

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

4 December 2014

Probation Policy

Report of Head of Transformation

This report is public

Purpose of report

To seek member approval of a revised probation policy with the intention that one document can be used across the three partner Councils.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the revised 3-way probation policy.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 To ensure that all new employees are able to meet and maintain the required standards of attendance, timekeeping, conduct and performance it is essential to have a robust probation policy.
- 2.2 If a new employee is not able to achieve the required standards the Council requires a mechanism for addressing their concerns and ultimately dismissing the employee if this is deemed necessary.
- 2.3 Each of the three partner Councils currently has their own specific probation policy. With the continued increase of shared teams it is essential to have a single probation policy which is applied consistently regardless of which Council is the employer.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The new policy seeks to bring together areas of good practice from all three Councils and reference has been made to all three current probation policies.
- 3.2 The revised draft policy is attached at Appendix 1. In summary this policy recommends:

- All new employees to the Councils are subject to a six month probationary period;
- Employees transferring to a new role between any of the three partner Councils who have already satisfactorily completed a probation period will not be subject to a new probation period;
- That three probation review meetings are held (after one month, three months and five months of employment) to ensure timely remedial action;
- A standard form to record the probation review meetings;
- The ability to arrange a probation review hearing where it is clear that an employee has failed to reach the required standards of performance, conduct or attendance required for their position;
- No ability to extend a probation period ensuring that any issues are dealt with in a prompt and effective manner.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Each partner Council can ensure that there is a clear, consistent and robust probation process to enable line managers to feel confident in being able to effectively praise good performance but also challenge where standards are not satisfactory. Where such a process is in place there will be less risk of potential challenge should the employee do so at any part of the process. The revised policy will improve the clarity and consistency of the process for employees to, particularly for those working within shared teams, and across partner Councils.

5.0 Consultation

CDC/SNC Joint Management Team	Support the proposals
South Northamptonshire Trade Union	Support the proposals
Cherwell District Council Trade Union	Support the proposals
Cherwell District Council Staff Consultation Group	Support the proposals

Feedback from the consultees has been taken into consideration in the draft version of the policy attached at Appendix 1.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Retain the current individual policies of each Council, which would not provide a clear, consistent process across the three partner Councils.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

7.2 Rigid adherence to a six month probation period as set out in the proposed policy will mean that relevant employees will not acquire statutory rights to bring claims against the Council for unfair dismissal and therefore significantly reduce the risk of claims being brought by individuals who do not meet the necessary levels of performance in post.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

N/A

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

N/A

Lead Councillor

N/A

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Probation Policy
Background Papers	
None	
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