



**MEETING** : LOCAL JOINT PANEL  
**VENUE** : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD  
**DATE** : TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2011  
**TIME** : 2.30 PM

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

**EMPLOYER'S SIDE:**

Councillors M Wood (Chairman), M R Alexander, A P Jackson and S Rutland-Barsby

*Substitutes:*

**Conservative**

L O Haysey and J O Ranger

**STAFF SIDE - UNISON**

Mr C Clowes, Mrs B Dodkins, Mrs J Sharp and Mr A Stevenson

*(Substitutes: Ms F Brown and Mrs Hazel Izod )*

*(Note: Substitution arrangements must be notified by the absent Member to Democratic Services 24 hours before the meeting)*

**CONTACT OFFICER: LORRAINE BLACKBURN  
01279 502172**

## PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

1. A Member with a personal interest in any business of the Council who attends a meeting of the Authority at which the business is considered must, with certain specified exemptions (see section 5 below), disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest prior to the commencement of it being considered or when the interest becomes apparent.
2. Members should decide whether or not they have a personal interest in any matter under discussion at a meeting. If a Member decides they have a personal interest then they must also consider whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.
3. A personal interest is either an interest, as prescribed, that you must register under relevant regulations or it is an interest that is not registrable but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of the Council more than it would affect the majority of inhabitants of the ward(s) affected by the decision.
4. Members with personal interests, having declared the nature of that personal interest, can remain in the meeting, speak and vote on the matter unless the personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.
5. An exemption to declaring a personal interest applies when the interest arises solely from a Member's membership of or position of general control or management on:
  - any other body to which they have been appointed or nominated by the authority
  - any other body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g another local authority)

In these exceptional cases, provided a Member does not have a prejudicial interest, they only need to declare their interest if they speak. If a Member does not want to speak to the meeting, they may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.

6. A personal interest will also be a prejudicial interest in a matter if all of the following conditions are met:
  - the matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decisions
  - the matter affects your financial interests or relates to a licensing or regulatory matter
  - a member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.
  
7. Exempt categories of decisions are:
  - setting council tax
  - any ceremonial honour given to Members
  - an allowance, payment or indemnity for Members
  - statutory sick pay
  - school meals or school transport and travelling expenses: if you are a parent or guardian of a child in full-time education or you are a parent governor, unless it relates particularly to the school your child attends
  - housing; if you hold a tenancy or lease with the Council, as long as the matter does not relate to your particular tenancy or lease.
  
8. If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must declare that interest and its nature as soon as the interest becomes apparent to you.
  
9. If you have declared a personal and prejudicial interest, you must leave the room, unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose. However, you must immediately leave the room once you have finished or when the meeting decides that you have finished (if that is earlier). You cannot remain in the public gallery to observe proceedings.

## AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Chairman's Announcements

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 12)

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2011

4. Safety Committee: Minutes (Pages 13 - 18)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2011

5. Reports by Secretary to the Employer's Side

(A) Secondment Policy (Pages 19 - 36)

(B) Probation Policy (Pages 37 - 50)

6. Declarations of Interest

To receive any member's Declarations of Interest and Party Whip arrangements.

7. Urgent Business

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LOCAL JOINT PANEL HELD IN THE  
WAYTEMORE ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES,  
THE CAUSEWAY, BISHOP'S STORTFORD  
ON WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY 2011, AT  
2.00 PM

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PRESENT:      **Employer's Side**

Councillor M Wood  
Councillors S Rutland-Barsby, L O Haysey  
and J O Ranger

**Staff Side (UNISON)**

B Dodkins, Mrs J Sharp and Mr A Stevenson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Emma Freeman	- Head of People and Organisational Services
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services

14      **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Chris Clowes and Councillors M R Alexander and A P Jackson. It was noted that Councillors L O Haysey and J O Ranger were substituting for Councillors A P Jackson and Councillor M R Alexander respectively. It was also noted that Paul Stevens was substituting for Chris Clowes.

15      **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, welcomed back Emma Freeman and congratulated her on the birth of her daughter.

16 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17 SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2010 be received.

18 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

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The Secretary to the Staff Side submitted detailed comments in response to the Budget Proposals and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2011/12 to 2014/15. The Director of Internal Services on behalf of the Secretary to the Employer's Side, submitted his response to those comments.

The Staff Side expressed concern that the MTFP report was confusing and was difficult to understand and track what was going on in terms of staffing implications. She commented on the sometimes conflicting figures which had been made available on the intranet and of the overuse of jargon and the differing estimates contained in related papers which made it difficult for a lay person to understand. The Staff Side said that it was good news that the Council was saving so much money which was in the main as a result of the refuse contract with Veolia.

The Staff Side Secretary queried whether the contractors could fulfil all their contractual obligations to achieve the savings and queried whether staff would be paid minimum wage. She stated that the absence of benchmarking had made it impossible to compare tenders. The Director of Internal Services gave assurances that the tender process had been competitive. Councillor Rutland-Barsby stated that she had played a role in evaluating tenders and the tender

had not been awarded to the cheapest tenderer as there was a quality objective to be achieved.

#### Reserves:

The Staff Side referred to the substantial level of reserves the Council had and that the Council should draw on that level of reserves to make savings. The Director of Internal Services sought clarification on the reference to “specialist advisor” mentioned by the Staff Side. The Staff Side clarified this statement. The Director concurred that the budget papers and the process was complicated but that Members and Staff had had an opportunity to ask questions about the process and proposals since the process had begun in July 2010. Information had also been made available on the Council’s website and the process had been submitted to scrutiny for comment.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that the Council had healthy reserves and that more were being put into earmarked reserves which had been supported by Audit Committee. He explained the variances within the reports and refuted the suggestion put forward by UNISON that the budget was “smoke and mirrors”. In terms of typographical errors, the Director referred to the difficulty in co-ordinating six separate reports at a time.

#### Outturn:

The Staff Side referred to a number of variances within the report and the projected overspend which had later turned out to be a large underspend (e.g. the refuse contract). The Director of Internal Services confirmed that the £82,000 net positive variance was correct. He provided updates in relation to budget monitoring and on the latest estimates.

The Staff Side referred to the impact of cuts on back office functions as well as front line functions and services and referred to home workers’ heavy reliance on the services of IT staff.

#### Redundancies:

The Staff Side referred to a comment by the Director of Internal Services confirming that there would be compulsory redundancies. The Staff Side suggested that the £400,000 earmarked for this in this financial year would be insufficient and would not cover costs. The Staff Side stated that the list did not mention redundancy costs and queried how the level of savings would be achieved. She stressed that savings should be achieved via natural wastage, voluntary redundancies, early and voluntary retirement.

The Staff Side expressed concern about redundancies and the low morale of staff and of the fact that disillusioned staff would leave when the job market improved. The Staff Side referred to the fact that a number of senior managers had been made redundant and the impact on pensions going back to 2004.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that there had been two redundancies last year which had been driven by necessity when the process started around savings and there were issues where efficiency savings could be made. He stated that the Council did not start out with a target in mind to create a level of redundancies and would always endeavour to reduce costs without recourse to redundancies. It was anticipated that within the next four years there would be redundancies and it was hoped that compulsory redundancies could be minimised.

Councillor J O Ranger stated that he would not want to see redundancies and would prefer other ways to reduce costs such as reducing working hours. Councillor Ranger referred to the CV (Curriculum Vitae) "Bank" whereby individuals could register their CV which would also be viewed by the 300 companies in the private sector.

The Staff Side referred to Strategic Direction and that some staff were keen to take voluntary redundancy but this was not supported by Human Resources. The Director confirmed that there were robust processes in situ and of the need for the Council to manage what staff it did not want to lose.



The Director of Internal Services acknowledged the fact that Senior Managers were aware of the low morale and that this would be addressed via a number of staff briefings which would consider the issue of the culture of the Council and behaviours between colleagues and the public.

The Staff Side stated that a worker earning between £8,000 - £9,000 a year and had the threat of losing an income, would not be able to remain motivated. The Director suggested that it was about adopting either a positive or negative attitude. The Staff Side stressed that the issue was about uncertainty of the future and that the process of managing staff expectations and uncertainty was not helped when particular roles were highlighted in the budget to disappear.

The Director of Internal Services explained that where any posts were considered at risk then meetings would first have been held with those individuals. He explained the process of consultation. The Head of People and Organisational Services stated that there would always be uncertainty until the formal consultation process had been reached.

UNISON felt that residents and staff needed to be protected and recommended that the levels of savings suggested be delayed for a financial year. At that point the C3W process would have taken place and from then, it would be possible to establish what natural wastage had occurred and so avoid compulsory redundancies.

#### Strategic Direction:

The Staff Side were concerned about the cuts projected for this section and the impact this would have on individuals. From the new structure there would be one redundancy and possibly three others. UNISON was aware of the large reduction in formula grants and of the need to work co-operatively. The Staff Side stressed that change needed to be managed well.

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that processes were being followed and that the Chief Executive would be preparing proposals. The Director confirmed that senior

managers would not be exempted from the proposals.

#### Partnership Working:

UNISON supported a partnership approach to working but not if this was detrimental to service provision.

#### Member Allowances:

The Staff Side considered the suggestion of a pay increase to Members to be insensitive at this juncture especially as staff would have to endure a pay freeze for the next 2/3 years. The Director of Internal Services stated that there were no proposals to increase Members' Allowances but that he could not predict what the Independent Review Panel might suggest.

#### Training Budget:

The Director of Internal Services confirmed that there would be a reduction in the training budget. In response to a query by Councillor J O Ranger, the Director confirmed that on average, the Council spent £200 per employee on training which was well above the average for other Councils.

#### Grant Reduction:

The Director of Internal Services explained that there had been a 16.2% reduction in Government Grant and that investment income was £850,000 below budget. In terms of the suggestion of "over-taxed residents" the Director explained that of the 201 Councils, East Herts was the 89<sup>th</sup> cheapest in Council Tax Band "D" and were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile of the lowest increases. Councillor J O Ranger referred to the fact the Scrutiny had recommended to the Executive that Council Tax be frozen for two years.

The Staff Side referred to the lack of engagement with the community about the provision of services. He referred to the fact that the Government was promoting "localism" but were not following through and that it was up to local councillors to make a case to protect services and to find out from the

community which services they wished to support. Councillor J O Ranger stated that there was little change to the services residents already received and that no vital services were being cut. The Director of Internal Services confirmed that there had been consultation and that the public were happy to see savings and had even suggested a reduction in Police Community Support Officers.

The Director of Internal Services felt that the suggestion to use reserves as recommended by UNISON were not savings. As a way forward, it was suggested that UNISON's comments and the Council's response be referred to the Executive for their consideration.

The Panel supported this approach.

RESOLVED – that UNISON's comments on the budget and the Director of Internal Services' response be referred to the Executive.

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm

Chairman .....
Date .....

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD IN ROOM  
1.11, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON  
THURSDAY 13 JANUARY 2011, AT 4.00  
PM

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PRESENT: Simon Drinkwater (Chairman).  
Peter Dickinson, Helen Farrell, Jenny  
Francis, Chris Gibson, Peter Mannings,  
Graham Mully and Barbara Sylvia.

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Roy  
Crow, Sue Gray, Paul Thomas and Steve Whinnett.

21 MINUTES - 7 OCTOBER 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2010 were  
agreed as a correct record.

22 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY REVIEW / UPDATES

Peter Dickinson reminded the Safety Committee that the  
policy had been completed. He stated that he had  
produced a Health and Safety Policy handbook, which  
was a shortened version of the policy.

The handbook would be uploaded to the intranet by the  
end of January, along with links to the relevant sections of  
the policy. Graham Mully commented that the handbook  
would also be made available to new starters.

Peter Dickinson stated that a test page for the intranet  
was being worked on by the web team, in respect of  
actions that should be taken in respect of first aid and fire.  
Officers would continue to improve and streamline the  
information available in respect of Health and Safety.

Peter Dickinson advised that progress on risk  
assessments had slowed and many risk assessments

were now due for review. Graham Mully undertook to send an e-mail to Heads of Service on this issue.

In respect of risk assessments for the use of the Exec area during the C3W works, Graham Mully stated that meetings should take place between Paragon and Officers to address this requirement.

Peter Dickinson referred to the issue accommodating Officers with special arrangements in terms of desk adjustments and special office chairs. He undertook to liaise with Martin Shrosbree and Paragon as soon as possible. He also stated that he would meet with Paragon to discuss Health and Safety rules.

Simon Drinkwater stressed that Officers would only be responsible for packing their work up ready for Office moves, Paragon would be responsible for moving things between the Offices or within Wallfields. Peter Dickinson stressed the importance of appropriate manual handling and the proper disposal of rubbish.

Simon Drinkwater stated that lift access to the top floor of Wallfields could be an issue. The contractors had been sent a list of evening meetings of the Authority as well as a list of planned training events. He referred to the staging area of 36 desks planned for the Executive area and stressed that some Officers could choose to work from the Causeway Offices rather than hot desking at Wallfields.

In relation to fire drills, Peter Dickinson reported that a live fire drill had occurred at Buntingford Depot and the evacuation had gone smoothly. He advised that fire marshal training had been booked for the 28 January 2011.

## 23 INCIDENT AT HARTHAM POOL

The Safety Committee was advised that following the incident at Hartham Pool, procedures for the storage of

chemicals had been reviewed and changes had been made to ensure chemicals were not stored in unbanded locations. The public using the pool had been evacuated quickly and this evacuation had gone smoothly.

The incident had largely come about due to the lack of a proper risk assessment. The liability for East Herts Council centred on contract monitoring. The Authority must be able to demonstrate that the issue had been discussed at a corporate level.

Peter Dickinson stressed that all paperwork in relation to safety procedures must be readily available for inspection by the Health and Safety Executive. Graham Mully stated that many of these issues would be picked up as part of the audit process.

#### 24 SAFETY VOLUNTEERS

Peter Dickinson reported that he was still seeking volunteers for all aspects of safety training for Officers.

#### 25 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTS

Peter Dickinson advised that there had been 3 non reportable accidents involving Officers between 8 October 2010 and 31 December 2010. He reported that the first incident involved an employee bumping their head on a cupboard door, the second incident had involved an employee's hand being trapped in a door. The final incident was an employee slipping on ice. There had been no reportable incidents.

Peter Dickinson stated that the Authority had tightened up on the reporting of accidents when Officers were working from home.

#### 26 ITEMS FROM TRADE UNION

Although there were no items from the Trade Union, Graham Mully commented on whether there had been

any recent Office inspections conducted by Peter Dickinson in company with union representatives.

Peter Dickinson advised that a walk round inspection had not happened for some time. He stressed that Unison had a right to request such inspections. He also stated that when works commenced at Wallfields, this could be a good time for regular Office Inspections.

Jenny Francis undertook to raise this issue at the next Union Executive meeting.

## 27 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Graham Mully advised that the Cautionary Persons' Register had been reported to Human Resources Committee where the register had been approved. He stated that minor amendments had been made in respect of the sharing of information.

Graham Mully referred to case law around who the Authority could and could not share data with in respect of the register. He commented that an item would be included in the next issue of team brief. Peter Dickinson stressed that people should only be included on the register for the right reasons.

The Safety Committee was advised that lone working was the sole outstanding item on the Health and Safety Action Plan. Peter Dickinson advised that risk assessments were up to date. He referred to inconsistencies between the two land management systems used by the Authority.

The Safety Committee conducted a ballot to randomly select home workers to receive a visit from Officers to cover work station risk assessments and the home working policy.

Peter Dickinson raised another Officer's concerns in relation to vehicles parking on the footpath outside Wallfields. He emphasised the importance of segregating



pedestrians from vehicles. The obstruction of an exit was forcing pedestrians to walk on the road.

28 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 24 March 2011 in Room 27, Wallfields, Hertford at 2.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 4.50 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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## EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL JOINT PANEL – 15 MARCH 2011

REPORT BY HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

## SECONDMENT POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED:     *None*

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### **Purpose/Summary of Report**

To approve the Secondment Policy.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION FOR :</u></b>	
<b>(A)</b>	<b>To approve the amendments to the Secondment Policy.</b>

### 1.0     Background

1.1     The secondment policy was last update in 2008.

### 2.0     Report

2.1     A review of the secondment process was completed in November 2010 to establish the effectiveness of the current policy.

2.2     The investigation found that due to the increase in secondments the policy needed to be updated to make it fit for purpose,

2.3     Issues that arose included:

- The length of time a member of staff could have between each secondment opportunity.
- A reduction of paperwork.
- Signing off of annual leave
- A process for dealing with performance issues.

2.3     Successful secondment depends on clear criteria, and agreement

between the managers and employees involved.

2.4 The policy has been amended, all amendment are shown in red.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper 'A'.

Background Papers: Collective agreement – Essential Reference Paper B

Contact Officer: Emma Freeman – Head of People and Organisational Services – Ext 1635

Report Author: Helen Farrell – Human Resources Officer

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives ( <i>delete as appropriate</i> ):	<b>Fit for purpose, services fit for you</b> <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i>
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place with Unison and SMG. Once approved, the revised policy will go to Local Joint Panel and HR Committee.
Legal:	None
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	As detailed in the report.
Risk Management:	None

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# **East Herts Council**

## **Secondment**

## **Policy Statement**

### **Policy Statement No 19 (Issue No 1)**

**February 2011**

## **Contents**

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## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The Council's Secondment Policy has been established to demonstrate our commitment to the development of all of our employees, both for their current roles and for the changes and challenges of the future, both individually and organisationally. Secondments can be advantageous to the employer and the employee. This policy provides the framework within which secondments will operate at East Herts Council.
- 1.2 The Secondment scheme will work in conjunction with other learning and development initiatives within the Council to offer internal and/or external opportunities for individuals to take up different posts for a specific period of time in order to provide temporary cover, i.e for maternity leave in another service.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to the principles of being a recognised Investor in People and seeks to consistently improve the development standards and opportunities for all employees in line with these principles.

## **2.0 What is a Secondment?**

- 2.1 Secondment is defined as the temporary transfer of an employee to another part of the same organisation or to a different organisation for a set period of time, which is agreed between both parties. Various secondment options need to be considered, i.e part time, job share cover, whilst considering the needs of the service.
- 2.2 A Secondment must be viewed flexibly, such as no barriers to a part time secondment (less than 37 hours), which could be either as part of a full time substantive post, or a part time secondment in its own right. The main criteria being that it meets the learning needs and circumstances of the employee as well as those of the Council.

## **3.0 Secondment versus Acting Up**

- 3.1 Generally both arrangements offer manager's the flexibility to make short term changes to their team either to cover a vacancy before a post is advertised permanently or to cover the absence

of the post holder e.g. sickness, maternity, secondment or sabbatical (see also 4.3 below).

- 3.2 Staff have the opportunity to experience new areas of work; develop their skills and abilities and usually, depending on why they are accepting such an arrangement, to earn more for a limited period.
- 3.3 The length of such arrangements may vary but would be unlikely to last for more than 1 Year.

### 3.4 **What is a Secondment?**

- 3.4.1 A secondment (at any level) is a move to a post *outside* the section/team/service area of the secondee's substantive post.
- 3.4.2 Secondments must be advertised at the evaluated rate for the job and offered at in the same way as a permanent or fixed term appointment.
- 3.4.3 Applications are acceptable from permanent and fixed term staff from within or outside the section/team/service area.

### 3.5 **What is Acting Up?**

- 3.5.1 Acting up is an arrangement where an employee temporarily covers part or all of a more senior post *within* his/her section /team/service area for a limited period.
- 3.5.2 Remuneration for Acting Up will depend upon what proportion of the post is being covered. Details on how to calculate this are set up in the Collective Agreement – Undertaking additional duties February 11.
- 3.5.3 Managers cannot use the arrangement as a mechanism to avoid paying someone the rate for the job so if it is used to back fill a post, for example a secondment, then the arrangement must be time limited to a year after which it should be reviewed on a three monthly basis to ensure it is equitable for all parties: secondee; employee acting up and manager.

## 4.0 **Principles**

- 4.1 Secondment opportunities will be available to all permanent employees who meet the eligibility criteria, in line with the organisation's commitment to Diversity and Equalities Policy.
- 4.2 Secondment opportunities should be considered when vacancies arise. If the vacancy is considered appropriate as a secondment opportunity then it will be advertised to all employees via email and on the intranet. Managers should circulate details to all staff without internet access.
- 4.3 Temporary and specific project vacancies may also be best filled through a secondment opportunity.
- 4.4 The substantive manager of anyone wishing to apply for a secondment must have given approval to the member of staff concerned **by signing the internal recruitment application being submitted.**
- 4.5 Secondments are to be encouraged and therefore the onus will be on the secondee's line Manager to provide an objective business case as to why an employee should not be permitted the opportunity of a secondment. **A minimum of 6 months between each secondment opportunity would apply.**
- 4.6 If the employee considers that they have unreasonably been denied an opportunity, they should speak to their **Head of Service.**
- 4.7 Secondments will normally be for a period of between 3 months and a year depending on circumstances. The time frame will be agreed and clearly defined in the secondment agreement. Any extension to the time frames must be discussed and agreed by both managers involved and Human Resources before the position is advertised.
- 4.8 The substantive manager can expect 4 weeks notice prior to the secondee taking up the secondment.**
- 4.9 All seconded staff will remain under the contract of employment with East Herts Council, retaining the majority of their substantive terms and conditions (except where the post to which they are seconded has a higher rate of pay and holiday entitlement); this may not include all special allowances unless relevant for the job such as, standby or other additional allowances. Continuity of employment will be protected and annual leave entitlement (where appropriate) will be adjusted accordingly for the duration of the secondment.
- 4.10 All annual leave taken during the secondment period should be signed off by the secondment manger and annual leave applied**

for outside of the secondment period should be signed off by the substantive manager.

- 4.11 PDR arrangements and development plans will be agreed with the host manager completing the PDR documentation from East Herts Council and ensuring all the relevant documentation and records are signed.

## **5.0 Types of Secondments**

### **5.1 Internal Secondment**

- 5.1.1 Within the Council a secondment will constitute one of the following:

#### **5.1.1.1 Project work**

- 5.1.1.1.1 A secondment is useful in resourcing short term projects, particularly specific projects with an expected duration of 3-12 months as this allows an individual to gain new skills and experiences whilst delivering an outcome on a project for the Council. Secondments are seen as a career development opportunity and for this reason will initially be advertised internally only at first. Should the internal recruitment not produce a suitable candidate. East Herts Council will look to other similar organisations to fill this role.

#### **5.1.1.2 Temporary cover**

- 5.1.1.2.1 A specific vacancy that exists on a temporary basis, such as maternity cover which would allow someone to move to a new role and develop skills and experience over a set period of time. These opportunities should be advertised internally and if not filled then offered through the normal Recruitment Guide and procedures that exist within the Council.

### **5.2 External Secondment**

- 5.2.1 An external secondment could constitute a secondment within another Local Government organisation (e.g. County Council,

Police and Health authorities) or to other not for profit organisations or private companies.

5.2.2 For all the parties involved, i.e. the host organisation, the employee and the seconding employer, the exposure to different work practices can be beneficial to all. However, it is essential that all three parties are clear about their obligations, responsibilities, expectations, accountabilities and performance objectives in this situation.

5.2.3 Legal Services must be involved in agreeing Secondment Agreement and advice should also be sought from Human Resources prior to formalising arrangements.

5.2.4 HR will confirm all secondments in writing to the employee, including written confirmation that where external terms are less favourable, the terms and conditions in the substantive contract will apply, for example sickness and holiday entitlement.

5.2.5 The Accountancy team will also need to be informed to ensure that appropriate recharging is established.

## **6.0 Benefits of Secondments**

6.1 Advantages are to be gained by both the Council and the employee.

### **6.2 For the Council:**

- a) Assists in improving employee motivation
- b) To cover long term sick leave, maternity leave etc
- c) Provides a viable temporary alternative to advertising and recruitment of new employees
- d) Improves working relationships across services/specialisms and with outside partnership agencies

- e) Assists in furthering organisational and personal objectives
- f) Encourages employee development
- g) Develops a multi-skilled workforce
- h) Provides a cost effective way of developing employees
- i) Demonstrates a commitment to developing all employees by actively promoting and supporting the policy
- j) Ultimately it could be of benefit to our customers
- k) Aids retention of staff, as they see development opportunities. This can be cost saving for the Council as replacing staff when they leave costs money (recent estimates have shown that the cost of losing an experienced employee can be equivalent to approximately one years salary).

### 6.3 For the Employee:

- a) Enables employees to develop and broaden their skills, knowledge and competencies
- b) Increases motivation
- c) Broadens knowledge/awareness of the District Council
- d) Develops skills and knowledge with 'on the job' work experience
- e) May assist in enabling career progression
- f) May provide a temporary alternative to redundancy

## 7.0 Recruitment Process and Responsibilities

### 7.1 Generally

- a) The host department will usually reimburse additional expenses incurred by the substantive manager as a result of the secondment.
- b) Advice must be obtained from Finance on suitable mechanisms for recouping the pay of East Herts

employees going to an external secondment or reimbursing external organisations for their employees from coming to East Herts on secondment. This will be arranged on a case by case basis depending on the length of the secondment and any other relevant factors.

## 7.2 Managers Responsibilities

- a) The host manager must ensure that HR is consulted on all potential secondment cases.
- b) The host manager must ensure that the vacancy procedure has been followed and the available post has the funding and authorisation to be recruited to.
- c) The host manager must ensure that the selection methods in the Recruitment Guide and procedures are adhered to.
- d) Host managers must provide an appropriate induction for the secondee and perform regular reviews **as set out in the probationary policy**, as well as maintaining the appraisal process with the secondee.
- e) Substantive managers considering a request from an individual seeking to be released to take up a secondment post must consider the costs of back filling the position; the resources available; the impact on the team, and objectives to be achieved. Where the budget holder for the secondee's substantive position faces the penalty of finding additional budget to cover the cost of recruiting to this position, a transfer of budget between the services might be required to offset this.
- f) If the substantive manager has any concerns that allowing a secondment will jeopardise their service provision, this must be resolved before the secondment takes place and where appropriate would form the business case for not allowing the employee to undertake the secondment opportunity. Advice can be sought on this from Human Resources if required.

- g) Substantive managers should maintain contact with the secondee during the secondment.

### **7.3 Employees/Secondees' Responsibilities**

- a) Employees wishing to apply for a secondment post must obtain agreement from their substantive manager whose signature must be on the application form. (Appendix 2)
  
- b) Individuals on secondment must consider how this learning opportunity will develop and support their personal development in line with their aims, objectives and targets established during the Performance Development Review Scheme (PDRS).

### **7.4 Human Resources Responsibility**

- 7.4.1 HR must work with managers to support the secondment policy and process.

## **8.0 Terms and Conditions**

### **8.1 Policies**

- 8.1.1 East Herts policies will apply except for external secondments.

### **8.2 Pay**

- 8.2.1 A post offered as a secondment will be offered at the grade for the post. If the grade of the seconded post is a lower graded post, the seconded employee will continue to receive the pay for his/her substantive post (in accordance with the protection afforded in redeployment situations).

### **8.3 Notice Periods**



8.3.1 The secondment agreement should stipulate an agreed notice period for all parties to notify of early termination of the secondment agreement, which should not exceed one month.

## **9.0 Health & Safety and Employers' Liability**

9.1 The host manager/organisation is responsible for all health and safety obligations for the duration of the secondment.

## **10.0 Indemnity**

10.1 The host organisation will keep East Herts and the seconded employee full indemnified against any claims which may be incurred as a result of carrying out duties for the host over the duration of an external secondment.

## **11.0 Conduct and Capability**

11.1 The host manager (internal) will deal with any concerns regarding conduct and capability **under the East Herts probationary policy, Managing Performance or any other relevant policy. The host manager must liaise with the substantive manager.** If there are any concerns about work performance in the seconded post, consideration will need to be given to reverting the employee to their previous post. The host manager must ensure that adequate training and support has been provided to the employee. For external secondments, the policies and procedures of the host organisation will prevail.

### **11.2 Code of Conduct**

11.2.1 The East Herts Code of Conduct will apply to secondments within East Herts and the code of conduct for the receiving organisation will apply to external secondments.

### 11.3 Confidential Information

- 11.3.1 Confidential information will remain the property of the host department or organisation. The secondee should be aware that breaches of confidentiality will be taken seriously by the Council.

### 12.0 Provisions for Secondee

- 12.1 Secondees should consider what they expect to achieve for the duration of the secondment post to provide clear expectations and outcomes for the position.
- 12.2 On return to their substantive post, the line manager and secondee should review the learning achieved, and as service demands allow the secondee to use some part of their new knowledge or skills gained in their secondment placement.
- 12.3 Secondees are encouraged to keep in touch with their substantive team and manager and they should receive regular information and updates from their substantive manager.

### 13.0 Provisions for a Manager

- 13.1 Where possible the manager should identify a mentor to each secondee to support their personal and career development throughout the duration of the secondment.

### 14.0 Difficulties/Problems **securing a** Secondment

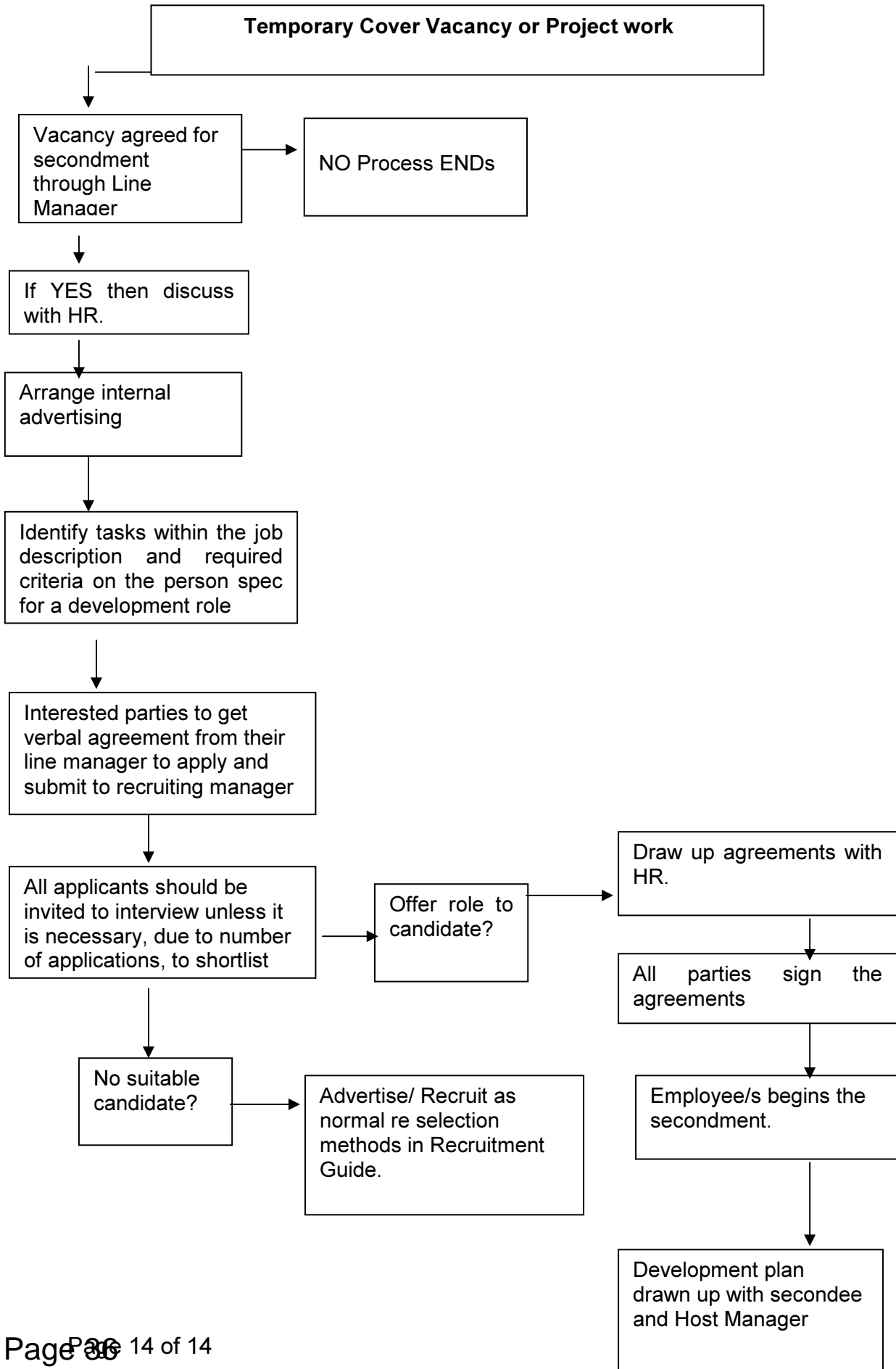
- 14.1 **Secondees** should first raise this with their **substantive** manager and consult HR for advice. Substantive or host managers should also consult HR. The aim will be resolve problems at an early stage. If employees feel that their substantive manager is unfairly refusing to support their application for a secondment position, then they may **raise the**

issue with their Head of Service and consult with Human Resources.

## **15.0 Policy Review and Amendment**

This Policy shall be reviewed after two years or sooner in line with legislation and best practice to reflect the best possible level of support and management.

## Secondment Flow Chart – Internal Secondments



## EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL JOINT PANEL – 15 MARCH 2011

REPORT BY HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

PROBATIONARY POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED:     *None*

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### **Purpose/Summary of Report**

To approve the Probationary Policy.

<b><u>RECOMMENDATION FOR :</u></b>
<b>(A)</b> <b>To approve the Probationary Policy.</b>

1.0     Background

1.1     The current contract of employment states that new members of staff are subject to a 6 months probationary period, unless they have previous local government service.

1.2     New staff with previous local government service are not required to complete a probationary period.

2.0     Report

2.1     A review of the probation process was completed in November 2010 to establish how effective the probation period was and how it was used by managers. The investigation found that different services and different managers used varying practices in regard to the probationary period. Some managers were aware of issues and were not raising them until the end of the probationary period. Other managers felt there wasn't enough support for dealing with new employees with continuous local government service.

2.2     Comparisons were made with other local Councils and it was found that some Council's had introduced a probation period for all new staff, irrespective of whether they had local government

service. This had ensured that if any issues occurred during the first six months of employment with the Council they could be dealt with effectively.

- 2.3 A new Probation Policy has been developed (Essential Reference Papers B and C) attached to the report now submitted, to introduce a six month/three month probation period for all new staff and staff on secondment and to give clear guidelines to managers and staff on the probation process.

The benefits to both the Council and the employee include:

- Uniform understanding of the probationary policy across the Council
- Clear guidance for managers and staff on the processes and expectations during the probationary period.
- Clear framework for managers and staff to deal with any issues that arise, even if the employee has previous local government experience.
- Supporting the Council's PDR process.

- 2.3 Successful probationary periods depend on clear criteria, robust assessment of service needs and good communication between managers and employees. The policy addresses these issues and aims to ensure continuity throughout the Council.

- 2.4 The policy has been devised and has been sent to SMG and UNISON for their comments. All the feedback and comments received have been taken into consideration and relevant amendments made.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

- 3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within Essential Reference Paper 'A'.

Background Papers: None

Contact Officer: Emma Freeman – Head of People and Organisational Services – 1635

Report Author: Helen Farrell – Human Resources Officer

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives ( <i>delete as appropriate</i> ):	<b>Fit for purpose, services fit for you</b> <i>Deliver customer focused services by maintaining and developing a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.</i>
Consultation:	Consultation has taken place with Unison and SMG. Once approved, the revised policy will go to Local Joint Panel and HR Committee.
Legal:	None
Financial:	None
Human Resource:	As detailed in the report.
Risk Management:	None

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# **East Herts Council**

## **Probationary Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

**Policy Statement No 41 (Issue No 1)  
February 2011**

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## **PROBATIONARY POLICY**

### **Policy Statement No 41 (Issue No 1) February 2011**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy outlines the probationary procedure for all employees commencing employment at East Herts Council including those with previous local government service.
- 1.2 The policy includes employees who are employed on a temporary, fixed term contracts, secondments (with or without continuous local government service).
- 1.3 An employee's performance, attendance and conduct will be monitored throughout the probationary period to ensure that the employee meets the required standards. The Line Manager will ensure that the member of staff is properly supported and trained to enable them to become an effective member of the team.
- 1.4 New employees will be subject to a 6 months probationary period. The probationary period would be reduced to 3 months for a secondment or fixed term contract.

#### **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Council employees except for Chief Officer level and above, where it should be used in conjunction with procedures set out in the Constitution.
- 2.2 All members of staff are subject to a probationary period and should follow the review process as a good practice guide. If a member of staff with continuous local government service has any issues arising from the reviews, these must be dealt with through the councils other policies for example managing performance, absence management or disciplinary at the earliest opportunity. The probationary period will be extended until these issues are resolved to the satisfaction of management.

#### **3.0 Principles**

- 3.1 Managers should assess the employee's capabilities, reliability and suitability for the role.

- 3.2 Employees should work to their set objectives, attend work as contracted to do so and ensure their personal conduct is acceptable at all times.
- 3.3 Appropriate training will be available to the employee, including corporate induction if new to the Council.
- 3.4 Open communication between managers and employee.
- 3.5 Human Resources will provide advice and support to managers when dealing with probation issues.
- 3.6 Employees will be able to contact Human Resources for advice.

#### **4.0 Review Timeline**

- 4.1 The initial review meeting will be held in the first week between the manager and the employee. Then regular working 1-2-1 meetings should be diarised.
- 4.2 The manager will then hold review meetings at 6 weeks, 12 weeks and 20 weeks. The outcome of these reviews should be recorded on the appropriate progress review form and sent to HR. Appendix A.
- 4.3 If the contract is a secondment or a fix term contract with review meetings would be a 3 weeks, 6 weeks and 10 weeks and recorded on the appropriate progress review form.
- 4.4 For the probationary period to be effective, it must have the active and positive involvement of both the manager and employee. This will allow any areas of concern to be raised and appropriate action to be taken before the end of the probationary period.

#### **5.0 Initial Review Meeting**

- 5.1 This meeting will be arranged in the employee's first week of employment as part of their induction. The purpose of this meeting is to set out the employees objectives, complete the induction check list and discuss the priorities of the Service and Council. In line with the Councils Performance Development Review Scheme the objectives must be sent to HR once finalised.

#### **6.0 Regular Review Meetings**

- 6.1 It is recommended that these meetings are booked in advance and should be held at 6, 12 and 20 weeks.
- 6.2 The manager should use the standard progress review form for each meeting and send the completed form to Human Resources signed by both the manager and employee.
- 6.3 At the review meeting the manager should consider the progress the employee has made and check the employee's performance against the set objectives. Attendance and personal conduct should also be discussed.
- 6.4 The employee should demonstrate they have been capable of undertaking the full range of their set duties and objectives.
- 6.5 Any issues identified by either party should be discussed at the review meetings. Human Resources should be informed if the probation is not going well and provide support if required.

## **7.0 Completion of Satisfactory Probation**

- 7.1 Human Resources write to the manager one month before the probation period is due to end. If the employee has satisfactorily completed the probation period the manager should sign off the probation at this point and Human Resources will write to the employee confirming their employment.

## **8.0 Unsatisfactory Probation - First Formal Review Meeting**

- 8.1 The first formal meeting will only be required if the performance is deemed as unsatisfactory and would be in addition to the set review meetings. If the employee has continuous local government service; the appropriate council policy should be implemented at this stage.
- 8.2 If the manager has identified that there are issues relating to the employee's performance, attendance or conduct these issues should be discussed with the employee at the earliest possible opportunity and a First Formal Review Meeting should be arranged.
- 8.3 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days notice, that they are required to attend a formal meeting. The employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. A reason for the meeting must be given, an outline of the issue. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a

trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting.

8.4 The formal review meeting will consider:

- The performance, conduct/behaviour or absence that is below the standard required.
- Details of management action taken to assist and support the employee to reach the required standards, including any identified training.
- The employee's response/explanation to all issues raised by the manager.

8.5 If the outcome of the meeting finds that the employee is working at a satisfactory level the manager should inform the employee no further action will be taken. This will be confirmed in writing within 5 days and a copy will be placed on the employee's personal file.

8.6 If the meeting finds the employee is not working to a satisfactory level the manager will issue a written warning within 5 days of the meeting which will include a clear set of targets for the employee to work to within a given time frame. The improvement targets should be concise and clear and giving the member of staff a realistic time scale to show improvement e.g. 1 month. The probationary period may have to be reviewed at this point to enable the employee to improve within the target deadlines set. A copy of the outcome will be placed on the employee's personal file. The written warning will be kept on the employee's file for six months.

#### **9.0 Second Formal Review Meeting – Unsatisfactory Probation**

9.1 In the event that the employee's performance has not improved within the set time period agreed a Second Formal Review Meeting should be held and chaired by the Head of Service.

9.2 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days notice, that they are required to attend a formal meeting. The employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting, which would be chaired by the Head of Service.

- 9.3 The manager should summarise to the Head of Service the position to date including details of any action taken to assist the employee to achieve their objectives and the employee should then comment on their progress since the last meeting.
- 9.4 The Head of Service should then decide if the employee has reached the required level of performance expected for their role and set objectives.
- 9.5 If it is deemed that the employee is working at the expected level, the Head of Service should send a letter within 5 working days to confirm they have now reached a satisfactory level and the written warning will remain on their personal file for 6 months.
- 9.6 If the employee is still not working at the expected level or performance diminishes the Head of Service should write to the employee within 5 working days issuing a final written warning with a clear set of targets for the employee to work to within a given time frame for improvement. The employee should also be informed that if their performance does not improve they will be dismissed from the Council.
- 9.7 Human Resources will continue to support the manager and employee and additional training and support should be investigated and implemented as appropriate.

## **10.0 Final Review Meeting**

- 10.1 If the employee's performance does not improve within the agreed timeframe a final review meeting will be arranged, chaired by the Director.
- 10.2 The manager must inform the employee, giving at least 5 working days notice, that they are required to attend a formal meeting. The employee must be informed of the date, time and location of the meeting. The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague. Human Resources will attend this meeting, which would be chaired by the Director.
- 10.3 The manager should summarise the position and explain the actions taken to support the employee in achieving their objectives. The employee should then comment on their progression.

- 10.4 The Director should decide if the employee has been able to achieve the objectives set for their post and their performance meets the required level.
- 10.5 If it is deemed that the employee has reached a satisfactory level, the Director will write to the employee to confirm they have achieved the expected level and the final warning will be remain on their personal file for 12 months.
- 10.6 If the employee hasn't reached the appropriate level of performance to meet their set objectives. The Director will dismiss the employee from the council after consultation with the Head of Human Resources. The employee will be given their contractual notice period. This will be confirmed in writing.

### **11.0 Extension to Probationary Period**

- 11.1 Only in exceptional circumstance will the probationary period be extended, unless section 2.2 applies. Good practice would state that the probationary period should only be extended up to a maximum of 12 weeks. The extension should reflect the appropriate training need or timeframe of the targets set at the formal review.
- 11.2 Extensions should only be for the purpose of dealing with performance issues, e.g. extended form training purposes.

### **12.0 Appeal**

- 12.1 All employees have the right to appeal against any formal action of this procedure in accordance with the Council's Appeals Policy.

### **13.0 Policy Review and Amendment**

- 13.1 This Policy shall be reviewed after two years or sooner in line with legislation and best practice to reflect the best possible level of support and management.



**Essential Reference Paper  
Probationary Policy**

**Probationary Review Meeting**

Name:	Post Title::			
Directorate: Service:	Start Date: End Date:			
Review Period:      6 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Final review 20 weeks <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs Development
Ability to work without supervision				
Reliability/Timekeeping				
Relations with other work colleagues				
Attendance records				
Key Objectives for the post. Managers to set SMART objectives to be achieved during probationary period				
1.	Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs Development
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
Any areas that need development before next review:				
Record of good practice/performance delivered:				
Agreed by Employee: -----Agreed by Manager: -----				
<b>To be completed for final review only</b>				
I confirm that the above person has successfully completed their probationary period. HR please send a letter confirming them in their post				
Manager signature: ----- Date: -----				

**Essential Reference Paper  
Probationary Policy**