

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 3RD JULY, 2007

Present – Councillors White (Chairman), R. Allen, Ashcroft, Clare, Dennis, Mrs. Rothwell (as deputy for Councillor Hayes), J. Silvester, A. Wilkinson and Zaman.

Also in attendance

Mr. D. Winstanley	Assistant Chief Executive
Ms. A. Sheridan	Human Resources Officer
Mr. J. Kerambrum	Trainee Democratic Services Officer

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Hayes.

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that Councillor White be appointed Chairman of the Human Resources, Performance and Diversity Policy Development Group for the Municipal Year.

Councillor White here took the Chair.

2. APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that Councillor Clare be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Human Resources, Performance and Diversity Policy Development Group for the Municipal Year.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Policy Development Group held on 14th March, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

4. THE RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING CORPORATE GUIDELINES

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report that advised members of the amendments to the Council's Right to Request Flexible Working Guidelines in response to the Work and Families Act 2006.

By way of background information, the report stated that the Employment Act 2002 provided parents of children under six, or disabled children under eighteen, the right to request to work flexibly and placed a duty on employers to

consider such requests seriously. Bolton Council introduced corporate guidelines on the Right to Request Flexible Working.

The report went on to state that the Work and Families Act 2006 came into effect on 6th April, 2007 and this extended the right to request flexible working to employees who are the carers of certain adults.

The report stated that in order to be eligible to make a request for flexible working employees must be able to meet the following statutory requirements:-

- be an employee of Bolton Council with 26 weeks continuous Local Government service at the date the application was made;
- not have made another application to work flexibly under the right in the previous 12 months;
- be the parent of a child aged six or under eighteen, where disabled, have responsibility for the upbringing of the child and be making the application to enable them to care for the child; or
- be the carer or expect to be the carer of an adult in need of care.

It was agreed that the report be noted and the amendments to the policy be endorsed.

5. MOBILE PHONE POLICY

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report that informed members of the amendments to the Council's Mobile Phone Policy in response to recent updates to the Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 2003 legislation.

By way of background information, Bolton Council introduced a corporate Mobile Phone Policy to help ensure the safe and effective use of Council mobile phones and to support the Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 2003. The regulations came into force to prohibit drivers using a hand held phone, or similar device, while driving. It also made it an offence to cause or permit a driver to use a hand held mobile phone while driving.

The report stated that the penalties for these offences were originally a fixed penalty of £30 or a fine of up to £1000 if the offender goes to court and £2,500 for drivers of goods or passenger carrying vehicles with 9 or more passenger seats.

The report explained that the contents of Bolton Council's current Mobile Phone Policy reflected the 2003 regulations.

Members were advised that from 27th February, 2007 the regulations were further amended with the penalties for using a hand held phone whilst driving increased. The penalty was now a £60 fine and 3 penalty points on your license with a maximum penalty of £1,000 if the case goes to court and £2,500 for drivers of vans, lorries, buses and coaches.

The report therefore proposed that the policy was amended to reflect these changes. It was also proposed that the policy incorporated the following guiding principles to further ensure the safety of staff and protect the Authority against potential liability claims:-

- the use of Council hand held mobile phones whilst driving at work be prohibited at all times;
- the use of personal hand held mobile phones whilst driving at work be prohibited;
- employees who choose to use hands free mobile phones do so at their own risk;
- hand held mobile phones could only be used once the driver had stopped in a safe place and turned off the engine;
- if calling a mobile phone, always check that the other person was not driving, hand held mobile phones must be switched to silent and all calls diverted to voicemail or turned off; and
- when driving, hand held mobile phones must be switched to silent and all calls diverted to voicemail or turned off.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

8. HR REVIEW UPDATE

Mr. D. Winstanley, Assistant Chief Executive gave a verbal report which updated Members on the progress made on the HR Review.

Members were reminded that the review was expected to be fully implemented by April, 2008. Despite some progress being made against the implementation plan, the high volume of work created by the Pay and Grading Review had significantly stretched resources within the Human Resources department.

It was agreed that the update be noted.

(The meeting started at 3.00 p.m. and finished at 3.55 p.m.)