bullying & Harassment and (2) Equal Opportunities	Singular policy - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Existing Policies

Appendix	Policy Name	Matter	Change
Appendix B	Absence and Sickness Management Policy & Procedure	Policy Title	Amended from Managing Sick Policy & Procedure to Absence and Sickness Management Policy & Procedure
		Timeframes	Section 12 – sickness absence and reporting. Timeframes amended from 3 hours to 4 hours
		Triggers	Section 14.1 – Removal of the 8 consecutive days trigger as already covered by existing triggers
		Review Process	Section 16.1 – approach amended from formal to informal. HR not required to attend for informal. Invite template developed to accompany policy.
Appendix C	Code of Conduct for Council Employees	Bullying and Harassment at Work	Section 5 – Bullying and Harassment at Work. Additional wording from The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 including examples and further guidance.
		Conflicts of Interest	Section 12.3 & 12.4 – additional wording added to cover being politically neutral and an employee cannot hold an Elected Member position in the Local Authority they are directly employed by or in a Local Authority that the employee is at the disposal of as part of a shared arrangement under section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972.
		Other policies	wording amended to reflect reference to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy.
Appendix D	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure	Scope	Wording amended to ensure deliverable and in line with S&ECLP Memorandum of Agreement.
Appendix E	Grievance Policy and Procedure	Scope	Wording amended to ensure deliverable and in line with S&ECLP Memorandum of Agreement.
		Roles	Section 5.1, 5.3 & 7 – tweaked wording to reference a ‘Commissioning Officer’ and Investigating Officer for clarity.
Appendix F	Improving Performance Policy and Procedure	Scope	Wording amended to ensure deliverable and in line with S&ECLP Memorandum of Agreement.

## **EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP**

Consistency in HR Policy across the Partnership will provide the benefit of a single approach to workforce management; as well as supporting PSPS in the delivery of the HR service. The former is particularly important as more teams from the three Councils start to work more closely together.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP**

As identified in 'Expected benefits to the Partnership'.

### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

none

### **STAFFING**

The Policies will have a direct impact on the management of the workforce. The Policies developed are in line with HR legislation and best practice and are designed to support positive workforce management.

### **WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Staffing matters are a non-executive function and are therefore a Council decision.

### **DATA PROTECTION**

There are no direct data protection implications arising from the content of the report, but data relating to staff is protected under data protection laws. The Council has suitable technical and organisational measures in place to protect such data.

### **FINANCIAL**

None

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

None

### **STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES**

Consultation has taken place with the Readers' Panel; Leadership Team and trade unions. All have supported the policies as appended to this report.

### **REPUTATION**

The Council recognises the importance of supporting its workforce and managing the workforce in a positive way. The policies aim to achieve that, thereby enhancing the reputation of the Council as an employer.

### **CONTRACTS**

None

### **CRIME AND DISORDER**

None

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING**

The policies comply with all associated legislation and have an Equality Impact Assessment.

### **HEALTH AND WELL BEING**

The policies aim to support a happy and healthy workforce.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER**

None

### **ACRONYMS**

PSPS – Public Sector Partnership Services

#### **APPENDICES**

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

<i>APPENDIX A</i>	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
<i>APPENDIX B</i>	Absence and Sickness Management Policy & Procedure
<i>APPENDIX C</i>	Code of Conduct for Council Employees
<i>APPENDIX D</i>	Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
<i>APPENDIX E</i>	Grievance Policy and Procedure
<i>APPENDIX F</i>	Improving Performance Policy and Procedure

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

#### **CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT**

*A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.*

#### **REPORT APPROVAL**

Report author:	Rachel Robinson, Group Manager – Organisational Development
Signed off by:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate

Approved for publication:

Councillor Jim Astill, Portfolio Holder – Corporate,  
Governance and Communications