

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

9 March 2011

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents the updated equality and diversity policy and procedure, previously known as the equal opportunities policy, with the aim of having it approved by this committee.

Background

2. The current equal opportunities policy was last revised in 2006. On the 1 October 2010 the Equality Act came in to force which represented a major piece of legislation in this area. The policy and procedure has been updated in line with the Act.
3. As part of the consultation process a strong preference for the title equality and diversity policy and procedure rather than equal opportunities was expressed. It was felt that this title also reflected the wider emphasis on diversity in the Act.
4. Each of the district council's had separate equality policy and procedures. These policies and procedures are currently out of date now that the Equality Act 2010 has come in to force. It is therefore timely to seek to harmonise this policy and procedure at this point and the JCC have agreed to this.
5. As a harmonised policy and procedure it applies to all Wiltshire Council employees and prospective employees (job applicants) except for teaching and non-teaching staff employed in locally managed schools.
6. The policy and procedure sets out Wiltshire Council's approach to equality and diversity which is to ensure fair and lawful practices and procedure at all times throughout employment and recruitment. It includes the Council's full equality and diversity policy statement. The policy and procedure is sent out to all new starters with the Council.
7. The aim of this review was also to:
 - maintain consistency of approach by adopting the standard policy format;
 - make the procedure clearer and easier to follow
 - ensure the content is up to date and fit for purpose.

Main Considerations for the Council

8. In amending the policy and procedure key stakeholders were consulted including the operational human resources teams, legal, the stakeholder panel, the staff disability forum, BME staff forum and the unions.
9. The main changes to the equality and diversity policy and procedure are:
 - the policy and procedure has been updated in line with the Equality Act 2010.

- there is information about equalities through the key stages of the employment lifecycle i.e. recruitment, induction, training and development, pay etc.
- details of monitoring arrangements and links to current monitoring information is included.
- The policy sets out details of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and how breaches to the policy will be dealt with.
- roles and responsibilities have been clarified.

10. A toolkit of guidance notes will accompany the policy and procedure.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

11. None.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

12. An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken on 16 November 2010 and no negative impacts were identified.

Risk Assessment

13. None

Options Considered

14. None.

Recommendation

15. To approve the revised equality and diversity policy and procedure.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report: None