

Annual assurance report in relation to employment policies and employee conduct

Date: 6th February 2023

Report of: Chief Officer Human Resources

Report to: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

This is the annual report to the committee concerning the Council's employment policies and employee conduct. The report provides assurance to the Committee that, employee conduct is properly managed, policies are regularly reviewed and employee conduct forms part of normal manager/ employee relations.

The Best Council Plan and the Best Council Ambition to be an efficient, enterprising and healthy organisation can only be achieved through the linked ambition to be the Best Place to Work which will be delivered by our People Strategy 2020- 2025.

Recommendations

Corporate Governance and Audit Committee is requested to receive this report and the attached Appendix 1 as together providing key forms of assurance on the robustness of the Council's employment policies and employee conduct.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 To provide members with assurance on the Council's employment policies and employee conduct and give the opportunity for them to review the arrangements and ensure they are up to date and fully complied with.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 2 The information set out in this report and appendix provide assurance that the council's systems of internal control in relation to employment and employee conduct are operating soundly and will support the Committee in approving the 2023 Annual Governance Statement.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 Employment policies are developed and reviewed by the HR team in consultation with trade union colleagues and staff networks with additional advice where applicable being provided by legal services. The views of and feedback from managers is also collected via focus groups.
- 4 Development of new/ reviews of existing policies form part of the weekly meetings with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Resources.

What are the resource implications?

- 5 Effective management of our workforce has a positive impact on our overall salary costs. Our policy review process includes working pro-actively with our Trade Union colleagues to ensure that our employment policies are in line with our values and are easy to understand for employees and managers so that our workforce is managed and supported effectively.

What are the legal implications?

- 6 All employment policies are legally compliant, and the human resources team receive direct updates from ACAS that allow policies to be reviewed to ensure they keep up with legislative changes as well as best practice advice.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 7 As an employer there is legal responsibility to ensure that certain employment policies are in place and as a good employer Leeds City Council wants to achieve a culture where all employees are clear on their responsibilities and can be their best.
- 8 If employment policies are not effectively implemented, then there is a risk of employees taking legal action against the Council through Employment Tribunal claims. ACAS early conciliation and employment tribunal cases are monitored through monthly meetings between the Deputy Chief Officer HR, the HR Business Partner with the lead for casework and legal services. These internal controls help protect against reputational damage which could lead to a poor employer brand making it harder to attract and retain the best employees. From April 2019 all formal casework has been logged via SAP which has resulted in better quality reporting allowing trends to be spotted and action to be taken.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 9 Our People Strategy 2020-2025 aims for all staff to be safe and well at work

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

10 N/A

How will success be measured?

11 N/A

What is the timetable for implementation?

12 N/A

Appendices

13 Appendix 1 Annual assurance report for employment policies and employee conduct

Background papers

14 None