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**EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY 2016-19**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To provide Members with context, information and purpose in preparation for the scrutiny of the proposed Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19.

**Purpose of the Scrutiny**

2. To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the draft Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19, prior to consideration by the Cabinet on 16 June 2016.

**Background**

3. Attached at **Appendix A** is a draft Cabinet report that explains the background to the Council's proposals for an Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
4. The Strategy has evolved as a consequence of the Council's Workforce Strategy 2015-18, underpinned by the Council's vision and values, and aligned to the Corporate Plan and Organisational Development Programme.
5. The Workforce Strategy deals with issues such as Workforce Planning, Performance Management, Employee Voice, Trade Union Partnership, Learning and Development, Health and Wellbeing, and the Employee Charter. The

Workforce Strategy Programme comprises five projects, each headed by a lead Senior Manager.

6. The Health & Wellbeing Project is one of the five projects, and is led by the Corporate Manager Resources, Christine Salter. It provides a focus for the development of policies, initiatives and information to help improve the health and wellbeing of all Council employees.
7. The Project is currently progressing four initiatives; the Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy under consideration today; the Corporate Health Standard; Time to Change Wales; and reviewing the Council's Employment policies as required.

## **Issues**

8. Members will find the draft Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19 attached as **Appendix 1** to the Cabinet report (**Appendix A**).
9. The three year Strategy proposes a framework for proactive health & wellbeing initiatives and actions that seek to prevent employees from becoming unwell (where possible), alongside the Council's focus on sickness absence.
10. The strategy defines health & wellbeing, clarifies why it is important the Council has such a policy, and outlines the potential benefits for the organisation, employees and citizens. Crucially, the strategy proposes a range of actions for 2016/17 designed to assist employees in managing their own health. Subject to approval by Cabinet, the agreed actions will be developed into an action plan with assigned responsibilities and agreed timescales which will be subject to regular monitoring.

## **Previous Scrutiny**

11. The Committee undertook scrutiny relevant to the direction of travel proposed by the new Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy in June 2015, when it considered a post implementation review of the Council's Attendance and Wellbeing Policy. At the time Members considered the overall trend of sickness absence levels to be in the right direction, but that greater urgency was required, and that the Council should consider setting harder targets and timescales. They felt that there was an opportunity for stronger, more challenging, Occupational Health support; and that the Council should be more flexible with trigger points where there are long term sickness issues. The Committee supported phased return to work, and return to work without a doctor's note.
  
12. The Committee re-stated its view that key to success is the quality of management implementation and accountability; reiterated the value of comparative performance data, and were reassured to note Core City sickness data comparisons. However, Members felt it would be enlightening to compare the Council with large organisations in business and industry.
  
13. In response the Cabinet reassured the Committee that a further review of the revised Attendance and Wellbeing Policy would take place 12 months on. More radical and stringent changes would be considered, should improvements not be achieved or sustained over the year. Cabinet proposed to monitor the spend on agency workers brought in to cover sickness; generally tighten up Occupational Health Service processes; and learn not only from external organisations how improvements could be secured, but also share the good practice that already exists internally.

## **Way Forward**

12. Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Corporate Performance and Resources) will be in attendance. Also in attendance will be Senior Management Team Lead for Health & Wellbeing Christine Salter, Centre of Expertise

Operational Manager Lynne David, and Sian Coleman, Organisational Development Specialist. Trades union representatives have also been invited to attend as a stakeholder in the Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy. Members will receive a presentation and have an opportunity for questions.

## **Legal Implications**

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with

recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Consider the draft Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19.
- (ii) Agree any comments and observations it may wish to pass on to the Cabinet for consideration on 16 June 2016.

**DAVID MARR**

Interim Monitoring Officer

1 June 2016