

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Strategic Lead – People & Technology

Corporate Services Committee: 21 August 2019

Subject: Review of Supporting Employee Performance Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the review of the Supporting Employee Performance Policy and the proposed changes.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the revised Supporting Employee Performance Policy (as detailed in Appendix 2).

3. Background

3.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that all employees have the appropriate skills, knowledge, competence and aptitude to undertake their role effectively and that there is a clear procedure for managing and addressing performance issues in a reasonable and fair manner.

3.2 Since the introduction of the Supporting Employee Performance Policy, various practices have been used to support employees to improve work performance, and maintain appropriate standards. The procedure provides a structured and supportive framework to address performance issues and encourage improvement.

3.3 As a result of feedback from Trade Unions, HR practitioners, managers and employees, the review was established to create a more supportive policy. It is anticipated that this will assist in promoting a more supportive and approachable culture between management and employees when managing performance. A number of adjustments to the Supporting Employee Performance Policy have been agreed with the policy development group and these are set out in summary at section 4 and detailed in Appendix 1.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Use of the policy since its' introduction highlighted the need for additional support and the informal stage could feel less formal. To progress this, it was important to consider pro-active measures that may be relevant.

4.2 Feedback to date has focussed on the length and perceived lack of support during the process. Therefore the policy has been reviewed to include clarity

and positive language, encouraging a culture of open conversations between employees and their managers.

- 4.3 The focus groups discussed the informal stage of the process in detail and agreed that the paperwork and action plan could feel formal. As a result of this, the informal stage will remain a conversation between the manager and employee with various support options utilised during the review period to ensure that the employee has the skills and training to undertake their role effectively. The replacement of the action plan coupled with a more informal note of the meeting will deliver a less formal and more supportive approach.
- 4.4 Additional guidance on the formal stages and the action plan were thought to be required and an example action plan has been added to the policy.
- 4.5 Responding to the feedback gathered from the focus groups, the policy has been reviewed to ensure that the process is viewed as a supportive interaction between line manager and employee. In accordance with the Policy Framework, amendments have been made in discussion with Trade Union colleagues, HR and service managers, to support effective joint understanding. HR also undertook a benchmarking exercise with other council's performance policies and best practice guidance from ACAS and the CIPD to ensure consistency and learning from other practice.
- 4.6 Supporting documents such as manager guidance, invitations to meetings letters etc. will be updated to reflect the agreed changes in the policy and ensure that the tone of any correspondence sent to employees is both appropriate and in keeping with the supportive approach. Additionally, the employee supports available will be highlighted in letter templates to ensure awareness of same. This also helps to ensure that those who don't regularly access the intranet are made aware of where they can access the information.
- 4.7 It is anticipated that these changes and additions to the policy will further support the management of the process and to help align with organisational values and objectives.

5. People Implications

- 5.1 The changes/additions outlined in the report will ensure that the policy better reflects the supportive approach intended and change the perception and the style in which the policy is applied. It is critical to further embedding a culture of support but also help employees realise their potential and organisational goals.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with revision of this policy and procedure.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Application of the revised policy and practice will mitigate against any potential risks by ensuring fair and effective management and support of employees and limiting inconsistencies in practice across departments.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 A revised equalities impact assessment has been completed. This includes details of potential impact upon sex, disability, age and pregnancy/maternity. There may be an impact on sex as the majority of the workforce is female. Those with a disability could be affected if their disability has an impact on their performance. The Council has an ageing workforce so it could be that some age ranges are affected than others. Those returning from a prolonged period of absence such as those returning from maternity may need more support in their return to work so could be affected.

9. Consultation

9.1 The changes to the Supporting Employee Performance Policy were informed by feedback from Service Managers, HR and Trade Unions. The changes were discussed at focus groups on 12th December 2018 and 7th May 2019 and subsequently agreed. The convenors agreed the changes subsequent to the meeting on 18th June 2019.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report directly supports the Council's Employee Wellbeing Strategy ensuring this policy is aligned to the ethos in providing meaningful support to employees.

Victoria Rogers

Strategic Lead – People and Technology

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Person to Contact: Cher Colquhoun, HR Advisor
Church Street, Dumbarton
Tel: 01389 737681
Email: cher.colquhoun@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Table of changes
Appendix 2 – SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE
PERFORMANCE POLICY

Background Papers: EIA

Wards Affected: None

Appendix 1 – Table of Changes

Section	Changes/Additions	Rationale
Performance management	Describes the culture managers are expected to adopt	This amendment helps support a more positive culture for attendance management and expects managers to create an approachable, open and honest environment.
Pre-requisites for poor performance	Additions in the form of management responsibilities	To ensure employees know what standards are expected from the recruitment stage.
Application of Policy and Procedures	Additions in the form of what may constitute under performance and the difference between that and a conduct issue.	To help managers successfully identify under performance.
Qualifications	Describes what to do if driving is a specified duty of the job and the person loses their licence	Guidance to help managers know what action to take in different situations.
Sickness during process	Guidance on what to do if someone becomes sick during the process	This is a regular HR query so clarity provided.
Line Management	Additions in the form of what an employee does if they perceive their line manager to be ineffective.	To reduce stigma or fear of approaching senior line management with concerns and to create an approachable culture.
Informal procedure	Removal of the need to have an action plan at the informal stage Additions in the form of creating a supportive and open culture	To reduce the deemed formality of this stage of the policy. To help create a supportive and open culture
Formal procedure	Details of what should be included in an action plan.	More information about what should be included in a formal action plan.
Appendix A	Details of supports that are available	To help managers explore options for employees to help support them during the process.
Appendix B	Action Plan example	To assist managers in what should be included in an action plan.

