

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

11TH DECEMBER 2023

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

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Revised Employee Code of Conduct

1. Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval to implement a revised Employee Code of Conduct.

2. Executive Summary:

Our Employee Code of Conduct is a set of internal guidelines that Neath Port Talbot Council employees must follow during their employment. These guidelines aim to set the standards and expectations for employee behaviour. This revised code of conduct sets out to align itself with the Council's corporate values whilst ensuring that the document is user friendly and legislatively up to date. This will ensure that employees understand what is expected of them and that employee behaviour embodies the ethos of the Council.

3. Background:

This policy was last reviewed in January 2021 and there is a requirement to review it regularly to ensure that the information is legislatively correct and that it's fit for purpose.

4. Review

Changes to Section 8 (now 10) – Gifts, Hospitality & Financial Inducements

Following a recommendation from members during a Standards Committee, the proposal is to amend the amount stated from 'negligible value' to 'up to a maximum of £5' in order to avoid any potential misinterpretation and challenge to the Council.

It is also recommended that the revised code of conduct stipulates that for school based staff, school governing bodies are expected to outline their own parameters for such gifts or hospitality due to the nature of their role.

To ensure that employees are able to determine if an offer of hospitality or gift should be accepted or tactfully rejected, a non-exhaustive checklist has also been included as a supportive resource to provide an indication of the types of issues that should be considered.

Changes to Section 13 (now 17) – Conduct Outside of Work

Feedback from both members and staff has highlighted that this section of the employee code of conduct needs further clarity in the following areas:

- Section 13.1 (now 17.1) now clearly stipulates that this is inclusive of all work related social gatherings such as Christmas parties or leaving events for staff.
- A subsection has been added to make employees aware that the Police, on occasion, make disclosures about individuals prior to conviction where they believe there is a risk because of an individual's employment or voluntary role and the disclosure is necessary for public protection.

Added sections

The following sections have been added in order to align the code of conduct to the Council's corporate values:

- General Principles
 - Provides a general overview of the policy separate from the introductory necessary legal framework.
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion

- To ensure that employees are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, fair treatment for all colleagues and to building a more inclusive culture which values and celebrates the diverse nature of the workforce.
- Voluntary Work
 - Provides clear guidance as to what constitutes as voluntary work and how it differs from secondary employment.
- Professional Registration Requirements
 - Section added on the basis of feedback obtained from staff expressing that employees need to be reminded to adhere to the expected standards of regulatory bodies and to ensure that their registration is kept up to date.

5. Signposting

The following policies have been signposted within the revised employee code of conduct to ensure that they are utilised and cross referenced where necessary:

- Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy
- Social Media Policy

6. Review of the Policy

Whilst the review was instigated by the Standards Committee and their recommendations added to the policy document, Focus Groups were also held with employees, trade unions and managers to ensure their views were captured in the policy document. It has also been supported by the Trade Unions at the Local Government Services forum.

7. Communication of the Policy

As this is an important policy, we will ensure that it is communicated widely across the Council. We will do this by including an article in the Council's Sway and In The Loop, we will place it on NPT Connect and Viva Engage. In addition to this, we will send an email to all Heads of Service and Accountable Managers requesting them to cascade details of the new

policy to all their service areas. For employees who may not have access to NPT Connect eg frontline employees, a leaflet will be produced with the main points included and a QR Code which when scanned by a mobile phone will take them to the main Employee Code of Conduct document on the intranet.

8. Financial Impacts:

No impacts.

9. 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 1 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”.

10. Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Impacts.

11. Workforce Impacts:

The revised Employee Code of Conduct will have a positive impact on the workforce as it provides guidance on what is expected of them as an employee of the Council.

12. Legal Impacts:

No impact.

13. Risk Management Impacts:

No impact.

14. Crime and Disorder Impacts

No impact.

15. Counter Terrorism Impacts

No impact

16. Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. The proposed revisions to this policy have been fully endorsed by the Trade Unions as both they and their members have been involved in the revisions.

17. Recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the revised Employee Code of Conduct.

18. Reason for Decision

A decision is required in order that the revised Employee Code of Conduct can be implemented and communicated to our employees.

19. Implementation

The revised Employee Code of Conduct will be implemented with immediate effect.

20. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Revised Employee Code of Conduct
Appendix 2 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment

21. List of background papers:

None.

22. Officer Contact

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