

Minutes of: EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Date of Meeting: 22 June 2023

Present: Councillor T Rafiq (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, D Berry, C Cummins, M Walsh and L Dean

Also in attendance: Julie Gallagher – Democratic Services, Sam McVaigh – Director of People and Inclusion

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor E Moss

5 FOR INFORMATION EMPLOYMENT PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

7 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed that the notes of the meeting held on 1st March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8 WORKFORCE POLICY REVIEW PHASE 3

The Director of People and Inclusion reported that the Council's HR team continues to progress their review of the Council's workforce policies. Three policies were presented this evening, copies of which had been circulated to Elected Members ahead of the meeting.

The Director provided a brief overview of the reports:

1. Smoking and Vaping – An updated policy following a review by Public Health
2. Fostering Policy – Bringing together 2 policies into one and aligning the Council's approach and the Foster Friendly Employers Scheme
3. Overtime – A revision to Local Conditions of Service Section 3 Paragraph 10 to provide a clear timescale for overtime pay applications.

In discussions that followed Elected Members raised the following comments/issues:

Members of the Panel expressed concern with regards to the following extract - Smoking and Vaping Policy:

Workplace Arrangements:

No employee is allowed to smoke/vape during paid working time; this includes employees working outdoors and working from home. When on a smoking/vaping break, employees should not be easily identifiable as a Council employee; i.e. where appropriate they should ensure their uniform is covered when smoking/vaping.

It is not permitted for any employee on duty in any Council place of work to open any doors or windows for the purposes of smoking/vaping. Smoking and vaping should be limited to breaks

(including lunch breaks) and should be appropriately logged via the flexi-sheet system where relevant.

Members reported that this statement may be seen to some as overreach, overly prescriptive, with little means of enforcement.

Responding, the Director of People and Inclusion reported, that this policy is based on advice from Public Health, agreed by the trade unions and is no way intended to pass judgment on how staff should conduct their lives out of working hours.

It was agreed:

That the Employment Panel:

1. Agree the revised Smoking and Vaping Policy subject to the following amendments to the scope of the policy (addition in italics):

The Policy relates to the actions of employees during the course of their work, irrespective of location. – *This is a workforce policy and the Council makes no comment or judgement on the actions of individuals outside of working time in relation to smoking or vaping.*

2. Agree the revised Fostering Policy.
3. Agree the revisions to Local Conditions of Service for Overtime

9 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed:

1. To exclude the press and public.

10 TRAINING & CONFIRMATION OF UPCOMING RECRUITMENT PANELS

11 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR T RAFIQ
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7pm and ended at 7.45pm)