



Employment and Appeals Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Employment and Appeals Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 11 July 2022 at the Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre.

Employment and Appeals Committee members present:

Councillors Lady D Atkins, Baxter, P Ellison, Smith and A Turner

Apologies for absence:

Councillor A Vincent

Officers present:

Jane Collier, Human Resources Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Olivia Cordingley, Human Resources Advisor
Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services Officer
Marc Whittaker, Senior Human Resources Advisor

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

1 Election of Chair for 2022/23

Unanimously, Councillor A Turner was elected as the Chairman of the Employment and Appeals Committee for the municipal year 2022/23.

2 Election of Vice-Chair for 2022/23

Unanimously, Councillor Baxter was elected as the Vice Chairman of the Employment and Appeals Committee for the municipal year 2022/23.

3 Declarations of interest

None.

4 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Employment and Appeals Committee held on 21 February 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

5 Policy Review

The Human Resources Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Jane Collier,

submitted a report presenting nine of the council's Human Resources policies and procedures that had been amended.

Jane Collier introduced the report and provided Elected Members with a brief overview of the policies.

(a) **Apprenticeship Policy**

Jane Collier highlighted that owing to the public sector target period set by the Government having ended, the Apprenticeship Policy was subsequently amended. She explained that it was still good practice to collect this data.

In response to a question posed regarding partnerships with institutions linked to apprenticeships and T Level qualifications, the Senior Human Resources Officer, Marc Whittaker, explained that the main provider the council work with was Blackpool and the Fylde College and explained the recent recruitment of the Corporate Apprentices. It was added that the usual practice was to source the provider around the apprenticeship in order to maximise the training experience.

Jane confirmed that the policy did not involve the potential introduction of T Level qualifications.

(b) **Gender Reassignment Policy**

Jane Collier explained the update to section 4.1 in regards to definitions used within the policy and section 7.3 as temporary relocation and redeployment was to be considered at the request of the employee or on the advice on Occupational Health.

Jane updated members that following consultation with the unions it was agreed for the policy to include reference to providing staff with equality and diversity training.

Following a question, it was explained that at present, there were no employees who had experienced gender reassignment whilst working for the council, nevertheless, the policy remained in place as the council was committed to supporting employees who were contemplating undergoing, were undergoing or had undergone transition.

A question was put regarding councillors receiving similar equality and diversity training, the Democratic Services Officer, Marianne Unwin, reminded councillors to speak to the Democratic Services team or the Chairman of the Councillor Development Group about future training opportunities.

(c) **Driving Policy**

Jane Collier explained the policy had been reviewed in consultation

with the Transport Manager. She summarised the minor amendments made throughout including section 4.1 regarding Green Fleet and Grey Fleet, section 5.4 regarding changes made to the Highway Code in January 2022 and section 5.10 regarding vocational drivers found guilty of any new motoring offences must report to the Transport and Maintenance Team Manager. She added an update to section 7.3 of the policy concerning the towing of trailers and other minor changes.

The Chair questioned whether Wyre Council drivers were to receive specialist training owing to the recent changes to the Highway Code. Jane updated members that this was something the council hoped to provide in the future.

In response to a question regarding company cars for senior officers, Jane Collier confirmed that, excluding fleet drivers, all staff used their own vehicles for work-related driving activities. In response to a further question on risk assessments, Jane reassured members that work-related driving activities were risk assessed and the Transport Manager ensured the necessary procedures were followed.

(d) Employee Code of Conduct

Jane Collier summarised the minor updates made to the policy and highlighted a change to staff completing an online form when declaring gifts and hospitality.

In response to a question, Jane updated members that policy updates were communicated to staff via the council intranet and that staff were not required to re-sign policies when changes were made.

Members welcomed the move to an online form.

(e) Protected Officers Disciplinary Policy

Jane Collier explained that this policy related to the three statutory officers the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

She updated members that the council had appointed two new Independent Persons resulting in a total of three. She also explained other slight amendments made including updates to the list of examples of Gross Misconduct.

(f) Promoting Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence

Jane Collier explained the Promoting Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence had been updated to bring Covid-19 symptoms or illness in line with other reasons for sickness absence.

Discussions were held regarding the percentage of officers working from home, hybrid working, recruitment issues and the impact on new

starters.

A member asked about sickness absence owing to the recent spike in Covid-19 infections. Jane Collier explained that the council and its services had managed sickness absence during the pandemic.

(g) **Working Carers Policy**

Jane Collier clarified that the Working Carers Policy had slight amendments made.

Jane explained that there could be staff unknown to them who were working carers. She added that staff were under no obligation to tell their line manager that they were a carer but would be encouraged to do so wherever possible. Managers were also actively encouraged to meet with their employees who had caring responsibilities to discuss the support they need.

Following a question from a member, Jane explained that DSE Assessments, an assessment of the workstation or display screen equipment, were carried out when necessary.

(h) **Eye Sight Testing Policy**

Jane Collier explained that this policy had been updated to reflect the change in the corporate provider.

Jane confirmed to members that the feedback for the new provider had been positive.

In response to a question, Jane clarified the amount awarded to staff to cover the cost of glasses was based on the equivalent of what the voucher offered staff.

There were additional discussions by committee members about apprenticeship recruitment.

6 **Decision taken**

Following discussion, the committee **approved** each of the following Human Resources policies and arrangements:

- Apprenticeship Policy
- Gender Reassignment Policy
- Driving Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Protected Officers Disciplinary Policy
- Promoting Attendance and Managing Sickness Absence
- Working Carers Policy
- Eye Sight Testing Policy

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.22 pm.

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