

ITEM FOR STAFFING COMMITTEE – 11 November 2014

PROPOSED POLICY ON DIGNITY AT WORK

Submitted by: Executive Management Team

Portfolio: Finance and Resources

Purpose of the Report

To obtain the Committee's approval for a proposed Dignity at Work Policy in place of the current Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Recommendation

That the policy detailed at Appendix A be approved.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Borough Council aims to fulfil its responsibilities as an equal opportunities employer and committed to creating an environment of positive relationships whereby all employees are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace.
- 1.2 The Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure is a development from the existing Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy which has been reviewed to better detail the legal position after the introduction of the Equality Act 2010. The Act saw the development of the law with regard to employers' responsibility for preventing bullying and harassment and for the increased definition of a protected characteristic.
- 1.3 The policy and procedure has been developed to deal with instances of Bullying, Harassment and Victimisation of or by employees, customers, elected members, customers, service users, contractors, casual and agency workers and anyone else who works for the Council in any capacity. A copy of the proposed policy is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.4 The policy aims to ensure that if inappropriate behaviour does occur in the workplace, it is dealt with in a serious, sensitive and confidential manner, so that the matter can be resolved as quickly and as sensitively as possible for all parties concerned and aimed at resolution rather than punishment.
- 1.5 The policy review is designed to benefit all employees regardless of whether or not they have a protected characteristic. It contains clear guidance on the behaviours that are expected from all employees and the action that will be taken where this falls short of requirements or breaches the rights of those with a protected characteristic.
- 1.6 It emphasises the importance of trying to resolve the matter through either informal discussion or through the use of mediation in the first instance. Very often people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome or misunderstood and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and agreement that the behaviour will cease. The use of mediation is open to

the parties concerned and can be a valuable resource in helping to resolve harassment and bullying complaints.

- 1.7 The policy gives employees and managers greater guidance in how to deal with these types of issues in the workplace, informally giving them the option of mediation to resolve issues and re-establish working relationships that may have deteriorated or even broken down.
- 1.8 The trade unions were provided with a draft copy of the policy in November 2013 and their recommended changes have been discussed and agreed in September 2014. They support the implementation of the policy.

2. Issues

- 2.1 At its meeting on 6 October 2014, the Employees Consultative Committee recommended that the Policy and Procedure be adopted.

3. Legal and Statutory Requirements

- 3.1 It is important that the council's policy on Dignity at Work reflects current best practice and ensures the council fulfils its obligations in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Implementation of the policy will help to ensure the Borough Council fulfil its responsibilities as an equal opportunities employer and is committed to creating an environment of positive relationships whereby all employees are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1 None

6. Major Risks

- 6.1 None identified.

7. List of Appendices

Appendix A –Dignity at Work at Work

8. Earlier Committee Resolutions

Employees Consultative Committee – 6 October 2014