



General Purposes Committee

7 November 2013

Report from Operational Director Human Resources

Wards affected:
ALL

Time Off Policy and Procedures

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides details of the proposed new Time Off Policy and associated procedures which will replace the current arrangements. There are no proposals to make any significant changes to the current arrangements. Whilst reviewing all of our HR policies and procedures the opportunity has been taken to bring together all the different leave arrangements operating within the Council into a single policy document.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The General Purposes Committee is asked to:

- a. agree the new Time Off Policy
- b. authorise the Operational Director, Human Resources (or Deputy), in consultation with the Leader and then consultation with the relevant trade unions, to make such other changes as may be necessary from time to time to the Time Off Policy and associated procedures to ensure they remain relevant and 'fit for purpose'.

3.0 Detail

3.1 The Council regularly reviews its HR policy framework to align its policies and procedures to the organisational objectives, incorporate legislative changes and to reflect current modern HR practice.

3.2 Currently there is no framework document for the Council's leave arrangements covering:

- annual leave
- special leave
- maternity leave
- paternity leave
- adoption leave
- parental leave

It is considered both from a management and employee perspective it would be beneficial to bring the leave arrangements together into a single policy document. The policy document is attached to this report for the Committee to consider. There are no proposed changes to the time off arrangements other than to offer a consistent paternity leave entitlement to staff regardless of length of service. The opportunity has been taken to rationalise and simplify the presentation of the information to make it more accessible and easily understood. Much of the leave entitlements are embedded in statute and/or the NJC terms and conditions. The Council similar to many other authorities follows the statutory provisions and NJC conditions although there are areas where the Council's arrangements are more generous.

3.3 Currently the Council provides paternity leave based on the two week statutory provision. Prior to 1992 the Council had a more generous Maternity and Paternity Leave Scheme in place. This Scheme remains available to staff who were in post prior to 1992 and have remained in the employment of the Council. Post 1992 the Council introduced maternity and paternity arrangements based on the statutory provisions and the NJC terms and conditions. It is not proposed to change the current maternity arrangements. In the current financial climate these are considered to be reasonable and affordable. For staff in post prior to 1992 it is proposed to continue to honour the agreement reached with the trade unions and staff and they will continue to receive the enhanced maternity arrangements.

3.5 In respect of paternity leave it is considered that in terms of equality the paternity leave does not reflect the Council's commitment to support parental responsibilities in an even handed way. It is therefore proposed that the pre 1992 paternity leave of three weeks be afforded to all staff who become eligible in the future. It is considered that this can be managed without having any detrimental impact on service delivery and within departmental budgets.

3.4 As with all the Council's policies and procedures the Time off Policy and associated procedures is designed to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently when managing time off whilst ensuring that services are properly maintained and delivery is not impaired.

4.0 Implementation Date

4.1 It is recommended that the policy becomes live on 11 November 2013. Albeit there is little change to the leave arrangements there will be a communications plan to support the roll out of the policy and guidance for managers. Human Resources advisers will be fully briefed to provide support to managers.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The increase of paternity leave from two weeks to three weeks for all eligible staff not currently enjoying this benefit will be managed within existing resources and through the management of leave arrangements within service areas.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Time Off Policy is underpinned by employment legislation and the Equalities Act as well as the NJC terms and conditions. The application of the Policy will accord with the Council's commitment to the basic principles of fairness in managing its workforce.

7.0 Diversity Implications

- 7.1 The policy and procedure is applicable to all staff and provides a consistent approach to implementing leave arrangements fairly and in keeping with the Council's aim to build a flexible workforce where flexibility works both for employees and services. The Time Off Policy and Procedures will be continually monitored to ensure it is implemented fairly across the Council.

8.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 8.1 Brent is moving towards a flexible workforce and the consolidation of the different time off arrangements into a single framework policy will assist the organisation to manage leave arrangements fairly both in the interest of the organisation and employees. There are no other implications in addition to those otherwise set out in the report. Consultation has taken place with the HR Improvement Group and CMT who have endorsed the approach. The trade unions have been consulted on this policy and are content with its content.

Background Papers

The draft Time Off Policy and Procedures are appended to this report
Current individual policy and procedure documents held on the Intranet.

Contact Officer

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