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To: Councillor Allan, Convener; Councillor Houghton, Vice Convener; and Councillors Cameron, Copland, Delaney, Graham, Hutchison, Macdonald and Reynolds.

Trade Union Advisers: Carole Thorpe and Ron Constable (EIS); Mike Middleton and Brenda Murdoch (GMB); Edwin Cameron and Thomas Whyte (SSTA); Kenny Luke and Alison Robertson (UNISON); Joe Craig and Mishelle Gray (UNITE); and Rob Stephen and 1 vacancy (VOICE).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 25 October 2018

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Committee Room 2 - Town House** on **THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2018 at 2.00 pm.**

FRASER BELL
CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

BUSINESS

DETERMINATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1.1 There are no items at this time

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2.1 There are no items of exempt business

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Members are requested to declare any interests (Pages 5 - 6)

REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATION

4.1 None at this time

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 Minute of Previous Meeting of 3 September 2018 (Pages 7 - 12)

COMMITTEE PLANNER

6.1 Committee Business Planner (Pages 13 - 16)

NOTICES OF MOTION

7.1 None at this time

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

8.1 None at this time

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 There are no items under this heading

STAFF GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

10.1 There are no items under this heading

WORKFORCE STRATEGY

11.1 There are no items under this heading

COUNCIL POLICIES AFFECTING STAFF

12.1 Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy (Pages 17 - 40)

12.2 Staff Travel Policy (Pages 41 - 64)

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING OF STAFF

13.1 Corporate Health and Safety - July to September 2018 (Pages 65 - 74)

13.2 Introduction of a "Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (SCAVC)" Pension Arrangement (Pages 75 - 78)

ESTABLISHING AND PROMOTING VALUES FOR THE ORGANISATION

14.1 There are no items under this heading

EMPLOYEE APPEALS AND DISPUTES

15.1 There are no items under this heading

EHRIA's related to reports on this agenda can be viewed at
[Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments](#)

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Agenda Item 3.1

You must consider at the earliest stage possible whether you have an interest to declare in relation to any matter which is to be considered. You should consider whether reports for meetings raise any issue of declaration of interest. Your declaration of interest must be made under the standing item on the agenda, however if you do identify the need for a declaration of interest only when a particular matter is being discussed then you must declare the interest as soon as you realise it is necessary. The following wording may be helpful for you in making your declaration.

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons

For example, I know the applicant / I am a member of the Board of X / I am employed by...
and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

OR

I have considered whether I require to declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons however, having applied the objective test, I consider that my interest is so remote / insignificant that it does not require me to remove myself from consideration of the item.

OR

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons however I consider that a specific exclusion applies as my interest is as a member of xxxx, which is

- (a) a devolved public body as defined in Schedule 3 to the Act;
- (b) a public body established by enactment or in pursuance of statutory powers or by the authority of statute or a statutory scheme;
- (c) a body with whom there is in force an agreement which has been made in pursuance of Section 19 of the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990 by Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise for the discharge by that body of any of the functions of Scottish Enterprise or, as the case may be, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; or
- (d) a body being a company:-
 - i. established wholly or mainly for the purpose of providing services to the Councillor's local authority; and
 - ii. which has entered into a contractual arrangement with that local authority for the supply of goods and/or services to that local authority.

OR

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons.....and although the body is covered by a specific exclusion, the matter before the Committee is one that is quasi-judicial / regulatory in nature where the body I am a member of:

- is applying for a licence, a consent or an approval
- is making an objection or representation
- has a material interest concerning a licence consent or approval
- is the subject of a statutory order of a regulatory nature made or proposed to be made by the local authority.... and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

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STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 3 September 2018. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Allan, Convener; Councillor Houghton, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Cameron, Copland, Delaney, Graham, Henrickson (as substitute for Councillor Hutchison), Macdonald and Reynolds.

Trade Union Advisors present:- Mike Middleton, GMB; Edwin Cameron and Thomas Whyte, SSTA; Kenny Luke and Alison Robertson, UNISON; Joe Craig and Fiona Sales, UNITE.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be viewed [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. Members were requested to intimate any declarations of interest in respect of the items on today's agenda, thereafter the following declarations of interest were intimated at this stage in the meeting:-

- (i) The Convener and Councillor Macdonald declared an interest in all items on the agenda by virtue of their membership of Unite the Union, but neither felt it necessary to leave during consideration of any items of business.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 29 June 2018.

The Committee resolved:-
to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the committee business planner as prepared by the Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in respect of the Annual Function Health and Safety reports, to agree to remove the items from the planner, noting that proposals would be developed over the coming

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

3 September 2018

- months in consultation with Trade Unions with reports being presented to Committee in due course;
- (ii) in respect of the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy, to note that the policy would now be reported to Committee in November to allow for sufficient time to consult with Trade Unions; and
 - (iii) to otherwise note the planner.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN - TRADE UNION REQUEST - RES/18/100

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which set out a request from Unison, in terms of 1.3 of the Staff Governance Committee Terms of Reference, for the Council to explore the merit of producing an employment policy dealing with the effects of violence on women.

The report recommended:-

that Committee –

- (a) note the request from Unison for the Council to explore the merit of producing an employment policy dealing with the effects of violence against women and;
- (b) instructs the Interim Chief Officer – People and Organisation to consider the request, and report back to the Staff Governance Committee by March 2019 on whether such a policy is required; and if so, produce a draft document for consideration.

The Convener proposed that a wider review in respect of violence in the workplace be considered and the Trade Unions expressed support for this.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

RETENTION OF IIP GOLD ACCREDITATION - PEOPLE AND ORGANISATION - RES/18/144

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which had been prepared to advise Committee of the retention of the Investors in People Gold accreditation in People and Organisation.

The report recommended:-

that Committee –

- (a) notes the retention of Investors in People Gold accreditation in People and Organisation; and
- (b) instructs the Interim Chief Officer – People and Organisation to proceed to assess the content of the feedback report from Investors in People and continue the process of action planning for further improvements.

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

3 September 2018

The Committee heard from the Director of Resources that workstreams were also underway across the Council in respect of several accredited awards.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to congratulate the staff in People and Organisation on the retention of the accreditation; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY - GOV/18/064

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Governance, which provided a reviewed Corporate Health and Safety Policy Improvement Plan for consideration by Committee, which set out how and by whom health and safety would be managed throughout the Council.

The report recommended:-

that Committee –

- (a) approve the proposed Corporate Health and Safety Policy; and
- (b) agree that compliance be monitored via health and safety performance reports to Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers amend the structure chart at 3.11 (page 47) of the report to clarify the reporting arrangements for the Corporate Health and Safety Lead, the Health and Safety Representatives and the Employees; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - GOV/18/068

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Governance which set out the principles upon which the Corporate Health and Safety Improvement Plan would be based. The report advised that the proposed Corporate Health and Safety Improvement Plan 2019/2020 would be implemented from 1 April 2019.

The report recommended:-

that Committee endorse the proposed principles for the organisation's Corporate Health and Safety Improvement Plan.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

3 September 2018

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY REPORT - APRIL - JUNE 2018 - GOV/18/065

8. With reference to article 7 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Governance which summarised the statistical health and safety performance information for the three month reporting period April to June 2018, to enable the Committee to monitor the Council’s compliance with health and safety legislation.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within the report; and
- (b) scrutinise and review health, safety and wellbeing policy, performance, trends and improvements.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE QUARTERLY REPORT - APRIL - JUNE 2018 - GOV/18/066

9. With reference to article 8 of the minute of its meeting of 4 May 2018, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Governance which provided an update on the utilisation of the Employee Assistance Service provided by Time for Talking during the 3 month period for April to June 2018.

The report recommended that Committee consider the contents of the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers periodically raise awareness about the Employee Assistance Service;
- (ii) to agree that future reports on the Employee Assistance Service would be provided every six months, to ensure that staff could not be identified by low numbers included in the reports; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the report.

OHP QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL - JUNE 2018 - GOV/18/067

10. With reference to article 9 of the minute of its previous meeting, the Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Governance which provided an update on the Council-wide utilisation of the Occupational Health Service contract provided by OH Assist during the 3 month period for April to June 2018.

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The report recommended that the Committee note the content of the report.

The Committee resolved:-

(i) to note the report.

- **COUNCILLOR YVONNE ALLAN, Convener**

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
3 September 2018

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER The Business Planner details the reports which have been instructed by the Committee as well as reports which the Functions expect to be submitting for the calendar year.								
2	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
3	01 November 2018								
4	Health and Safety Quarterly Report	To present the quarterly health and safety report - for June to September 2018	On agenda	Colin Leaver	Governance	Governance	5.2		
5	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing / Revised Absence Management Policy	To seek approval of a new policy to replace the Maximising Attendance policy.	On agenda	Keith Tennant	People and Organisation	Resources	4.1	D	Was delayed from September to allow sufficient time to consult with the Trade Unions, particularly the teaching Trade Unions as a result of the school summer holidays
6	Introduction of a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (SCAVC) pension arrangement	The report is to provide detail and seek approval for the Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution pension arrangement.	On agenda	Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	5.3		
7	Staff Travel Policy	To present the revised staff travel policy for comment prior to presentation to City Growth & Resources Committee for approval	On agenda	Carol Smith	Finance	Resources	4.1		
8	Revised Behavioural Framework	The report will either report progress towards a revised behavioural framework for the organisation or will present the framework itself		Dorothy Morrison/ Martin Wyllie	People and Organisation	Resources	6.1	D	Delayed to January 2019, to allow the new Chief Officer - Organisational Development to overview the work being done on culture and behaviours before it is signed off by Committee
9	Occupational Health Quarterly Report	To present the quarterly occupational health report.		Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	5.2	D	Delayed to January 2019, as the next report from the supplier is due at the end of October and so information is not available to be presented to the November meeting

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2									
10	Mental Health Action Plan	SGC 29/06/18 - To note the request to produce a mental health action plan based on robust evidence-based data and to instruct the Interim Chief Officer - People and Organisation to gather relevant data and present this to the meeting of the Staff Governance Committee on 1 November 2018 together with any necessary action plan.		Keith Tennant	People and Organisation	Resources	1.3	D	The Council's Corporate Management Team wish to have oversight of the report and action plan, therefore the report will now be submitted to the Committee on 31 January 2019.
11	Risk Register (People and Organisation)	To present the risk register		Morven Spalding	People and Organisation	Resources	GD 7.4	D	This will be submitted to in January to allow the Chief Officer – Organisational Development and Director of Resources to review the current risk register.
12	Recruitment and Retention of Lorry Drivers	ODC 29/05/18 - To request that a report be brought to the Staff Governance Committee, to investigate what initiatives could be used to recruit and retain lorry drivers		Pam Walker	Operations and Protective Services	Operations	Purpose 5	R	Officers have proposed that this would be best fulfilled by a Service Update (which has been circulated to Members) as there are no recommendations for approval by the Staff Governance Committee. It is therefore recommended for removal.
13			31 January 2019						
14	Absence Update	To update Committee on absence rates for ACC		Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	5.3		
15	Employee Assistance Scheme Six Monthly Report	To present the employee assistance scheme six monthly report		Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	5.2		
16			18 March 2019						
17	Health and Safety Quarterly Report	To present the quarterly health and safety report - will include Record of Health & Wellbeing Events as appendix		Colin Leaver	Governance	Governance	5.2		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2									
18	Equal Pay Audit	SGC 04/05/18 - To request that following the equal pay audit report having been considered by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee that a copy of the report be submitted to a meeting of this Committee for information		Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	6		
19	Violence in the Workplace Policy	SGC 03/09/18 - to instruct the Interim Chief Officer - People and Organisation to consider the request from Unison to explore the merit of producing an employment policy dealing with the effects of violence against women and to report back to the Committee by March 2019 on whether such a policy was required		Keith Tennant	People and Organisation	Resources	1.3		
20	Occupational Health Quarterly Report	To present the quarterly occupational health report.		Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	5.2		
21			April 2019 Onwards						
22	Annual Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report for the Committee.	To be reported May 2019	Stephanie Dunsmuir	Governance	Governance	GD 7.4		
23	Employee Assistance Scheme Annual Report	To present the annual Employee Assistance Programme Annual report	To be reported May 2019	Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	5.2		
24	Employee Assistance Scheme Six Monthly Report	To present the employee assistance scheme six monthly report	To be reported May 2019	Neil Yacamini	People and Organisation	Resources	5.2		

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	1 November 2018
REPORT TITLE	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy
REPORT NUMBER	RES/18/191
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Morven Spalding
REPORT AUTHOR	Keith Tennant
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Purpose of Committee 5 Remit of Committee 3.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the attached Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy to replace the existing Maximising Attendance policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 approves the attached Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy to replace the existing Maximising Attendance policy; to take effect from 1 January 2019, to allow for necessary training and other administrative arrangements to be completed.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current Maximising Attendance policy was put in place in 2010 and was revised in 2014 and was therefore due a further review under the rolling programme of HR policy reviews.
- 3.2 A key aim of the new policy will be to contribute towards reducing sickness absence levels in the Council. One of the Council's statutory performance indicators (SPIs) relates to sickness absence, measured as average days lost per employee.
- 3.3 The Council's overall figure for 2016/17 was 10.3 average days lost per employee and for 2017/18 was 9.9 average days lost per employee; a reduction of 0.4 average days lost per employee over the two years.

- 3.4 It should be noted that 46% of employees had no sickness absence in 2016/17 and 47% of employees had no sickness absence in 2017/18. The new policy should help to maintain the attendance of those employees and support other employees who may have to take time off work due to sickness absence.
- 3.5 From the review it was identified that a new policy was required going forward to meet current organisational needs, with it to be as supportive as possible towards employees. The review involved the trades unions with early discussions having taken place on the proposed features of the new policy.
- 3.6 It was highlighted that the policy put in place by the Bon Accord Companies in May 2017 was an example of good practice, with it having an emphasis on the supportive aspects of attendance management and with absence managed through one process rather than divided into short and long term.
- 3.7 It was identified that it had been operating effectively to date since its introduction and has contributed (along with other measures) to an improvement in the Bon Accord Companies' levels of sickness absence, with average days lost per employee in 2016/17 having been 13.2 days, and average days lost per employee in 2017/18 having been 10.9 days; a 2.3 day per employee reduction.
- 3.8 It was decided therefore to base the design of the Council's new policy on the Bon Accord Companies' policy with the compilation of a document to meet the Council's current needs and in accordance with the requirements of the Target Operating Model.
- 3.9 A reduction in sickness absence would likely lead to less overtime being worked, less agency usage, an increase in productivity and reduction in employment costs. This should in turn lead to the provision of better service to Council customers.
- 3.10 Appropriate training will be put in place on the new policy to help ensure that managers are familiar with its operation, so that they understand their responsibilities. This should enable them to better support employees through the process where absence occurs.
- 3.11 Administrative arrangements are currently being designed, including relevant letters and forms, and consideration given to how the new Core HR system can be utilised in the process (with the Your HR system to no longer be used). In addition, there will be a designated page on the new People and Organisation portal covering employee wellbeing and how to deal with absence.
- 3.12 To allow time for the work mentioned under 3.10 and 3.11 above to be undertaken, the implementation date of the new policy will be 1 January 2019.
- 3.13 The key differences between the existing policy and the proposed new policy are detailed below.

- 3.131 The policy and procedure will be contained in one document rather than there being separate guidance notes. This should make it easier for managers and employees to understand the policy and their responsibilities under it.
- 3.132 There will now be one process for managing both short and long-term absence, rather than separate processes for each. This should help ensure that absence is managed more efficiently, particularly in cases where there is a combination of short and longer-term absence.
- 3.133 There will be a single absence trigger level in the new policy which will be 10 days or more and/or 3 occasions of absence over any 12-month period. In the current policy there is a second trigger point of 15 days or more and/or 5 occasions of absence over a 24-month period. This change will make the policy more straightforward to administer and easier to understand.
- 3.134 There is more of an emphasis in the new policy on managers and employees working together to identify solutions in relation to an employee's absence.
- 3.135 There is also more of an emphasis on preventative measures to employee absence and looking at employee wellbeing with reference in the policy to employee good health initiatives, the Counselling Service and flexible working options.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report. The cost of officer time in implementing the policy, including the training and administrative arrangements will be met through existing budgets. Savings to overtime and agency staff costs may accrue if the new policy achieves its aim of contributing towards reductions in levels of sickness absence in the Council. Absence figures will be monitored going forward to identify the effectiveness of the new policy.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	If the new policy were not approved, then it may be the case that	N/A	The approval of the new policy will mitigate this risk.

	anticipated future reductions in sickness absence and associated savings may not accrue.		
Legal	There is no legal risk.	N/A	N/A
Employee	If the new policy were not approved, then employees would not benefit from there being in place a policy with a more supportive tone and content than the existing policy and hence improvements in employee health and wellbeing may not accrue.	N/A	The approval of the new policy will mitigate this risk.
Customer	If the new policy were not approved; which is anticipated to assist in reducing levels of sickness absence in the Council; then customers may be adversely affected with fewer employees available to provide services at any time.	N/A	The approval of the new policy will mitigate this risk.
Environment	There is no environmental risk.	N/A	N/A
Technology	There is no technological risk.	N/A	N/A
Reputational	There is no reputational risk to the Council.	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Links with the 'Prosperous Economy' theme in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan; as having as supportive and effective absence management

	policy in place will assist with employee morale, demonstrating the Council as a caring employer. Levels of morale are linked to productivity, resource efficiency and the delivery of cost effective services. As the Council plays a key role in fostering an environment where the local economy can thrive having an engaged workforce delivering cost effective services is a key requirement.
Prosperous People	N/A
Prosperous Place	N/A
Enabling Technology	N/A

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	N/A
Organisational Design	N/A
Governance	N/A
Workforce	Links to the 'Workforce' design principle in that having a policy in place that is supportive and enables the early addressing of sickness absence issues, will help ensure that the Council has an engaged workforce with high levels of attendance, contributing positively to its outcomes and service to customers. It will also assist in creating a positive culture and hence with the retention of employees.
Process Design	N/A
Technology	N/A
Partnerships and Alliances	N/A

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Full EHRIA required. No adverse equality or human rights issues were identified from the assessment.

Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Bon Accord Care Supporting Attendance and Supporting Wellbeing policies.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name Keith Tennant
Title Policy and Advice Officer
Email Address ktennant@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel 01224 - 523094



Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing

Policy

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- 7.7 **ABATEMENT OF ANNUAL LEAVE**
- 8.0 **REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Council values the contribution made by its employees and recognises that high levels of attendance at work are key to supporting the achievement of the Council's objectives and priorities. It is committed to maintaining high levels of attendance whilst ensuring that employees are treated fairly, consistently and supportively.

This policy applies to all Council employees and covers any sickness absence, regardless of the reason(s). It does not apply to any casual or agency workers.

It links to the 'Workforce' Design Principle of the Council's 'Target Operating Model', in that having a policy in place that is supportive and enables the early addressing of sickness absence issues, will help ensure that the organisation has an engaged workforce with high levels of attendance, contributing positively to its outcomes and service to customers. It will also assist in creating a positive culture and hence with the retention of employees.

The policy also accords with the 'Prosperous Economy' theme in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan; as having a supportive and effective absence management policy in place will assist with employee morale, demonstrating the Council as a caring employer. Levels of morale are linked to productivity, resource efficiency and the delivery of cost effective services. As the organisation plays a key role in fostering an environment where the local economy can thrive having an engaged workforce delivering cost effective services is a key requirement.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Senior Management

Are responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, leading strategic initiatives to reduce sickness absence and promoting a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture.

2.2 Line Managers

Are responsible for recording and monitoring absence levels and for implementing this policy fairly and consistently. Managers should recognise the individual circumstances of each case and exercise the correct balance between supporting employees and taking action, where appropriate.

2.3 Employees

Have a contractual responsibility to maintain their attendance at work and to comply with all aspects of this policy, including attending meetings and health assessments as requested. It is expected that employees will identify measures to look after their general health and wellbeing and seek medical advice, where appropriate, to maximise their attendance at work.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 REPORTING AND RECORDING SICKNESS ABSENCE

3.1.1 Notification

If an employee is unable to come to work, they must notify their line manager as soon as possible and generally within one hour of their normal start time. For employees contracted to work according to rotas and/or with early/late start times, contact should be made **prior to the start of their shift**.

An employee must contact their line manager by telephone and speak to them in person unless they are unable to do so e.g. if they are incapacitated or in hospital; in which case another person can report their absence on their behalf. Employees must speak to an alternative manager if their direct line manager is not available. It is not acceptable for an employee to advise a colleague to pass on a message. This applies to all employees, including part-time or shift workers, but excluding teachers, who are permitted to contact their school. Employees should not wait until their next scheduled work day to tell their manager about sickness absence.

3.1.2 Certification Requirements

Line managers must record every absence on the HR/Payroll system with the start date and sickness reason as soon as they are informed of an employee's absence.

For self-certified absences, i.e. those of **less than 7 calendar days**, upon return to work, the employee's absence must be closed on the HR/Payroll system.

For absences of **more than 7 calendar days**, a Fit Note is required from an employee's GP. The Fit Note must be sent by the employee to their line manager on the 8th day of absence or as soon as possible thereafter. Employees must send in copies of any subsequent Fit Notes to their line manager and these must cover the entire sickness period. Line managers must record all Fit Notes on the HR/Payroll system and follow up on missing fit notes with their employees.

Non-compliance with absence reporting or certification procedures could result in disciplinary action and employees will not normally be paid for periods of unauthorised absence.

3.2 RETURN TO WORK

3.2.1 Return to Work Discussion

On each occasion an employee returns to work following a sickness absence, their line manager must arrange to discuss that absence with them. This should usually be undertaken face to face, but can be done by telephone, with manager/employee agreement. The return to work discussion form provides guidance on carrying out the discussion and must be completed by the line manager. Return to work discussions are used to welcome and support an employee back to the workplace and should aim to do the following:

- Establish the reason for the employee's absence and ensure that they are fit to resume work
- Register concern and interest in the welfare of the employee

- Update the employee on any issues that occurred during their absence
- Ensure the employee has complied with notification and certification rules and if not, decide what action needs to be taken
- Determine if there is any need for counselling, guidance or appropriate referral for support
- Find out if there are any work-related factors affecting attendance
- Confirm the absence trigger levels and ensure that the employee understands how the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy applies to them and what may occur if there is further absence

3.2.2 Phased Return

A phased return to work (usually for a period of up to 4 weeks, unless there are exceptional circumstances) may be offered to employees who have been absent for a prolonged period of time. Teachers/SNCT employees have a separate local agreement on phased return. Each case will be considered individually. The manager should discuss temporary adjustments to duties or hours of work with the employee before they return to work and confirm their agreement in writing. Details on phased return are available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers.

3.3 MEDICAL REFERRAL

Depending on the reason given for the sickness absences, a manager may need to establish if they are related to an underlying medical condition. This is done by making a referral to the Council's occupational health service and it is important to do this prior to holding meetings at the various stages of the procedure. If an occupational health appointment has been requested, the medical report must be available to discuss at the particular meeting. If the absences do not appear to relate to an underlying medical condition, but instead are attributable to minor ailments, there will normally be no need to refer the employee to occupational health.

3.4 THE SUPPORTING ATTENDANCE PROCESS

This procedure applies in relation to managing all absences including intermittent absences and/or continuous long-term absences. At each stage the line manager must make sure that the employee is made aware of the procedure, the next steps of the process and the consequences of further absences.

Where an employee is absent from work, managers should continue to keep in touch regularly as well as holding the formal meetings required at each stage of the procedure; having both informal and formal conversations is key to a successful return to work. Following the initial notification of the absence, the **minimum** requirements for contact during a period of absence are:

1. The 4th day of the absence.
2. The 7th day of the absence and weekly contact thereafter in the first 4 weeks of the absence.

3. Thereafter, the employee and the manager must agree and maintain a regular pattern of contact, which should be recorded.

Employees are expected to maintain contact with their line manager out with the minimum timescales set out above to pass on any relevant information regarding any update on their medical situation or fitness for work.

Employees are permitted to request a manager of the same gender to consider matters under the formal stages of this procedure, and this will be granted where practical.

3.5 **RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED**

At any formal meeting in the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing procedure an employee should be given the opportunity to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague, but not a family member or a legal representative.

3.6 **ABSENCE TRIGGERS**

In order to manage absence there are trigger levels that, if met, place the employee into the formal Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing procedure. The triggers are as follows:

- **10 days or more of absence in any 12-month period**
- **3 occasions or more of absence in any 12-month period**

The formal procedure will apply if either trigger is met (i.e. number of days or number of occasions).

3.7 **PROCEDURAL STAGES**

There are 3 stages within the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing procedure. Once a trigger level is met an employee will be entered into the first formal stage of the process, Stage 1. The manager should issue a letter inviting the employee to the Stage 1 Attendance Review Meeting.

3.7.1 **STAGE 1**

Stage 1 Attendance Review Meeting

At the Stage 1 Attendance Review Meeting the manager must discuss with the employee the reason(s) for reaching the absence trigger level and agree an attendance improvement plan. The manager will set a review period during which

absence will be monitored and improvements in attendance sought. It is recommended that the review period is no longer than 12 weeks.

Stage 1 Outcome Meeting

At the end of the review period, or at an earlier date if it is evident that the improvement required will not be met, the manager and the employee will meet to discuss attendance during the Stage 1 review period.

There are three potential outcomes to Stage 1;

1. Return to Normal Monitoring

Applies where the required improvement in attendance has been achieved. It should be noted that where an employee is unable to sustain their attendance at any point in the next 12 months, the manager has the option to move the employee back into the procedure at the point at which they left i.e. the end of Stage 1.

2. Extend the review period

It may be applicable to extend the review period where annual leave or special leave has occurred during a Stage 1 review period; where medical information is not immediately available to inform a decision, or where sickness absence has improved but not enough to justify a return to normal monitoring.

3. Progression to Stage 2

Where there has been a further episode(s) of absence or the employee has failed to return to work from a continuous absence during the review period, a **caution** for unsatisfactory attendance should be issued and the employee moved to Stage 2.

3.7.2 STAGE 2

Stage 2 Attendance Review Meeting

If a decision is made to commence Stage 2, the Stage 2 Attendance Review Meeting immediately follows the Stage 1 outcome meeting. The manager must review and, if necessary, amend the attendance improvement plan and will set a review period at Stage 2 during which absence will be monitored and improvements in attendance sought. It is recommended that the review period is no longer than 12 weeks.

Stage 2 Outcome Meeting

At the end of the review period, or at an earlier date where it is evident that the

improvement required will not be met, the manager and the employee will meet to discuss attendance during the Stage 2 review period.

There are three potential outcomes to Stage 2;

1. Return to Normal Monitoring

If the required improvement in attendance has been achieved, the employee will be informed that their attendance will no longer be subject to regular review under the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing procedure. It should be noted that where an employee is unable to sustain their attendance at any point in the next 12 months, the manager has the option to move the employee back into the procedure at the point at which they left i.e. the end of Stage 2.

2. Extend the Review Period

It may be applicable to extend the review period where annual leave or special leave has occurred during a Stage 2 review period; where medical information is not immediately available to inform a decision or where sickness absence has improved but not enough to justify a return to normal monitoring.

3. Progression to Stage 3

It would be appropriate to issue a **final caution** and progress to Stage 3 of the procedure in the following circumstances;

- **No Underlying Medical Condition** - If no underlying medical condition has been identified to explain the reason that improvement in attendance has not been achieved.
- **Underlying Medical Condition** - If absence relates to an underlying medical condition, reasonable and practical adjustments have been considered and implemented (where appropriate) and the level of absence is unsustainable.
- **Continuous Absence of more than 4 weeks** - If the employee is currently absent and the medical evidence suggests that they may be unlikely to return to work within a reasonable timescale, with or without reasonable adjustments. Before progressing to Stage 3, redeployment and ill health retirement, where applicable (see section 4.0), must be investigated and ruled out as alternatives.

3.7.3 STAGE 3

Stage 3 Attendance Review Meeting

If a decision is made to commence Stage 3, the Stage 3 Attendance Review Meeting immediately follows the Stage 2 outcome meeting. The manager must review and, if necessary, amend the attendance improvement plan and will set a further period of review at Stage 3. The duration of this further review is at the manager's discretion; however, it is recommended that this is no more than 12 weeks and can be for a shorter period where the medical evidence suggests that

the employee is unlikely to be able to improve their attendance within a reasonable timescale.

At the end of the Stage 3 review period, a report will be prepared by the manager who has managed the employee's absence(s). It is important that the management report provides evidence of the contact with the employee regarding their attendance and any support provided to the employee to improve their attendance. The manager should forward the completed report to their Chief Officer, for arranging a Capability/Conduct Assessment Meeting.

The employee will be invited to a Capability/Conduct Assessment Meeting at the end of the Stage 3 review period. Where absence relates to an underlying medical condition, the manager's report will be a Capability Report and the employee will be invited to a Capability Assessment Meeting. Where absence does not relate to an underlying medical condition the manager's report will be a Conduct Report and the employee will be invited to a Conduct Assessment Meeting.

Stage 3 Capability / Conduct Assessment Meeting

The employee should be given at least 5 working days' notice of the meeting in writing and a copy of the manager's report.

The meeting will be attended by;

- The Chair of the meeting who must be an independent manager at least at Third Tier level or above (for teachers/SNCT employees the Chair will be the Director or nominee)
- The line manager who has managed the absence(s) to date
- The employee
- The employee's trade union representative or work colleague (where applicable)
- A People and Organisation Adviser

The purpose of the meeting is to consider whether the required improvement in attendance has been achieved, up to and including the Stage 3 review period and to carefully examine all options, including the likelihood of improved attendance or dismissal on the grounds of lack of capability due to ill health or misconduct due to sustained poor attendance (whichever applies).

At the meeting the employee's manager will present their report on the employee's absence, highlighting the measures taken to assist the employee to improve their attendance. The reasons for the absence levels will be discussed as well as the content of the latest medical report (where applicable). The employee will be given the opportunity to provide a full response at the meeting.

There are three potential outcomes to the Stage 3 Capability / Conduct Assessment Meeting;

1. **Return to Normal Monitoring**

Where the required improvement in attendance has been achieved during the Stage 3 review period, the employee will be informed that their attendance will no longer be subject to regular reviews under the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy. It should be noted that where an employee is unable to sustain their attendance any point in the next 12 months, the manager has the option to move the employee back into the procedure at the point at which they left i.e. a Capability/Conduct Assessment Meeting at Stage 3 of the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing procedure.

2. **Extend the Review Period**

The chair of the Capability/Conduct Assessment Meeting has the discretion to extend the review period if additional information or monitoring is required to inform a decision.

3. **Termination of Employment**

Where the Chair decides, after considering all available information, to terminate employment, if possible the employee will be informed of this at the meeting, with the decision confirmed in writing along with details of their right of appeal.

The reason for termination of employment must be clearly communicated to the employee. Where absence relates to an underlying medical condition (Capability Assessment Meeting) employment will be terminated on grounds of lack of capability due to ill health. Where absence does not relate to an underlying medical condition (Conduct Assessment Meeting) employment will be terminated on the grounds of misconduct relating to failure to fulfil contractual responsibilities due to poor attendance.

3.7.4 **APPEAL**

The employee has the right of appeal against dismissal **within 10 working days of receipt of written notification** of the decision. Any appeal must be lodged in writing, with the grounds clearly stated. A non-teaching employee can choose to have their appeal heard by a senior manager at Chief Officer level or above, who has had no prior involvement in the case, or through the Appeals Sub Committee. A teaching employee can choose to have their appeal heard by a Director, who has had no prior involvement in the case, or through the Appeals Sub Committee.

4.0 **ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT**

If an employee meets the qualifying requirements as a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and where it is appropriate for an ill-health retirement assessment to be requested this should be considered. An ill health retirement assessment is carried out by an Independent Registered Medical Practitioner through an approved occupational health service. The occupational health service will assess the employee against the ill health retirement criteria contained within

the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations and can make one of two assessments, if ill health retirement applies;

1. The employee meets the criteria for a Tier 1 ill health retirement
2. The employee meets the criteria for a Tier 2 ill health retirement

In both cases, the employee should immediately be managed in line with the guidance on ill health retirement (available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers.). Where the employee does not meet the criteria for either a Tier 1 or Tier 2 ill health retirement, a Capability Assessment Meeting will be arranged.

If the outcome of a Capability Assessment Meeting is to dismiss an employee who is currently absent, and the medical evidence suggests that they may be unlikely to return to work within a reasonable timescale, a Tier 3 gratuity will be paid if;

- the employee is a current member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), with 2 or more years' service in the Scheme
- an ill-health retirement assessment has been undertaken and it is confirmed that ill health retirement does not apply

This gratuity is equivalent to one week's pay for each completed year of continuous service up to a maximum of 30 weeks. This payment will be made in addition to any pay in lieu of notice and only applies to dismissal on grounds of lack of capability due to ill health.

The ill health retirement provisions and process for teachers/SNCT employees are separate and are available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers.

5.0 SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

Small changes in the workplace and personal lives can make big differences to the wellbeing of employees and in turn can reduce absenteeism. Relevant information can be found on the Employee Good Health Group page which includes wellbeing toolkits, advice on good health and training available. See link below.

http://thezone/AskHR/HealthandSafety/YourHealthSafetyandWellbeing/HS_your_health_and_safety.asp

5.1 SPECIAL LEAVE AND EMPLOYEE AIDE

It may be necessary for an employee to be absent from work due to reasons other than illness and it is important that all absence is correctly labelled and recorded. Special leave provisions are available to support employees when they require time off for personal reasons. Information about the special leave arrangements are on the People Anytime portal (see link below) or available from line managers (teachers/SNCT employees have separate special leave provisions). In addition to

these arrangements, Employee Aide is a provision to assist employees to deal with unexpected family, personal or domestic problems and provide managers with more flexibility in dealing with requests for time off when these situations arise.

<https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/leave/special-leave/>

5.2 ANNUAL LEAVE

Those employees who have choice over their holiday periods should be encouraged to use their annual leave proportionately throughout the year to prevent stress and tiredness.

5.3 COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Council provides a free, confidential, 24-hour counselling service 365 day per year, Time for Talking. Details can be found under the link below.

<http://www.timefortalking.co.uk/>

5.4 FLEXIBLE WORKING

As part of the Smarter Working Guidance, employees can request to work flexibly. Managers should consider the options under Smarter Working when managing an employee under the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy. The Guidance document is available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers. See link below.

<https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/people-management/flexible-working/>

5.5 STRESS INFORMATION

Information about stress, its causes and techniques and measures to control and manage stress is available on the People Anytime portal. See link below.

http://thezone/AskHR/HealthandSafety/HS_policies_and_procedures.asp

5.6 MENOPAUSE

As an organisation with a significant number of female employees the Council has a responsibility to consider any potential wellbeing concerns specific to this group. Information in relation to the menopause and employment can be found under the link below.

http://thezone/AskHR/HealthandSafety/YourHealthSafetyandWellbeing/HS_Menopause.asp -

5.7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Council promotes equality of opportunity and is committed to having a diverse workforce where everyone is valued and respected. The Equality and Diversity policy is available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers. See link below.

<https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/people-management/equality-and-diversity-3/>

5.8 EXTENSION OF OCCUPATIONAL SICK PAY

The Council recognises the difficulties that employees in the terminal phase of an illness may encounter financially if their occupational sick pay ceases due to their length of time off sick. A continuation of occupational sick pay can be requested in order to ease the stress of financial commitments placed on employees and their families. The Extension of Occupational Sick Pay Guidance is available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers. See link below.

<https://peopleanytime.aberdeencity.gov.uk/pay/sick-pay/extension-of-occupational-sick-pay/>

6.0 USEFUL CONTACTS

Access to Work - www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview

Healthy Working Lives - www.healthyworkinglives.com

7.0 OTHER ABSENCE RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 ABSENCE RELATED TO DISABILITY

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as “A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on an individual’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

Where disability has been confirmed as the cause of absence(s), reasonable adjustments will be discussed at the earliest opportunity in relation to the duties of the job, aspects of the working arrangements and/or the premises. In such circumstances, there is a duty to make reasonable adjustments in an effort to accommodate a person with a disability, so that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared to non-disabled employees. Some examples of these may be:

- making adjustments to premises, buying or modifying equipment
- allocating some of the employee’s duties to another employee
- redeployment
- altering working hours
- allowing time off during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment
- providing training
- modifying procedures for testing/assessment during training

Managers should also be aware of the Access to Work Scheme. This is a scheme operated by Job Centre Plus that can provide eligible employers with partial funding to purchase equipment to assist an employee with a disability to undertake their job. Further details on the Access to Work Scheme are available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers.

Disability-related sickness absence should be managed under the Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy. If an employee meets one of the trigger points in the procedure due to disability-related absence, then the absence should be managed in a supportive manner with focus on identifying measures that can be taken to assist the employee to improve their attendance. Managers are expected to think creatively about any adjustments. If, after all attempts to make reasonable adjustments have been made, the employee is still unable to return to work, or maintain an acceptable level of attendance, then their employment may be terminated on capability grounds.

7.2 ABSENCE RELATED TO PREGNANCY

Absence related to pregnancy is defined as 'any absence linked to an employee's pregnancy either before or after the birth of the baby'. It is important to establish and record whether an absence is pregnancy related at each return to work discussion as this will determine how a case is managed where an absence trigger point is reached.

Where an employee meets one of the trigger points in the policy due to absence related to pregnancy they will be required to attend a Stage 1 Attendance Review Meeting. The nature of this meeting will be wholly supportive and will focus on identifying measures that can be taken to assist the employee to improve their attendance, with concern shown for their health and wellbeing at all times.

In contrast to other reasons of sickness absence, the case will not progress to Stage 2 of the procedure if there has been no improvement in attendance levels. Instead, the employee will continue to be considered at Stage 1 of the procedure with the focus of the follow up meeting(s) continuing to be supportive and with the manager exploring any further measures to improve the employee's attendance. This approach would continue until the employee's attendance had improved sufficiently, at which point they would move out of the procedure and normal monitoring would then apply.

It should be noted that if an employee goes off sick for any reason connected to their pregnancy within the four weeks before the baby is due (as stated on MatB1), the maternity leave will start immediately on the first day after their absence starts (even if they are subsequently fit to come back to work). Refer to the Maternity Guidance for full details, available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers.

7.3 INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT

Where an industrial injury has been recorded in the corporate system and where an employee meets one of the trigger points in the procedure due to absence related to an accident or incident at work or due to an industrial disease, then as with any other employee, they will be required to attend a Stage 1 Attendance Review Meeting (for teachers/SNCT employees reference should be made to the SNCT handbook). The nature of this meeting will be wholly supportive, to identify measures that can be taken to assist the employee to improve their attendance, with concern shown for their health and wellbeing at all times. A monitoring period will be set for improvement to occur. At the end of the monitoring period the manager will meet with the employee to discuss progress and to make a decision on the outcome of Stage 1. Depending on the employee's absence record, further stages of the procedure could also apply.

7.4 SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Where an employee's absence can be reasonably attributed to a substance misuse problem, absence(s) will be managed in line with the Supporting Attendance & Wellbeing policy. The Managing Substance Misuse policy and procedure is available to support the employee in these circumstances, provided the employee is willing to accept such help and support and follow an identified treatment or support programme. The policy/procedure is available on the People Anytime portal or from line managers.

7.5 TERMINAL ILLNESS

In the case of a terminally ill employee, managers must consider the circumstances of the employee and their continued employment in as sensitive and compassionate a way as possible. The latest GP and Occupational Health medical reports should be carefully considered. Advice can be sought from People and Organisation on the issue of continued employment and from the Pensions Section for details of pension benefits for a spouse or dependants. It is important to consult the employee about their wishes and to be in a position to provide them with all the information they might require on available options before any final decision is made on their employment situation.

7.6 ABSENCES RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health conditions should not be a barrier to effective working. Providing employment and maintaining people in work is a positive way of supporting individuals who have, or are recovering from, mental health conditions. A positive working environment and appropriate support at work has a significant impact on reducing stress related sickness absence and improving long term outcomes for employees.

An employee suffering from a mental health condition may return to work and continue to undergo treatment for their condition. Managers should provide

appropriate support to employees in this scenario in conjunction with advice from the Occupational Health Service ensuring that monitoring is undertaken and supervision available. The Council's policy on Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace is available under the Health and Safety pages on the Zone or from line managers.

7.7 ABATEMENT OF ANNUAL LEAVE

If an employee has been absent due to sickness (other than pregnancy related) for 90 days or more (either one period of sickness or an aggregate of more than one period) over a rolling period of the previous 12 months, annual leave will be abated to a period proportionate to the actual service given during the leave year (excludes teachers and SNCT employees). However, annual leave will **only** be abated to the statutory minimum of 28 days (pro-rated for part-time employees) and inclusive of available public holidays.

8.0 REVIEW OF THE POLICY

People and Organisation will review this policy every 3 years. It will nevertheless be subject to continual review and amendment in light of experience of its operation, employment best practice and statutory requirements. Changes will only be made following normal consultation arrangements.

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee City Growth and Resources Committee
DATE	Staff Governance - 1 November 2018 City Growth and Resources - 27 November 2018
REPORT TITLE	Staff Travel Policy
REPORT NUMBER	RES/18/150
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Jonathan Belford
REPORT AUTHOR	Carol Smith
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Staff Governance Committee 4 and 6 City Growth and Resources Committee 1.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval of the amended staff travel policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Staff Governance Committee:-

- 2.1 provide comment on the report from a staffing perspective; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Officer – Finance to consult with Trade Unions on the draft policy prior to its submission to the City Growth and Resources Committee.

That City Growth and Resources Committee:-

- 2.1 approve the Staff Travel Policy appended to this report; and
- 2.2 approve that the policy be implemented from 1st January 2019.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Travel Policy was last amended at Finance, Policy and Resources Committee on 7 June 2016. It is due for review under the policy cycle.

- 3.2 Financial restraint is currently a significant challenge for the Council, and therefore all expenditure for travel costs and staff resource must be more thoroughly considered in respect of the cost and benefits against Council priorities and outcomes.
- 3.3 Given the different Conditions of Service and Codes of Conduct relating to staff and members, it has been decided to have 2 separate Travel Policies. To tie in with the review of the Scheme of Governance in March 2019, the Members Travel Policy will be presented as part of this. The Members Travel Policy will be based on the principles and controls recommended by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.4 Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee on 23 November 2017 agreed in relation to Travel Policy that
- procedures should be put in place to ensure the most cost-effective method of travel is put in place.
 - the approval process for foreign travel should be reviewed.
 - the policy should consider timeliness of travel applications to ensure cost effectiveness of travel.

A streamlined approach to the travel approval process is proposed that meets these criteria.

Approval of Journey Purpose and Outcome:

- Programmes of foreign travel (e.g. for economic development or educational outcome purposes) – approved by relevant Committee in advance of the programme with a business case
- One-off Foreign travel – approved by relevant Committee in advance
- Travel within UK – approved by relevant budget holder

Budget availability and value for money check:

- All travel – approved by relevant budget holder

Approval of exceptions that are allowed within the travel policy (for example special needs requirements or higher cost due to lack of availability of accommodation):

- All travel – relevant Chief Officer

- 3.5 A review has been undertaken to align the policy to the new Scheme of Governance approved on 5 March 2018 to
- Ensure that Powers Delegated to Officers align with this policy.
 - Align the format of the travel policy with other documents in the Scheme of Governance.
- 3.6 A process review has been undertaken by the staff administering the travel process who are moving to the Customer Function, Business Services Team. They have identified several inconsistencies and improvements that have been incorporated into the policy to improve use of resources.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The implications arising from implementation of this revised expenses policy are that it is expected to reduce costs associated with travel outside the City.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Data protection implications are covered in the staff privacy notice.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	If the policy is not implemented then there is a risk that the Council spends too much on travel, reducing financial resources available to other priorities and outcomes of the Council.	M	All staff advised of new policy and additional checks required. All responsible staff implement new checks in policy.
Legal	None identified	L	
Employee	There is a risk that employees are exposed to criticism and suspicion that travel and expenses are not necessary and extravagant. .	L	All staff advised of new policy and that additional checks on best value and timeliness are required. Following the policy ensures that employees have a framework and structure to base travel decisions on.
Customer	There is a risk that customers may feel the impact of lower levels of service due to financial resources being used inefficiently on staff travel.	L	All staff advised of new policy and additional checks required. All responsible staff implement new checks in policy.

Environment	There is a risk that lowest cost travel would not have the least environmental impact.	L	Ensure that environmental travel records are kept updated and any increase in environmental impact is reported.
Technology	There is a risk that available technology is not effective	L	Instances where technology is not effective are reported and actioned.
Reputational	There is a risk if the policy is not implemented that there is a reputational impact if the cost/benefit of travel is not sufficiently demonstrated to our customers.	M	<p>All staff advised of new policy and additional checks required.</p> <p>All responsible staff implement new checks in policy.</p> <p>Decision making in relation to travel should be subject to a robust business case that adequately justifies the need for the travel to be undertaken.</p> <p>Reporting on benefits of travelling to events provides the Council with assurance about the need for and benefits gained from incurring that expense.</p>

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Effective use of travel budget and staff time resource maximises positive impact on economy.
Prosperous People	Effective use of travel budget and staff time resource maximises positive impact on people.
Prosperous Place	Effective use of travel budget and staff time resource maximises positive impact on place.
Enabling Technology	Recognising the benefit of digitisation to support efficient networking, communication and learning will improve how technology is enabled for staff and citizens.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	Travel cost and staff time priorities should be aligned to networking, communication and learning opportunities that support customer service design e.g. early intervention and prevention, data management and are aligned to good customer service.
Organisational Design	Travel cost and staff time priorities should be aligned to effective organisational design e.g. a customer centric approach and ensure accountability of resource use.
Governance	Travel cost and staff time priorities should align with principles of good governance.
Workforce	Travel cost and staff time priorities should align with workforce principles e.g. flexibility and empowerment.
Process Design	Travel processes should be effective in enabling the most cost-efficient method to be used, ensuring responsibility and accountability for travel costs and an objective consideration of the cost/benefit of travel is undertaken.
Technology	Travel cost and staff time priorities should maximise effective use of technology.
Partnerships and Alliances	Travel cost and staff time priorities should maximise the opportunity benefit of partnering e.g. shared travel, one partner representative travelling, maximise partnering opportunities.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Not Required
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not Required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not Required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Finance, Policy and Resources Committee – 7 June 2016 – CG/16/069 Travel Policy, Procedure and Guidance

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee – 23 November 2017 – IA/1814 – Travel Costs Council - 5 March 2018 - Standing Orders For Council, Committee and Sub Committee Meetings

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Staff Travel Policy

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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STAFF TRAVEL POLICY

STAFF TRAVEL POLICY

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STAFF TRAVEL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy covers all local, long-distance and foreign travel undertaken by staff employed by or seconded to the Council. It also covers any other traveller (e.g. client) where Aberdeen City Council funds are used to pay for all or part of the travel.

The policy includes travel for teachers on Council business but excludes school trips attended by pupils and teachers which are covered by a separate policy.

All financial transactions undertaken by or on behalf of the Council are also subject to the Council's Financial Regulations that are referenced in section 7.1 of this policy.

The purpose of this policy is therefore to ensure that all travel arrangements:

- Satisfy the purpose of travel;
- Demonstrate due regard for the safety and welfare of the traveller; and
- Offer value for money and meet Financial Regulations.

The policy sets out key principles of compliance, purpose and outcome of travel, cost effectiveness of travel and approval responsibilities.

Appendix 1 to the policy contains detailed guidance for applying the policy.

The Staff Travel Scheme for Aberdeen City Council comprises the policy, detailed guidance and associated request forms and records.

2. COMPLIANCE

It is the duty of all officers employed by the Council to fully comply with this policy. Failure to comply with the requirements contained within this policy and the associated guidance and procedures may result in an investigation under the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Any breach or non-compliance with these Regulations must, on discovery, be reported immediately to the Chief Officer – Finance. The Chief Officer - Finance may consult other relevant officers, including the Chief Executive, to determine the appropriate action.

Employees who deliberately obstruct or unreasonably fail to provide information to Auditors or any other Officer charged with investigating an allegation within the specified period may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. PURPOSE AND OUTCOME OF TRAVEL

Staff travel within and away from Aberdeen must be for the business objectives of the Council and in fulfilment of its obligations.

For long-distance and foreign travel, a full disclosure of the purpose of travel must be made before the travel is approved. The applicant must set out the intended outcomes of that purpose as aligned to the Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes - Prosperous Economy, Prosperous People, Prosperous Place and Enabling Technology.

The objectives of the Council include the promotion of and participation in the economic development of the City. These are justifiable purposes for undertaking long distance and foreign travel under this policy.

The travel application form requires travellers and authorisers to confirm purpose of travel and relevant outcomes are justified as priorities for the business objectives of the Council. Any applications which the Business Services Team considers are not fully completed in this respect will be referred to the relevant Chief Officer (or more senior authoriser if applicable).

Where it is concluded from that referral that purpose and outcome justification is insufficient, then the referral may result in refusal to authorise travel, or reimbursement of a lower value in line with the lower cost method of achieving that purpose or outcome.

4. COST EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAVEL

Travellers must choose the best value or lowest cost option and consider whether the travel is necessary, the mode of transport and the time and date of travel.

Travellers are expected to exercise judgement regarding expenses incurred under this policy and to neither personally gain nor lose financially from its implementation.

Timeliness of travel booking is a key factor in cost effectiveness. All travel applications will be completed in a timely way immediately the travel need is identified to make best use of cost effective options.

Business Services can provide advice before the application is made on the best value or lowest cost option.

The travel application form requires travellers and authorisers to confirm cost effectiveness checks and timeliness of the travel booking. Any applications which the Business Services team considers are not compliant in this respect will be referred to the relevant Chief Officer (or more senior authoriser if applicable).

Where it is concluded from that referral that cost effectiveness and timeliness checks are insufficient, then the referral may result in refusal to authorise travel, or reimbursement of a lower value in line with the most timely or cost effective option.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TRAVEL

Before booking travel, claimants should consider whether the trip is necessary or whether teleconferencing or video conferencing offer a viable alternative.

When arranging travel, the Council encourages travellers to use modes of transport that results in the least environmental impact. More energy efficient forms of transport such as electric and hydrogen vehicles and low emission vehicles should be considered more appropriate than high emission diesel vehicles.

Records are maintained and monitored of the estimated environmental impact of council travel costs. The Council has a clear intent to reduce the environmental impact of travel by being more efficient and using technology wherever possible.

6. APPROVAL RESPONSIBILITIES

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All travel and subsistence will be subject to a budget availability and cost effectiveness check by the approved budget holder.

Approval exceptions that are allowed within the policy detailed guidance in Appendix 1 (for example special needs requirements or higher cost due to lack of availability of accommodation) will be approved by the relevant Chief Officer.

Where the travel applicant, approver or referee is a Chief Officer, all approvals will be by their Director and Directors by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive should seek approval from the Chief Officer with the Delegated Power.

6.1 Foreign Travel

The relevant Service Committee will approve programmes of foreign travel for the financial year ahead subject to a business case and ensuring the purpose of travel meets the objectives and outcomes of the Council.

Where a requirement arises for foreign travel during the course of a financial year which was not included within the approved programme of foreign travel, the relevant Service Committee will require to authorise that travel.

6.2 Travel within UK

The relevant approved budget holder will authorise all travel within the UK ensuring the purpose of travel meets the objectives and outcomes of the Council.

Travel in Scotland will be restricted to road and rail networks with the exception of the Northern and Western Isles where sea or air networks may be used.

Travel outside Scotland may involve air networks and therefore the approver should consider carefully the number of participants at events and the higher costs associated with this mode of transport.

6.3 Responsibility of the Chief Officer with the relevant Delegated Powers

The Chief Officer with the relevant delegated powers in relation to travel administration has the following powers:

- To administer the corporate travel scheme and approve any variation from the scheme.
- To approve the amount and payment of subsistence and travel expenses to officers undertaking business on behalf of the Council outwith the city of Aberdeen in accordance with the National Scheme of Conditions of Service.

The Chief Officer with the relevant delegated powers may update the Detailed Guidance to the Staff Travel Policy in Appendix 1 following consultation with CMT and the Business Manager.

6.4 Responsibility of Authorisers

Authorisers of travel and expenses claims, are responsible for checking receipts and ensuring that the claim is appropriate to meet the business needs of the organisation. All individual claims are not re-checked afterwards – they are subject to audit testing and sampling exercises routinely carried out throughout the year.

A claimant cannot authorise their own Travel and Subsistence Claim Forms and similarly cannot authorise their own travel application, foreign currency expenses application, foreign currency float application or similar.

7. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

In applying this policy, compliance is required with all documents contained within the ACC Scheme of Governance, and specifically with the associated documents set out below.

7.1 Financial Regulations

Financial Regulations are an integral part of the stewardship of Council Funds. Adhering to the Regulations ensures that all financial transactions of the Council are conducted in a manner which demonstrates openness, integrity and transparency. They form a significant part of the governance of the Council.

https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s80098/AppE_FinancialRegs.pdf

7.2 Working Time Policy

In relation to undertaking travel to meet business need officers must comply with the Working Time Policy. Summary relevant guidance is included in Appendix 1 – Policy Detailed Guidance Section D.3.

<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=39144&SID=8142>

POLICY DETAILED GUIDANCE

A. DETAILED GUIDANCE – RELEVANT TO ALL TRAVEL

A.1 Booking and Approval

The Council will fund approved, ordinary and necessary travel to undertake the business of the Council. All travel applications must be fully completed, authorised and emailed to Travel@aberdeencity.co.uk or sent to Travel Team, Business Services, Business Hub 15, 3rd Floor South, Marischal College for processing.

All major travel expenses for long distance and foreign travel must be booked by the Business Services Team. This allows the Council to ensure that this policy is observed, to achieve purchasing economies, to reclaim any VAT on purchases, to best use the time of staff, and to meet its duty of care to employees.

A.2 Personal Business

Travel applications must include clear information on any time spent on non-Council business, personal travel, recovery time and any other non-Council related activity.

An employee may extend a business trip for personal reasons if approved in accordance with the booking and approval section of this policy. Claimants must use the normal holiday application process in addition to the travel application when applying for an extension of a business trip for personal reasons.

Incremental costs relating to extension must be paid for personally. It must be clearly demonstrated that Council business was the primary purpose of the visit. Leave records should be appropriately completed.

Council insurance does not cover travellers for the additional days of any extension of a business trip for personal reasons.

Should the time spent on personal business in any one trip exceed seven days the traveller must contact the Payroll team for guidance on the taxation position of any reimbursement made by the Council.

A.3 General Exceptions

The relevant Chief Officer may approve requests for upgrades in class of travel, hotel or additional travel expenses where there is a documented health issue relating to the applicant or their family circumstances with corresponding medical advice that justify the additional cost involved in such a decision. In addition to upgrades, travel arrangements may be generally revised in such circumstances where an additional cost may be incurred to protect the safety and well-being of the traveller.

In the event that the traveller is attending an event hosted at a higher standard hotel, or has a business need for a higher standard hotel, then approval in advance is also required from the relevant Chief Officer.

Where there is an exceptional personal or business need for choosing a travel method that is not the least cost effective option, then approval in advance is also required from the relevant Chief Officer.

Evidence of the reason for such exceptions should be provided to the Business Services Team at the time of the request for a higher class or higher cost of travel in advance of the travel taking place.

A.4 Travel Insurance and Emergencies

The Council has a travel insurance policy with Zurich Municipal. The policy number is QLA-14U003-0013.

This policy covers all Council employees, Councillors and relevant representatives of the council for whom the council has accepted responsibility for travel insurance. The policy covers medical expenses, cancellations, delay, personal effects, etc. while engaged in foreign travel for a business purpose, subject to the policy terms and conditions.

Cover is provided for loss of money or personal property and, where expenses are incurred, receipts will be required to support any claim. In the event of theft, the loss should be reported to the police and a copy of their report obtained. Welfare assistance is also provided such as counselling, legal advice, security advice, bereavement advice.

If personal items such as jewellery, phones/tablets, watches etc. are taken on a trip then these are taken at an individual's own risk and are not covered under the policy, unless damage or loss is caused by an Aberdeen City employee. Should a traveller want such items to be covered then this would need to be arranged by them independently of the council.

In the event of an emergency the number +44 (0)1489 868 888(*Security Assistance*) should be contacted immediately, but in any event within 48 hours of any serious accident or illness abroad requiring in patient hospitalisation, extended treatment or alteration to travel arrangements. The number is available 24 hours a day, including weekends and will accept call collect and reverse charge calls.

No arrangements should be made without involving and obtaining the agreement of *Security Assistance*.

An information letter and emergency phone numbers will be supplied by the Business Services Team as part of your travel information.

A copy of the insurance policy is available from the Business Services Team. Any concerns about the adequacy of this policy should be raised in advance with the Business Services Team so that these can be checked with the insurers prior to departure.

A.5 Safety

The employee and the approver should ensure a suitable and sufficient health and safety risk assessment is carried out, if required for the trip, and appropriate risk controls are in place.

This will identify, for example, any risk due to the country of location of the visit or due to the nature of activities being undertaken.

This form should be submitted to the Business Services Team along with the application form.

On receipt of the application, the Business Services Team will review the application and the risk assessment for relevant health and safety information relevant to the country(ies) being visited.

On receipt of any information from the Business Services Team, the traveller and their line manager will agree any mitigating action to be taken to minimise risk.

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure, as far as practicable, that adequate steps are taken regarding personal safety. This will include maintaining links, and taking advice from, the host where appropriate.

Before travel, the employee should leave a mobile telephone number and/or a contact at the host organisation, with a nominated council contact, which may be the line manager or Business Services Team. The nominated contact should also be provided with a copy of the employee's travel itinerary, including departure and arrival times for the journey, and accommodation details.

On arrival at the employee's travel destination, contact should be made with the council nominated officer to confirm arrival. This could be via text, telephone or email depending on time of arrival and the most practical way to maintain contact.

Travellers who may have specific health issues or who are not British Citizens are strongly advised to obtain their own travel advice in relation to the information that will be supplied as a result of these checks as the Business Services Team will not have access to personal information about each traveller.

A.6 Calculation of monetary rates applicable

HMRC produces tables of subsistence rates that provide a measurable value for different countries and in some cases different cities / regions in countries. These represent 'moderated' values for each country that HMRC will allow to be 'given' to an individual by an organisation up to which HMRC is not to be considered for tax purposes. These tables are broken down into different elements of subsistence to provide a framework that can be used to make calculations for advance payments and they provide a reasonable basis upon which to base a scheme for individuals travelling abroad.

The Council uses these as the basis for its currency calculations for staff travelling abroad in respect of hotel and expense advance payments. All such travel living expenses have to be receipted. The full value of the currency advance payment will require to be accounted for and any balance remaining unspent along with receipts must be returned.

These will be updated in consultation with the Accounting team on an annual basis adjusted for the Consumer Price Index for Restaurants and Hotels.

B. DETAILED GUIDANCE FOR TYPES OF TRAVEL

B.1 Air Travel

Flights will be booked using the cheapest available Economy class fare (or equivalent), buying tickets with fixed dates and times. The cost of tickets will be considered in terms of “overall value for money” and factors such as the predictability of travel plans, airline schedules and connection times may mean that a more expensive ticket provides better value for money under a specific set of circumstances.

The Business Services Team will consult with the applicant regarding appropriate flight time and carrier arrangements and to allow sufficient rest time following the flight. Flight arrangements will be made by the Business Services Team giving due weight to the three criteria of travel set out in the Purpose and Scope of this document. If the applicant wishes to extend the trip for personal reasons, then this should be made clear in advance to the Business Services Team with any excess cost being agreed to be funded by the applicant.

While the traveller may retain frequent flyer benefits, these must not result in any incremental cost to the Council.

B.2 Hotel Accommodation

Hotel accommodation will be booked in a convenient hotel to the business location. The hotel standard will be booked by the Business Services Team with reference to HMRC guideline rates dependent on the location. The Business Services Team will take advice from the Travel Partner on suitable accommodation options and where appropriate safety advice from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will be considered when making bookings.

Where the cheapest available accommodation exceeds HMRC guidelines by up to 10% the Business Services Team may approve the higher cost. If the cost exceeds this guideline then it must be referred to the Chief Officer-Finance.

Wherever possible, breakfast should be included in the hotel rate. If this is not possible, the cost of breakfast should be claimed in accordance with guidance on living expenses. In the UK where possible, an evening meal will also be booked.

Upgrades to executive floors / rooms are not acceptable unless the hotel offers them on an entirely complimentary basis (as could be the case for frequent visitors).

Local hotel accommodation may be booked in exceptional circumstances where because of operational needs the traveller would be required to undertake travel during unreasonable anti-social hours and/or where it could expose the employee to an inappropriate level of personal risk.

B.3 Ground Transport

Train travel will be booked in a class equivalent to UK standard class, buying tickets with fixed dates and times. If the applicant is in possession of a rail card, then this should be notified at the time of application for the Council to benefit from any relevant discounts.

Buses offer a cost-effective means of travel and will be considered as an option for local and long-distance travel.

Hire cars will be booked using a category sufficient for the number of passengers and luggage to be carried. The Business Services Team will make the necessary arrangements using the relevant Travel Partner. Hire cars should be considered as they can be a value for money option to meet the business need. Situations and circumstances where this should be used are where the cost of group travel by public transport is excessive, inaccessibility of the destination by public transport, personal safety, travel time and, weight of luggage.

Taxi use should be restricted to situations where personal safety, travel time, weight of luggage, inaccessibility of destination by public transport, or the cost of group travel by public transport makes a taxi journey clearly necessary.

B.4 Car Travel

The hire of cars (as referred to in the section above) and use of the Co-Wheels car club (<http://www.co-wheels.org.uk/>) scheme is usually the first and most cost-effective option.

If a private car is the most cost-effective method of ground transport the Council will pay mileage for the actual distance covered for business purposes.

It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy at all times and is taxed and has a current MOT certificate (if an MOT certificate is legally required). Travellers must also ensure that they have a valid driving license and that they have the relevant business use motor insurance in place at the time of travel. The cost of adding business use onto a personal motor insurance policy cannot be claimed by the traveller.

Mileage claims are made by a Travel and Subsistence Claim form.

Parking, congestion charges, tolls, ferries and other driving-related penalties

Reasonable expenses incurred on parking, congestion charges, tolls and ferries may be claimed in respect of journeys which qualify for the mileage payments above. Receipts or other documentary evidence should be submitted as part of the claim.

Charges for overnight parking will be paid only when subsistence expenses are payable for the night(s) in question.

Should an employee be liable for clamping or other parking / congestion charge penalty (e.g. because a meeting over runs or due to non-payment of a congestion charge) then reimbursement of the charge will not be made. Similarly, reimbursements will not be made to an employee who receives a fine or other financial penalty relating to an offence committed whilst driving on Council business (e.g. for speeding or for using a hand held mobile phone or similar device). **Employees are required to notify the Council of any such offences and penalties.**

C. DETAILED GUIDANCE FOR LIVING EXPENSES

C.1 Foreign Currency Advance Payment Application

For foreign travel, an advance payment to cover travel living expenses will normally be paid by means of a currency application in advance of travel. This will include an advance payment to cover breakfast, lunch and dinner based on HMRC recommended guidelines for the location to be visited. If meals have been booked as part of the travel arrangements or are provided by the host, then that will not be included in the currency advance payment. In addition, if it has not been possible to pay hotel costs in advance, it will include an advance payment for the hotel.

All such travel living expenses have to be receipted. The full value of the currency advance payment will require to be accounted for and any balance remaining unspent along with receipts must be returned to the Business Services Team within seven days of returning to Aberdeen. All cases of non-compliance will be referred to the relevant Chief Officer and may result in recovery of advance payments.

It is the responsibility of the traveller to notify the Business Services Team of meals (or other living expenses) supplied as part of the travel / conference arrangements

The advance payment will be based on the time the traveller is expected to be based in the foreign location based on 24-hour, 10 hour and 5-hour time periods up to the total expected time away. Calculations will be based on the scheduled time of arrival in the first country outside the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK) and the scheduled time of departure of the route returning to the UK. Living expenses outside these times will be deemed UK travel and claimed in the normal way (see C.3. below).

The currency issued will be in the relevant local currency of the destination country. If more than one country is being visited, then this will be identified in the itinerary and a relevant split of currency will be made based on the time spent in each destination.

C.2 Foreign Currency Float

In addition to the foreign currency application, the traveller may apply for a float to meet the cost of minor travel expenses. **Floats for overseas travel must be submitted to the Chief Officer with the relevant delegated powers for approval. The full value of the Float will require to be accounted for and any balance remaining unspent must be returned to the Business Services Team within seven days of returning to Aberdeen.**

The Foreign Travel Float application should detail the itinerary of the traveller(s) and any specific minor travel expenses that are known and likely to be incurred, e.g. taxis or hospitality. In general, a sum of £25 per 24 hours and part thereof will be calculated for minor travel expenses unless there is a clear and demonstrable need to provide a greater value on any day.

The currency issued will be in the relevant local currency of the destination country. If more than one country is being visited, then this will be identified in the itinerary and a relevant split of currency will be made based on the time spent in each destination.

C.3 Travel and Subsistence Claim Form

For UK travel, living expenses will normally be paid by completion of a travel and subsistence claim form after travel has taken place. All such expenses must be receipted (in the unusual event that no receipt is available full justification / explanation must be given and accepted by the authorising manager).

Travel and subsistence claim forms may not be used for recovering travel expenses that should be booked through a Business Services Team.

Payroll will forward a copy of all foreign travel expenses claims to the Business Services Team to confirm that the claimant has not already received currency to cover the costs either through Foreign Currency Expenses, Foreign Currency Float or the Corporate Credit Card.

All Travel and Subsistence Claim Forms must be authorised by the claimant's line manager or other authorised signatory who is senior to the claimant.

C.4 Use of Corporate Credit Card

Corporate credit cards are allocated based on the business need of the postholder and will be offered to staff who have a regular business need to undertake long distance travel.

If the traveller is in possession of a corporate credit card, they may use it in lieu of the foreign currency float, the foreign currency expenses application or instead of the travel and subsistence claim form.

Corporate credit cards may not be used for recovering travel expenses that should be booked through a Business Services Team.

Credit card bills will be monitored and reconciled by the Business Services Team. Reference must be made to specific guidance on the use of corporate credit cards. Any misuse of the corporate credit card will be referred to the Chief Officer - Finance and is subject to the Council's disciplinary policies.

C.5 Inadmissible living expenses

Expenses the Council will NOT pay for:

Personal telephone calls;
Personal internet access;
Parking fines and traffic offences;
Mini-bar or in-room entertainment;
Newspapers;
Clothing or any other items that the traveller may reasonably be expected to bring from home;
Excess luggage costs, unless the traveller is required to travel with significant quantities of business materials or equipment. This should be identified at the time of booking major travel expenses so that the Council can take account of reduced rates for booking this in advance;
Laundry costs and dry-cleaning (except where the period of travel covers more than 5 days);

Membership of airline frequent flyer / loyalty schemes or similar;
Alcoholic drinks, tobacco products, personal gratuities;
Expenses the Council will NOT pay for (cont.):

Travel Insurance;
Equipment, materials or services that should be bought through the normal procurement process e.g. computers, phones.

Any claim that contains an item listed above (or similar) will require explicit approval by the relevant Chief Officer. In a travel emergency, the situation may arise where such expenditure may be appropriate.

D. MISCELLANEOUS DETAILED GUIDANCE

D.1 Entertaining and Gift Expenses

The offering and accepting of hospitality may be a legitimate expense to meet business objectives such as building international networks and undertaking business transactions. If the travel requires business entertaining or presentation of gifts, then:

Any entertainment or gifts provided must be consistent with the image and reputation of the Council as a UK public body that is subject to full public audit;

An expenses claim must be submitted with the name(s) of the beneficiaries, included any staff members in attendance. This will be held with the register of gifts and hospitality that each Chief Officer holds as per the Financial Regulations; and

The cost must be within the approved budget.

If the traveller is offered hospitality or gifts (other than small business items such as pens, folders, diaries, calendars, etc. with an estimated combined value of less than £30) while undertaking travel, then a full declaration must be made in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

Gifts and hospitality must not be offered or accepted in any way that could be construed as a bribe or inducement.

Working lunches or dinners can be an appropriate method of business provided that no extravagance is involved, and the occasions are infrequent (infrequent is defined as fewer than 4 times in a 12-month period). Where there is a business need for increased frequency then this should be discussed and agreed by the relevant Chief Officer and paid for from within approved budgets. Likewise, it can be reasonable for an officer to represent a Service of the Council at an external social function or event organised by outside bodies.

Gifts and hospitality should be in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and reference should be made to them for additional guidance.

D.2 Travel Funded by Grant Expenditure

Travel costs that are met by grant expenditure are subject to the same policy as all Council travel. The traveller should ensure that the Council maximises the income to the Council in respect of that travel and grant claims are made in a timely and effective way.

D.3 Working Hours Whilst Travelling

Staff should ensure that they comply with the Council's Working Time Policy. Relevant extracts are summarized below:

The Council's definition of working time is as follows:

- When workers are working at an office, depot, Council building, or from home as an authorised activity
- When workers are engaged in work regardless of where that work is performed

Travel time (but only within the City boundary) will count as working time except where the activity is planned (e.g. evening meetings).

The following is not classed as working time –

- Breaks when no work is done, e.g. lunch breaks.
- Travelling outside of normal working hours.
- Travel to and from work (where the employee has a fixed place of work).

In considering the cost/benefit of travel activity, officers should be mindful of the opportunity cost of time resource lost to other priority activities for staff and not just consider travelling expenses.

D.4 Monitoring of Expenditure

All major and minor travel expenses are subject to regular checks and performance monitoring information is gathered in respect of expenditure. Reports of expenditure may be presented to the Chief Officer Finance and Corporate Management Team and in general this would normally be anonymised. Attention may, however, be drawn to trip activity of high volume claimants.

From time to time the Council may be required to publish information relating to expenses claimed for instance in response to a Freedom of Information request.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this document.

- Local travel means travel within Aberdeen City Council boundaries.
- Long-distance travel means travel outside Aberdeen City Council boundaries but within the UK.
- Foreign Travel means travel outside of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (i.e. outside Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

Major travel expenses mean the costs of purchasing flights, train tickets, inter-city buses, car hire, visa costs and accommodation (including breakfast) that should normally be booked in advance.

Minor travel expenses mean the costs of taxis, local buses, car parking, business telephone calls and other incidental items incurred while travelling for business purposes.

Car mileage expenses – expenses paid for travel undertaken by personal vehicle.

Living expenses include the cost of meals, service charges, drinks, phone calls and similar costs. Those that can and cannot be claimed from the Council are referred to in the relevant section.

Foreign Travel Float means a sum of money provided in advance of foreign travel that enables travellers to meet minor travel expenses.

Authoriser a person with the authority to approve travel, generally this will be a budget holder and reference should be made to section 6 of the policy for further advice.

Business Services Team means a person authorised to make bookings for major travel expenses (member of the Business Support Transactions Team).

Travel Partner is one or more companies contracted to provide travel services to the Council as organised by the Business Services Team.

Long-haul flights are those flights (including necessary same-day flight connections) outside Europe.

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	1 November 2018
REPORT TITLE	Corporate Health and Safety July- September 2018
REPORT NUMBER	GOV/18/190
DIRECTOR	N/A
CHIEF OFFICER	Fraser Bell
REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Leaver
TERMS OF REFERENCE	5.2; 5.3

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The report summarises statistical health and safety performance information for the three-month reporting period July-September 2018 to provide the Committee with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within this report; and
- 2.2 scrutinise and review health, safety and wellbeing policy, performance, trends and improvements.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 This report contains statistical information on the three-month reporting period (July-September 2018) and a review of health and safety activities for the same period.

3.2 Incidents (July-September 2018)

3.3 Incident information:

The following table gives a breakdown of incidents across all Functions in Aberdeen City Council.

	1. RIDDOR Reportable employee (including absences over 7 days)	2. Non-RIDDOR reportable employee (absences of 4 to 7 days)	3. Non-RIDDOR reportable employee (absences of 0 to 3 days)	4. RIDDOR Reportable Non-employee	5. Non-RIDDOR reportable Non-employee
AHSCP			6		2
Commissioning					
Customer	1		2		6
Governance					
Operations	1	3	63		27
Place					
Resources					
Total Jul-Sept	2	3	71	0	35

3.438 of the total of 111 incidents were because of physical assault by a service user on an employee. As a proportion of total incidents, the figure for physical assault has reduced from the previous quarter by 29%. The main service area where these incidents occur have introduced a new people centred risk assessment process aimed at reducing these figures.

3.7 For every incident an investigation will be completed to identify root causes and to identify remedial actions. This level of investigation will allow further controls to be put in place, where required, to prevent reoccurrence of a similar incident; also, to better improve the safety management system of the Council this improvement would be shared across the Council to other areas where the same risk exists.

3.8 HSE Reportable incidents (July-September 2018)

3.9 During the reporting period 2 employees were injured in incidents, which required to be reported to HSE which were attributed to slips/trips and falls. And prevented the employee from working for 7 or more days. There were 2 dangerous occurrences, which required to be reported to HSE involving the removal of asbestos containing material from ACC properties.

3.10 Incident (reportable employee) frequency rates

Period – Quarterly	Reportable Incident rate	Reporting period
July-Sept 2018	0.23	2018/19

The above figures are calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Incidence rate} = \frac{\text{RIDDOR injuries per year}}{\text{Employment}} \times 1000$$

3.11 This figure has decreased from the reported figure last quarter (Apr-Jun 2018) from 0.59 when there were 4 RIDDOR reportable incidents. The figure from this corresponding quarter last year was 0.50.

3.12 Reportable Diseases (July-September 2018)

There were no diseases reportable under RIDDOR; as was the case in the corresponding reporting period last year.

3.15 Near Miss information (July–September 2018)

3.16 Many safety activities are reactive, that is, they occur after an injury incident. By reporting near-miss incidents this promotes proactive safety. “Proactive” means raising awareness of potential hazards and mitigation strategies before an injury occurs. Recognising and reporting near-miss incidents can significantly improve employee safety and enhance the safety culture.

3.17 The table below shows relevant near miss information for July-September 2018.

	Near Misses Jul - Sep 2018	Employee at risk Jul - Sep 2018	No review of risk assessment Post-incident Jul - Sep 2018
AHSCP	11	10	9
Commissioning	0	0	
Customer	31	20	28
Governance	0	0	
Operations	81	64	60
Place	3	2	3
Resources	1	0	1
Total	127	96	101

3.18 The relevant line managers reported in 101 of the 127 occasions reported that there was no review of the existing risk assessment following the incident although there are risk assessments in place. This review is not always legally required but it would be best practice for it to be carried out. The relevant risk assessment and incident investigation training courses have been changed to include information that this review is an explicit requirement in ACC procedures.

3.19 Overall the number of near misses increased slightly, from 108, when compared to the same period last year.

3.20 Enforcement interventions (HSE / SFRS)

3.21 There are occasions where HSE and Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) contact Aberdeen City Council to request further information or ask for action to be taken. HSE interventions are usually to request further information on work tasks following a complaint or to investigate a serious incident which has been reported. SFRS interventions usually follow an audit visit they have carried out of Aberdeen City Council properties where they have found fire safety issues.

3.22 The intervention figures for the corresponding period last year was 2 HSE and no SFRS interventions.

3.23 Health and safety training

3.24 A selection of training has been delivered over this quarter through the health and safety development programme.

Course – face to face (July – September 2018)	Number of courses	Number attended
First Aid (EFAW) 1 day	13	40
First Aid (FAW) 3 day	1	2
First Aid (FAW) 2 day Requalification	1	6
Evac Chair Operator Training	3	12
Fire Extinguisher Training	2	17
Developing Personal Resilience	1	8
Personal Wellbeing	4	40

Course – eLearning (July – September 2018)	Number of completions within the period July, August, September 2018
Basic Health and Safety Awareness	66
Asbestos awareness	72
Fire safety awareness	308
Fire warden responsibilities	40
Food hygiene L2 certificate	42
Moving and Handling Module 1- object handling	20
Moving and Handling Module 2 - object handling	26
Moving and Handling Module 3 – People handling	12
Prevent	203
Stress Awareness for Managers	20
Display Screen Equipment E-Learning	24

3.25 Most Clusters hold local records where employees training records are held. Work is being undertaken to transfer these records to the central

organisational database (CoreHR). This work will allow the organisation to provide an accurate report on the percentage of training completed against the identified training needs analysis. This will involve identifying the compulsory skills and training required for each job role.

3.26 Fire risk assessment

3.27 Fire risk assessments are completed on a rolling 5-year programme. A total of 27 fire risk assessments were completed during this reporting period of which 9 of were completed of Bon Accord Care premises. The overall average compliance score was 85%, which compares to 83% in the same reporting period last year.

3.28 Health and Safety Audits

3.29 The overall average audit score for all audits completed in a reporting quarter and for this reporting period was 72%.

3.30 The average figure has increased from the last four reporting quarters; being between 60% and 66%. There is still however a need for the remedial actions identified in each audit to be implemented by the auditee. It is equally important that the message is shared with other managers within the Cluster to ensure that they are also compliant. This should allow the safety management performance to improve and therefore the average figure to increase as the same issues would not reoccur.

3.31 Compliance Monitoring

3.32 A process of compliance visits has been carried out over the period looking at risk topics such as premises security, personal protective equipment, driver checks, provision and use of work equipment, manual handling operations, etc. The average score for all compliance visits completed was 82%. Again, the lessons need to be implemented and shared to ensure that employees and members of the public's safety is not being endangered. The average score for the same period last year was 94%; this score was for different topics so it is difficult to reach an exact comparison.

3.33 Health and safety policies and guidance

3.34 There were no policies or procedures reviewed this reporting quarter.

3.35 Work-related absence

3.36 The sections below detail the absence levels for both work-related injury and stress.

3.37 Mental health

3.38 The percentage of employees by headcount who were absent for this period reported as being for mental health issues is 1.68%. The trend in this figure has remained relatively constant over a period of transition for the

organisation. The completion of Quality of Working Life risk assessments by all line managers who have teams or employees who are likely to be pressured in their jobs could help in identifying work-related causes. This should especially be the case where employees are absent for work-related reasons to potentially prevent others from being similarly affected.

3.39 Physical Injury

3.40 The percentage of employees who are absent following a work-related injury is very low at slightly over 0.15% of the headcount workforce, which is the same as the previous reporting period.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct Financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Analysis of the causes of the incidents, near misses and work-related absences and resultant improvements to prevent, where possible, reoccurrences, can reduce the financial exposure to the Council.

4.2 An effective health and safety management system in which risks are identified and either eliminated or reduced will result in a reduction of costs to the organisation.

4.3 If the Enforcing Authorities take a case to court against Aberdeen City Council for breaches of legislation then it could leave the Council liable to pay any fine or damages imposed and also for the costs of any subsequent civil claim, which follows where an individual has suffered personal injury.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Health and safety legislation requires that an organisation has a suitably robust safety management system to ensure the health safety and welfare of their employees. Where any incident is of sufficient seriousness there is the potential that the Enforcing Authorities will become involved and carry out their own investigation into the circumstances of the incident. Any investigation could result in prosecution of the organisation and in some cases prosecution of managers and/or employees.

6.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	The risk is that any incident has the potential to bring a reduction in the overall budget in place to provide service delivery.	M	All tasks are risk assessed and the controls implemented and supervised by line managers. All employees are trained to a level where they are competent to carry out the work
Legal	There is the risk that any injury or serious health and safety incident could result in focus from the Health and Safety Executive which could result in enforcement action in the form of notices or prosecution.	M	As above.
Employee	The risk is that any health and safety incident can lead to an injury to an employee which could have the potential to temporarily or permanently affect either or both their employment or their life.	M	As above. If the task has been risk assessed; employees are trained, competent and supervised then there should be less likelihood of incidents.
Customer	The risk to our citizens is that we are unable to provide the same level of service delivery due to staff absences from illness and injury sustained during their work. Also there is the possibility of a reduced budget due to the associated financial costs.	M	Reducing the number of incidents will reduce the number of absences and the subsequent costs to the Council.

Reputational	Local and National press coverage of any incident can present reputational damage to the organisation.	M	Should be provided by each Function having a robust safety management system in place. There are many facets to this which are important starting from ensuring employees are trained and competent, every hazard is risk assessed and up to carrying out investigation of near misses to ensure controls are reviewed to consider whether remedial actions are required.
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7.0 OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Local Authorities play a key role in local economic growth, e.g. investment in local infrastructure. Any detriment to this investment would have a detrimental effect on this investment. Therefore any financial burden placed on the organisation in the form of legal costs and punishment; staff absence which affects service provision can lead to a lesser level of funding for investment. The aim should be to be an organisation who considers the health and safety of its workforce to be paramount and a key element in service delivery. This focus is one key in having an engaged workforce and all the additional benefits associated with this; it will also reduce the likelihood of legal challenges and their associated costs.
Prosperous People	The workplace is an environment in which most adults spend a substantial fraction of their time. It has the potential to have both positive and negative influences on their health and well-being. Where there are continuing trends of incidents there is the risk that employees become disengaged with the organisation as they feel that there is no concern for their safety. There are many additional strands from disengaged employees: poor customer

	service, increased absence rates and reduced productivity.
Prosperous Place	An engaged workforce is best-placed to provide good service delivery to the residents of the City. Any financial penalties imposed by poor health and safety practices impacts on the provision of public services, especially in an environment of reducing budgets. The provision of good service to the residents would result in good public opinion, which would benefit the City, which can extend outwardly to visitors and businesses seeking to inwardly invest.
Enabling Technology	<p>Each Function conducting an exercise where they conduct a skills and training analysis of their workforce with the results populating a skills and training matrix would benefit the organisation and give assurance that they have a workforce who have the competence levels to continue to provide Services in a safe manner.</p> <p>The current electronic reporting system can be utilised to assess where trends are apparent, and resource placed there to improve safety management systems.</p>

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Governance	This report gives the committee the opportunity to gain assurance that the Functions are managing health and safety effectively. This can be done by scrutinising the level of incidents as a trend and being allowed the opportunity to question relevant managers. Figures on audits, compliance monitoring and training which will allow the committee to gauge the effectiveness and suitability of the safety management system.
Workforce	The report gives the committee the opportunity to improve the health and safety management system, which would in turn reduce the risks to employees of being involved in an incident.

Process Design	This can allow the committee to identify where processes are failing to address safety risks.
Partnerships and Alliances	The report to committee allows Trade Unions, elected members and officers to collaborate on potential improvements to the Council's health and safety arrangements.

8.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	EHRIA not required
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required
<u>Children's Rights Impact Assessment/Duty of Due Regard</u>	Not applicable

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

10.0 APPENDICES

N/A

11.0 REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	1 November 2018
REPORT TITLE	Introduction of a “Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (SCAVC)” pension arrangement
REPORT NUMBER	GOV/18/200
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Morven Spalding
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Yacamini
TERMS OF REFERENCE	5.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is to provide detail on the Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution pension arrangement. It is intended to convert the existing Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) scheme provided by Prudential (in partnership with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)) into a “shared cost, salary sacrifice” version (SCAVC) to take advantage of the National Insurance Contribution savings available to both employees and the Council.
- 1.2 The introduction of the SCAVC pension arrangement will require the input of a professional tax advisory firm to ensure that the scheme is legislatively-compliant in terms of design, implementation and ongoing advice/administration.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Committee:-

- 2.1 Approve the conversion of the existing Additional Voluntary Contributions scheme into a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution pension arrangement.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council currently has an Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) scheme which can be accessed by employees and is delivered by Prudential. Currently 240 employees participate in the scheme.

- 3.2 Due to changes in legislation there is the opportunity for the Council to establish a shared cost additional voluntary contribution scheme which would replace the existing scheme.
- 3.3 Soft market testing has indicated that undertaking a mini-competition through ESPO Framework 664 (Consultancy Services) is likely to be a suitable procurement vehicle in this instance. However, officers will ensure there is sufficient flexibility in the procurement process in the event that an open ITT is identified as the most appropriate approach to take.
- 3.4 Officers have had preliminary discussions with counterparts at Aberdeenshire Council as they have noted their interest in implementing the SCAVC scheme.
- 3.5 The SCAVC scheme will have the following positive impacts:
- Current beneficiaries of the existing AVC scheme – approximately 240 employees – will see an increase in their net pay of up to 12% of the SCAVC amount sacrificed each month due to reduced employee National Insurance Contributions (NICs)
 - The combination of tax relief and a reduction in employee NICs will provide a greater incentive to employees to enter the scheme, thereby helping increase individual pension provision and financial wellbeing.
 - Integration of the SCAVC scheme into the wider employee benefits package will increase visibility of the offering and take-up should increase across the workforce.
 - The Council will see a reduction of employer's NICs equivalent to 13.8% of the total amount sacrificed through the SCAVC scheme, which can be estimated to be £409,584.
 - Implementing a “fully-managed service” version of the SCAVC scheme will allow the scheme to be internally administered using existing resources within People and Organisation thereby increasing the income generated for the Council.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 In common with other employee benefits, officers anticipate that professional fees will be based on a percentage of the amount of salary sacrificed in the respective invoicing period. Through soft marketing testing, it is estimated that the percentage charge for fees will be a maximum of 3.5%.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that as the popularity of the SCAVC scheme increases, more third-party organisations will enter the marketplace and the cost of the professional fees will decrease commensurate with the level of competition. While this will not benefit the Council now, it is hoped that the marketplace will have matured by the time this particular contract ends.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	Future tax law changes may not provide financial benefits to the Council.	L	This will be assessed as part of the annual budget process.
Legal	Failure to comply with relevant tax law.	L	Deductions will be made through the payroll system in compliance with current taxation rules.
Employee	Employees may join the scheme but in future not benefit from the tax benefit as legislation changes.	M	Any change in tax legislation will be notified to anyone joining the scheme,
Customer	N/A		
Environment	N/A		
Technology	The payroll system is not compliant with current tax legislation.	L	There will be a contractual obligation on the supplier to ensure the payroll system adheres to the relevant tax legislation.
Reputational	N/A		

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous People	The proposed scheme provides existing employees with an additional employee benefit

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Workforce	The scheme would allow the workforce to prepare for the future and give them the opportunity to increase their pension
Partnerships and Alliances	The scheme would allow a more collaborative approach with local authority partners.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	<i>not required</i>
Privacy Impact Assessment	<i>Not required</i>
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	<i>not applicable</i>

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

10. APPENDICES

N/A

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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