

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 28 FEBRUARY 2012**FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY****REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES****Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to present and seek approval for the Council's proposed Flexible Working Policy.

Background

2. As part of the current review of terms and conditions of employment, the Committee endorsed a proposal to remove the existing Flexi-Time Scheme and replace it with a new Flexible Working Policy. Whilst not a financial efficiency saving, the removal of the flexi scheme was proposed in order to modernise the way in which the Council operates enabling managers to better meet service needs and balance them with employees' requests for work/life balance.
3. The current flexi-time scheme stipulates core hours, i.e. between 10am and 12pm, 2 and 3.30pm. These are the hours that employees must be at work. Outside of these times, employees may choose to work their remaining contractual hours between 7.30 am and 6.30pm. They may also accrue any hours worked above their contractual daily total, which is 7 hours and 24 minutes for a full time employee. Employees may take this accrued time as a "flexi day" of leave in the following month.
4. The current scheme is felt to be restrictive as it applies largely to office-based staff which represent a small proportion of the whole workforce. There is also a concern that it does not enable managers to implement working arrangements that meet the needs of the service.
5. Consultation with employees and negotiation with trade unions commenced in July 2011 regarding the removal of this policy and replacing it with a flexible working policy.

Flexible Working Policy

6. A copy of the Policy is attached as **Appendix A** to this paper. The Policy removes the notion of "core hours" and the automatic entitlement to accrue time off by working additional hours. The new Policy would also be applicable to all employees.

7. The purpose of the Policy is to enable managers to set hours of work that best suit the needs of their service at the same time as encouraging them to think differently about how to meet employee requests for flexible working.
8. A fundamental principle of the Policy is that time-off-in-lieu (TOIL) can only be accrued as a result of a genuine business need and where this has been agreed by the manager. Managers are expected to meet, where possible, employee requests for temporary adjustments to working hours to meet out of work commitments by enabling employees to make up any time lost.
9. The Policy also sets out a range of different working arrangements, such as annualised hours, compressed hours and zero hours contracts. Managers should consider these options if they present more cost efficient and service focussed contractual arrangements that also satisfy employee requests for flexibility.

Implementation

10. The Policy has been fully supported by the Council's Corporate Management Team and the trade unions. As the implementation of the Policy represents a significant cultural shift in the management of working arrangements, if approved by the Employment Committee, robust briefing and guidance will be provided to managers. The proposals are currently being considered by Legal Services.
11. The Policy would become effective on the 1st May 2012 and its application will be monitored through on-going discussions with Departmental Management Teams.

Recommendation

Employment Committee is requested to approve the Flexible Working Policy for implementation from 1 May 2012.

Background Papers

Terms and Conditions Report – 23 May 2011
Terms and Conditions Progress Report – 14 October 2011
Terms and Condition Report - 11 January 2012
Terms and Conditions Report – 28th February 2012

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

12. None

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Equal Opportunities Implications

13. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been developed as part of the review of terms and conditions