

**PEOPLE AND  
ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

6.00 P.M.

18TH JULY 2024

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Prof Chris Harris (Chair), Mandy Bannon, Matthew Black (substitute for Margaret Pattison), Paul Hart, Paul Newton and Jason Wood

Apologies for Absence:-

Councillors Caroline Jackson and Margaret Pattison

Officers in attendance:-

Alex Kinch	Chief Officer - People and Policy
William Griffith	Chief Officer - Environment and Place
Louise Anson	HR Business Partner
Laura Collins	HR Policy and Strategy Lead
Chelsie Gladstone	Senior Corporate Health and Safety Manager
Catherine Joyce	Senior HR Business Partner
David Richmond	Talent & OD Officer

**1 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chair.

It was moved and seconded: -

“That Councillor Jason Wood be appointed Vice-Chair of the People and Organisational Development Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.”

There being no further nominations, the proposition was declared carried.

***Resolved: -***

That Councillor Jason Wood be appointed Vice-Chair of the People and Organisational Development Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jason Wood declared his interest as an employee and member of UNISON and as a member of Unite the union, these interests being publicly declared. He also declared that his wife is a member of UNISON, Unite the union and GMB.

Councillor Matthew Black declared his interest as a Regional Representative of the Fire Brigades Union.

Councillor Paul Hart declared his interest as a Member of Morecambe Town Council.

**3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**4 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR**

There were no items of urgent business.

**5 HR DASHBOARD**

The Talent and Organisational Development Officer submitted a report that provided an update on the Annual HR Dashboard Figures. The report informed that the purpose of the dashboard was to accomplish three primary aims.

Members were informed that annual staffing reports had started again from last year after a period of no reporting. The recent restructure presented a chance to begin afresh in providing staff reporting and insights in line with structural changes. The annual staffing report covered the financial year 2023/2024. Members were provided with Dashboard insights for 2023/2024.

In conclusion it was reported that the main themes from the report to consider over the next year are the rise in Musculo-Skeletal problems and how this can be addressed in order to reduce sickness absence. Lack of development opportunities, like last year, are appearing to be a primary reason why people are leaving the organisation, which intends to be addressed through work on the People Plan over the coming year.

A number of points were raised at the meeting including consideration, at a future meeting, of the addition of a Wellbeing Day and also inclusion of transitioning within the Sickness Policy as part of the HR Policy Review process. Also, in future Dashboard reports, more information to be provided on agency spends to provide more information on the spend and whether this was backfilling or the need to buy-in expertise and more information and reasons for Housing and Property sickness absences. It was noted that this information would be included in future reporting to the Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Professor Chris Harris, seconded by Councillor Jason Wood and unanimously agreed as follows.

***Resolved:-***

- (1) To continue running annual and quarterly staffing reports in addition to utilising live dashboards to pick up on trends and provide an evidence base to inform leadership and HR/OD in making decisions and designing interventions at a team, service and organisational level whilst measuring progress over time.
- (2) To use previous years' data as a baseline for future years and benchmark against other LA's.
- (3) To consult with stakeholders on additional people metrics to be incorporated into future dashboards and add further value.

**6 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

The Senior Corporate Health and Safety Manager submitted a report that enabled the Committee to consider and approve a range of amendments and additions to existing policies and procedures. These were:

- SG02 Risk Assessment Policy
- SG13 Work Equipment Policy
- SG07 Accident, Incident and Dangerous Occurrence Reporting Policy

Comments and amendments following the meeting of JCC on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were set out in the report.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Officers for the work undertaken to date.

It was proposed by Councillor Professor Chris Harris, seconded by Councillor Jason Wood, and unanimously resolved as follows.

***Resolved: -***

That Health and Safety SG02 Risk Assessment Policy, SG13 Work Equipment Policy and SG07 Accident, Incident and Dangerous Occurrence Reporting Policy, appended to the report, including the amendments recommended by JCC at its meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024, be approved.

**7 HR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW**

The HR Policy and Strategy Lead submitted a report that enabled the Committee to consider and approve the introduction of revised recruitment and selection, domestic abuse, maternity, partner, adoption, and shared parental leave policies and the introduction of a special leave (consolidating the emergency dependant leave, bereavement leave, compassionate leave, unpaid leave and carers leave policies) and parental leave policies.

Comments and amendments following the meeting of JCC on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were set out in the report.

The policy tracker, appended to the report, advised of further information on the changes to be reviewed. For these policies these were:

**HR Policy Amendments Tracker**

Policy Section Number (new number)	Existing/New Section	Section Heading	Amendment/addition Notes
<b>Recruitment and Selection Policy</b>			
9.2	Revised Existing	Disability Confident	It was highlighted on consultation that the policy referred to the "Guaranteed Interview

		Scheme and Armed Forces Veteran	Scheme" rather than the Disability Confident Scheme (which was referenced elsewhere within the policy). This has been updated within the policy, but the major change is to remove the requirement for HR to attend these interviews. Line managers have had People Manager Essentials training, which was an extensive session on the recruitment and selection policy, and it is therefore considered unnecessary to include another member of staff to make disabled candidates feel more at ease. It is acknowledged that having more people in an interview could cause considerable pressure, and line managers should be equipped to conduct an interview alone, having prepared and understood any reasonable adjustments necessary ahead of time.
<b>Domestic Abuse Policy</b>			
N/A	N/A	Branding	Policy re branded to new format.
N/A	N/A	Generic Layout	Layout follows new format. Scope, Purpose, Roles & Responsibilities followed by the substantive provisions.
4-8	New		The domestic abuse policy has been revised significantly, but the policy itself doesn't have a process to follow, but more so the commitments LCC makes to victims. Those commitments are captured in brand new clauses 4-8 which focus on the importance of confidentiality, an explanation of who can be affected by domestic violence and what it is, acknowledging that it can have an impact on the workplace, encouraging open conversations, and listing the specific support and adjustments which are on offer (including a new entitlement to 2 days paid leave).
9	New	Disciplinary action against perpetrators	The existing policy is silent on what (if any) action would be taken against the perpetrators of domestic abuse. The revised policy makes clear that any domestic abuse in the workplace will not be tolerated, and also captures the fact that LCC may consider taking disciplinary action if domestic abuse has taken place outside of the workplace, but which has an impact on someone's role. Following consultation, we have specifically included that this might be where conduct could bring LCC into disrepute or where we have to balance our duty of care to another employee.
N/A	N/A	White Ribbon Ambassadors	We have a network of trained employees who are available to the victims of domestic abuse or their line managers who are equipped to have open conversations and provide the appropriate support. The revised policy signposts them as additional sources of support.
<b>Parental Leave Policy</b>			
N/A	N/A	Branding	Policy introduced with branding to match new format.
N/A	N/A	Generic Layout	Layout follows new format. Scope, Purpose,

			Roles & Responsibilities followed by the entitlements and procedure to be followed.
4	New	Entitlement	Reflects statutory scheme – eligible employees must have 1-year continuous service and have or expect to have parental responsibility for the child and be taking the time off to care for the child. They are entitled to 18 weeks leave per year unpaid and can take no more than 4 weeks in any one year.
5	New	Taking parental leave	In ordinary circumstances, no more than 4 weeks of leave can be taken in one year and must be taken in 1-week blocks, however for parents of disabled children, they can take their leave in less than 1 week blocks if necessary, but they are still subject to the same requirement to take no more than 4 weeks per year and no more than 18 weeks in total.
6	New	Our right to postpone	The statutory scheme acknowledges an employers right to delay/postpone parental leave, which would only be in cases of undue disruption, but our policy reflects the statutory regime that any postponement cannot be beyond 6 months. It should only be in exceptional circumstances that a request is postponed/delayed.
<b>Special Leave Policy</b>			
N/A	N/A	Branding	Policy introduced with branding to match new format. The policy consolidates 4 existing policies and introduces the new statutory right to Carers Leave.
N/A	N/A	Generic Layout	Layout follows new format. Scope, Purpose, Roles & Responsibilities followed by the procedure to be followed for each individual policy.
3.	New	Definitions	Following consultation, definition of Dependant has been clarified to include grandparents.
N/A	N/A		Following feedback from internal networks, it has been repeatedly fed back that employees would prefer not to have to telephone their line managers in emergency situations for a variety of reasons. In each of the policies where contact is necessary, any method of communication is now acceptable, but employees will be expected to accept a follow-up call from their line manager at an alternative time if the line manager contacts them. This concession is to acknowledge that not everybody communicates in the same ways and particularly in emergency situations it may be particularly distressing, whilst also highlighting the importance of LCC knowing where staff are and appropriately recording absences for pay reasons.
		Emergency Dependents Leave	Simplified to not refer to annual leave at all (previously if there was outstanding annual leave there would be no paid entitlement) and to provide everybody regardless of length of service 2 paid days off to attend to dependant emergencies.

		Carers Leave	The government recently introduced a new statutory right to Carers Leave. This is an entitlement to 1 working week of unpaid leave to deal with caring responsibilities. The LCC policy reflects the statutory offering in respect of entitlement and eligibility and notice requirements (i.e. For ½ or 1 day of leave, 3 days' notice is required or for longer, then twice the amount of leave as notice) albeit we acknowledge within the policy that the notice provisions may not always be met given the emergency nature of care. Requests cannot be refused but they can be delayed in exceptional circumstances, and it would only ever be in truly exceptional circumstances that a request be delayed.
		Unpaid Leave	The existing policy separated out Unpaid Leave into different categories according to the length requested and had different length of service requirements for each. The eligibility has been simplified so that all employees who have passed probation are entitled to make a request. For any requests less than 3 weeks this can be approved by the line manager, and for any requests 3-12 weeks, need to be approved by the Chief Officer. The request process is the same, and requests can be rejected for business reasons. Any Unpaid Leave which exceeds 12 weeks will be considered a career break.
<b>Maternity Leave Policy</b>			
N/A	N/A	Branding	Policy introduced with branding to match new format.
N/A	N/A	Generic Layout	Layout follows new format. Scope, Purpose, Roles & Responsibilities followed by the procedure to be followed.
7.1-7.2	Revised existing	Annual Leave	The existing policy provided a limit on holiday carryover to 5 days. This has been revised to remove this limit on carryover, to ensure that all outstanding leave can be carried forward, but to implement a time limit to book the leave i.e. any carried over leave must be pre-booked in the first 2 months after returning (but this can be booked for any time of the year). This was the intention from the outset but has been clarified to make that intention clear as a result of consultation.
<b>Adoption Leave Policy</b>			
N/A	N/A	Branding	Policy introduced with branding to match new format.
N/A	N/A	Generic Layout	Layout follows new format. Scope, Purpose, Roles & Responsibilities followed by the procedure to be followed.
7.1-7.2	Revised existing	Annual Leave	The existing policy provided a limit on holiday carryover to 5 days. This has been revised to remove this limit on carryover, to ensure that all outstanding leave can be carried forward, but to implement a time limit to book the leave i.e. any carried over leave must be pre-booked in the first 2 months after returning (but this can be

			booked for any time of the year). This was the intention from the outset but has been clarified to make that intention clear as a result of consultation.
<b>Partner Leave Policy</b>			
N/A	N/A	Branding	Policy introduced with branding to match new format.
N/A	N/A	Generic Layout	Layout follows new format. Scope, Purpose, Roles & Responsibilities followed by the procedure to be followed.
		Name of Policy	Policy renamed to Partner Leave as a more inclusive name to acknowledge all genders who are partners to primary parents.
		Entitlement	The existing policy was an enhancement beyond the statutory. All employees were entitled to 1 week full pay and leave regardless of length of service, but the second week was subject to statutory pay and eligibility for leave. Now, the policy provides for 2 weeks enhanced pay and leave no matter the employees' length of service, and therefore the provisions relating to eligibility have been removed. There are new statutory regulations in relation to how leave can be taken and the notice requirements, so these have been updated within the policy i.e. leave can be taken in 2 1 week blocks and 4 weeks' notice of each week must be given.
<b>Shared Parental Leave Policy</b>			
N/A	N/A	Branding	Policy introduced with branding to match new format.
N/A	N/A	Generic Layout	Layout follows new format. Scope, Purpose, Roles & Responsibilities followed by the procedure to be followed.
7.1-7.2	Revised existing	Annual Leave	The existing policy provided a limit on holiday carryover to 5 days. This has been revised to remove this limit on carryover, to ensure that all outstanding leave can be carried forward, but to implement a time limit to book the leave i.e. any carried over leave must be pre-booked in the first 2 months after returning (but this can be booked for any time of the year). This was the intention from the outset but has been clarified to make that intention clear as a result of consultation.

The Chair expressed his thanks to Officers for the work undertaken to date on the HR Policy Development and Review process.

It was moved by Councillor Prof Chris Harris and seconded by Councillor Jason Wood and resolved as follows.

**Resolved: -**

That the introduction of revised recruitment and selection, domestic abuse, maternity, partner, adoption, and shared parental leave policies and the introduction of a special leave (consolidating the emergency dependant leave, bereavement leave, compassionate

leave, unpaid leave and carers leave policies) and parental leave policies, appended to the report, be approved.

**8 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was moved by Councillor Jason Wood, seconded by Councillor Paul Newton and resolved as follows.

***Resolved: -***

That, in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

**9 PROPOSED VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY REQUESTS - ENVIRONMENT & PLACE  
(PAGES 9 - 11)**

The Chief Officer – Environment and Place submitted a report that enabled the Committee to consider a proposed redundancy request.

***Resolved: -***

The resolution is set out in a minute exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**10 PROPOSED VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY REQUESTS - PEOPLE AND POLICY  
(PAGES 12 - 13)**

The Chief Officer – People and Policy submitted a report that enabled the Committee to consider a proposed redundancy request.

***Resolved: -***

The resolution is set out in a minute exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Chair

(The meeting ended at 7.08 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Stephen Metcalfe, Democratic Support - email [sjmetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:sjmetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk)**



By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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