

## **WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE**

**21 September 2011**

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## **RELIGION AND BELIEF IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. This report presents the new religion and belief in the workplace policy and procedure, which amalgamates existing religious beliefs and practices information and is in line with the Equality Act 2010, with the aim of having it approved by this committee.

### **Background**

2. The current religious beliefs and practices information on HR direct was last revised in 2008. 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 is in line with the Act.
3. In terms of the ex-district councils, religion and belief was not covered as a separate policy but would have fallen under the appropriate equality policy and procedure which have now been superseded by the new Wiltshire Council equality and diversity policy and procedure. It is therefore proposed that the new religion and belief policy and procedure should apply to all employees as a harmonised policy.
4. 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.
5. The policy and procedure sets out Wiltshire Council's approach to religion and belief in the workplace in line with the Equality Act 2010 and is closely linked to the new equality and diversity policy and procedure which aims to ensure fair and lawful practices and procedures at all times throughout employment and recruitment.
6. The aim of this review was also to:
  - maintain consistency of approach by adopting the standard policy format;
  - to bring together a range of employment issues and requests relating to religion and belief into one document
  - make the procedure clearer and easier to follow
  - ensure the content is up to date and fit for purpose.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

7. 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, the west wilts multi-faith forum and the unions.
8. The main changes to the religion and belief in the workplace policy and procedure are:

- the policy and procedure has been updated in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- there is information about religion and belief in the workplace through the key stages of the employment lifecycle i.e. recruitment, induction, training and development etc.
- roles and responsibilities have been clarified.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

9. None.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

10. An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken on 12 July 2011 and no negative impacts were identified.

### **Risk Assessment**

11. None

### **Options Considered**

12. None.

### **Recommendation**

13. To recommend approval of the religion and belief in the workplace policy and procedure.

**Barry Pirie**  
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**HR & OD**

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