



**General Purposes Committee
13 September 2012**

**Report from Director of
Finance and Corporate Services**

Wards affected:
ALL

Flexible Working Policy

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides details of the proposed flexible working policy and procedure. This will replace all current flexible working arrangements and provides an improved offer for staff.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 GP Committee is asked to agree the draft policy with effect from 1st October 2012 to coincide with the introduction of the new employment contract for all employees.
- 2.2 To note that the flexible retirement policy will be amended due to legislative changes.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Brent is committed to providing excellent, publicly accountable services that give real value for money. The way in which we deliver services needs to change. This is driven by customer demands, developments in areas such as mobile and web technology, and the Council's business, estates, IT and people management strategies.
- 3.2 Brent's new Core Contract recognises the principles of flexible working as standard and will have implications for most staff on working times and where they work.
- 3.3 The new flexible working policy formalises flexible working across the Council; supports the statutory right of eligible employees to apply for flexible working; and outlines to managers and employees how Brent will support and handle flexible working.

- 3.4 The key points to note are that the new policy:
- Replaces all existing flexible working policies and arrangements;
 - Encourages managers and employees to develop new ways of working that meet service requirements;
 - Ensures customer demands and service delivery standards are met wherever possible;
 - Replaces the need for employees to formally apply for flexible working. Flexible working will be the norm for most staff in Brent and will be negotiated between an employee and their manager, subject to service requirements.

3.5 The policy is underpinned by a strong focus on performance management, given that employees will be working and delivering services in different ways. Employees subject to capability reviews will not be eligible for flexible working.

3.7 All flexible working patterns will be subject to regular review.

4.0 Flexible retirement

4.1 The flexible retirement policy is currently being amended to accommodate an exit strategy and no access to severance. Some legislative changes need to be accommodated.

5.0 Implementation date

5.1 It is recommended that the policy becomes live on 1st October 2012 to coincide with the introduction of the new Core Contract. A communications plan has been developed to support roll out of the policy and guidance for managers to support implementation of new arrangements.

5.2 A review period – during which managers will proactively be asked to work with employees to identify new ways of working – will run from 1st October to 1st December. Any appeals against proposed new ways of working will be heard from 1st January until 31st March 2013 and will be concluded before the move into the new Civic Centre.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no specific financial implications.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 The policy is underpinned by the 2002 Employment Act.

8.2 The policy is non-contractual and may, subject to applicable legislation, be amended or withdrawn by Brent at any time.

9.0 Diversity Implications

9.1 The policy provides a consistent flexible working offer for Brent staff, alongside harmonized terms and conditions through the employee benefits review.

10.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 10.1 This policy supports the move to the Civic Centre and creates a workforce which is flexible.

Background Papers

Draft Flexible Working Policy is appended to this report.

Contact Officer

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