

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 14 DECEMBER 2006

REPORT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

7. FLEXIBLE WORKING SCHEME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: NONE

'D' RECOMMENDATION: that the Flexible Working Scheme be approved for adoption.

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1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To introduce a scheme which enables a more flexible, modern and family friendly approach to working meeting both the needs of the organisation and those of it's staff.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation

3.0 Background

3.1 The flexible working group have been meeting for several months and one of the items they have been tasked with is the production of several policies within the flexible working remit, these are:

- Homeworking
- Remote working
- Extending the flexi time scheme

The group has initiated a number of pilots, some of which are more advanced than others. These now need to be concluded and opened up to all services as soon as possible.

#### 4.0 Report

- 4.1 HR and UNISON have worked jointly to produce a draft flexible working scheme, this is attached as Appendix 'A7' (pages 7.4 – 7.62). It is a detailed document, providing a variety of options, with associated guidance. It also provides clear rights and responsibilities for both staff and managers.
- 4.2 The pilot has enabled those services involved to identify the benefits of the flexible working scheme, in respect of improving efficiency (e.g. reducing overtime costs in the Revenue Team) and improving access for the public to our services in that the reduction/removal of core time has matched peak times in contact.
- 4.3 Once HR Committee have confirmed that this scheme can be adopted by the Council, briefing will commence in January 2007 briefing managers so that scheme can be implemented across the organisation.

#### 5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 As already mentioned this scheme has been produced jointly with HR and Unison and both parties are keen to implement the scheme adopted and in use across the Council. Unison requested that this document was considered by the LJP and it was agreed on 29<sup>th</sup> November. We are therefore presenting this as an agreed report.

#### 6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The proposed scheme will comply with the Council's duty as an employer under employment legislation and provides guidance on it's health and safety obligations.

#### 7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The scheme addresses the need for managers to assess the financial viability of implementing the various options available. However, there is an issue concerning the cost of IT and this is being addressed through a PID.
- 7.2 The pilot has identified a reduction in overtime costs as a result of flexible working.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

8.1 The scheme is required to support a culture that values work life balance, that challenges outmoded working practices and places the responsibility on staff to manage their performance and outcomes.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

9.1 Health and safety of staff working flexibly with regard to the working time regulations and appropriate working conditions.

Background Papers

None

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