

Classification

Item No.

Open

Meeting:	Employment Panel
Meeting date:	3 rd February 2026
Title of report:	Workforce Policy Review
Report by:	Cllr. Richard Gold, Cabinet Member for Customer Service, Communications & Corporate Affairs
Decision Type:	
Ward(s) to which report relates	All

Executive Summary:

A key component of the Council's HR improvement and modernisation programme is the review of core HR systems, processes and policies to ensure they are fit for purpose, reflective of modern HR practice and align with the organisational culture described by the LET'S values.

This report sets out proposals for a number of new, changed, reviewed and replaced policies. Trade Union colleagues have been fully engaged in this work.

Recommendation(s)

That the Employment Panel agrees:

1. An updated Family Leave Policy
2. A revised Working Time Regulations Policy
3. A revised Job Evaluation Procedure

The documents will then go for endorsement to the Council's Corporate Joint Consultative Committee on 4th February 2026 and subject to approval will then be published on the Council's intranet pages and communicated to staff.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Family Leave Policy

Background

The Family Leave Policy was created in July 2023 and combined into one document provisions relating to maternity, paternity, fostering, adoption, shared parental leave, parental bereavement and IVF. It was amended in February 2025 to include neonatal care leave provisions.

Policy Headlines

Small changes have been made to the Family Leave Policy, in response to the Employment Rights Act 2025, to ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation with effect from April 2026. These include:

- 9.2 Making paternity leave a day one right
- 10.3 Removing the need to take paternity leave before taking any shared parental leave
- 11.4 Making parental leave a day one right

2. Working Time Regulations Policy

Background

The Working Time Regulations Policy sets out the Council's commitment to providing safe working conditions, and details how it will take all practical measures possible to operate within the Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended). It was last reviewed in April 2009.

Policy Headlines

Changes have been made to generally update the Policy and also to strengthen Policy wording to ensure that staff, in normal circumstances, with more than 1 internal contract are not permitted to work above the 48-hour limit. This is in line with the Council's approach to supporting staff welfare and wellbeing.

3. Job Evaluation Procedure

Background

The NJC Job Evaluation Procedure and supporting documents were last reviewed in 2015. This procedure is used to evaluate the jobs of the vast majority of Council employees, who are on NJC 'green book' terms and conditions.

Policy Headlines

Although there are no changes to the NJC scheme itself, the HR Team and Unison are now using a new Sharepoint based system to record, monitor and report upon evaluations. The Procedure has been amended to reflect this, and also the opportunity has been taken for a general update and to pull into one document the evaluation and appeals procedures.

Community impact/links with Community Strategy

A modern and effective employee policy framework is essential to ensuring the effective operation of the organisation and, in turn the delivery of our commitment to the Community Strategy.

Equality Impact and considerations:

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Equality Analysis Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.

No negative impact identified.

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Trade Union objection to policy changes	Prior discussions have taken place with Unison

Consultation:

All of the above proposed changes have been shared with the Trade Unions, and where appropriate there have been consultations with HR colleagues, managers, the EDI Manager and the Legal Team.

Legal Implications:

There are no immediate legal implications

Financial Implications:

There are no immediate financial implications

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Background papers:

Appendix 1: Family Leave Policy
Appendix 2a: Working Time Regulations Policy
Appendix 2b: Working Time Regulations EqIA
Appendix 3a: Job Evaluation Procedure
Appendix 3b: Job Evaluation Procedure EqIA