

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LOCAL JOINT PANEL – 15 MARCH 2011

REPORT BY HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

PROBATIONARY POLICY

WARD(S) AFFECTED: *None*

Purpose/Summary of Report

To approve the Probationary Policy.

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

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

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ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'A'

Contribution to the Council's Corporate Priorities/Objectives (<i>delete as appropriate</i>):	Fit for purpose, services fit for you <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