

## **WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Staffing Policy Committee**

**1 November 2017**

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### **Trade Union Deduction of Contributions at Source (DOCAS)**

#### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this item is to bring to the attention of staffing policy committee the current draft Trade Union (Deduction of Union Subscriptions from Wages in the Public Sector) Regulations 2017 which are due to be implemented on 10 March 2018.

#### **Background**

2. The Trade Union Act 2016 included a provision to restrict the use of DOCAS or “check off” arrangements across the public sector. To support this the currently draft DOCAS regulations are being introduced.
3. DOCAS is the process whereby a union member has their union subscription deducted from their pay via their employer’s payroll. The payroll provider then forwards the collected union membership subscriptions to the union each month.
4. Wiltshire Council payroll currently processes DOCAS on behalf of the unions at no charge.

#### **Main considerations**

5. The proposed new DOCAS regulations will mean the council is only be able to deduct trade union subscriptions from employees where:
  - the employees are given the option to pay their subscription by other means; and
  - the union makes reasonable payments to the council which represent the total cost to public funds of making the deductions.
6. It is the responsibility of the union to provide evidence to us that they offer alternative methods for employees to pay their union subscriptions other than via our payroll.
7. UNISON have asked for the council to sign a Service Level Agreement (SLA) once the DOCAS regulations come into force on 11 March 2018. UNISON have requested this for all councils and produced a draft SLA for consideration.
8. The council is currently considering the implications of agreeing the UNISON SLA, which may result in us having to provide more detailed information than currently e.g. producing a monthly reconciliation report to UNISON on actual

deductions for unions subscriptions compared with expected union subscription deductions.

9. The council is also seeking advice from our legal team regarding DOCAS and the implications of potential SLAs which unions may agree direct with foundation and voluntary aided schools and academies which will impact on our payroll traded service agreements with these schools / academies.
10. Alongside this the council is researching what other local authorities have agreed with the unions as well as determining the likely cost to the payroll and finance service in processing DOCAS.

### **Environmental Impact of the proposal**

11. None

### **Equalities impact of the proposal**

12. None

### **Risk Assessment**

13. None

### **Financial Implications of the proposal**

14. The new regulations will mean that the council will receive payment from the unions for collecting union members' subscriptions via payroll deductions.

### **Recommendations**

15. It is recommended that:

- the council continues to investigate an appropriate calculation for each union so that the DOCAS regulations are complied with.
- the council reports back to staffing policy committee once this work has been carried out.

**Joanne Pitt**  
**Head of HR&OD**

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