

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

28TH NOVEMBER 2022

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Employer Supported Policing Scheme for Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to propose the introduction of an Employer Supported Policing Scheme (ESP) and approve the associated policy document.

Executive Summary:

ESP is a national scheme owned by the Home Office. It is a partnership benefitting employers, their staff and the police service by releasing Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers to volunteer in the communities they serve.

Background:

Following a request from an employee for special leave to carry out duties as a Special Constable, research was carried out into the Employer Supported Policing Scheme run by SWP to ascertain whether this initiative would be beneficial to the Council. There are currently 240 organisations signed up to ESP in the UK (according to SWP) and they have advised that organisations who take part in the scheme give their employees a minimum of 2 days and up to a maximum of 25 days paid leave a year to carry out Special Constable duties. There are 21 councils across Wales and England currently signed up to ESP. Part of being a Special Constable means that you are required to volunteer for 16 hours a month. SWP have also advised that organisations

now also allow paid leave for Police Support Volunteers, however the amount of leave provided to them is less as there is no requirement to volunteer for the 16 hours per month and the duties are much less onerous.

Benefits of Employer Supported Policing

By allowing our employees time off to volunteer as a Special Constable to undertake policing duties, we are helping to protect those who are most vulnerable within our communities whilst providing opportunities for our employees for them to expand their skillsets and undergo training that will aid them both in and out of the workplace. Examples of training provided by SWP include first aid training and conflict management. Case studies provided by SWP also demonstrate how ESP aids staff engagement, team building skills and work-life balance.

This scheme promotes the presence of a shared vision, inclusion of those with diverse backgrounds, equal opportunity, and supportive relationships between individuals. It will also help tackle crime within the community whilst providing anyone that volunteers with transferrable skills.

Forming a partnership with SWP in relation to this Scheme directly supports our purpose as laid out in the Corporate Plan 'to help NPT residents live good lives' and also supports Wellbeing Objective 2 '*All communities are thriving and sustainable - "People live healthy, long and good lives in thriving and sustainable communities where people get along together and support one another"*

Supporting staff to volunteer will enhance their skill set whilst also helping our communities to be safer. This initiative will be a positive addition to the Council's policies and procedures and will contribute to the Council becoming an 'employer of choice' as it shows that we are supportive of volunteering opportunities and personal development. It is anticipated that this Scheme will form part of a wider Volunteering Scheme going forward.

Financial Impacts:

The financial impact of this Scheme is in relation to time off and managers would have to take service requirements into consideration before approving the leave and this is built in to the Policy. However, the Council's Special

Leave Scheme already provides our employees with 18 days paid time off for public duties, pro-rata for part time employees so there would be no change to this.

Integrated impact assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment, attached at appendix 2 has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language”.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

This Scheme would have a positive impact on valleys communities as the Council, our employees and the police service benefit by releasing Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers to volunteer in the communities they serve.

Workforce Impacts:

The intention behind the ESP Scheme is to have a positive impact on the workforce by increasing opportunities to volunteer, adding value and building relationships within the local community. By supporting employees by providing special leave to take part in the scheme we are helping South Wales Police to address policing issues and enhance service delivery whilst in turn helping the people and communities of Neath Port Talbot.

Legal Impacts:

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

Regular meetings will take place between the Council and the ‘Citizens in Policing’ key contact person. Communication between any employees that

take up the opportunity and their accountable manager will also need to be maintained. There will be frequent reviews with SWP to maintain the partnership, ensuring that it's working for both parties.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this proposal. However, Citizens in Policing staff within South Wales Police were consulted for further information on the scheme.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members APPROVE the Employer Supported Policing Scheme for Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers

FOR DECISION

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Employer Supported Policy Scheme for Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers

Appendix 2 - IIA

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