

PERSONNEL AND GENERAL PURPOSES SUB-COMMITTEE

15th December 2021

Present: Councillor Chris Mitchell in the Chair
Councillors B. Amos, Bayliss, Denham,
Gregson (Vice-Chair), Stanley and Stephen

Officers: David Blake, Managing Director
Shane Flynn, Corporate Director – Finance
and Resources
Sian Stroud, Corporate Director – Planning
and Governance
David Sutton, Deputy Director – Policy and
Strategy

24 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor Bill Amos for Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson.

25 Declarations of Interest

None.

26 Public Participation

None.

27 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

28 Review of Alcohol & Drugs Policy & Procedure

The Sub-Committee considered an amended Alcohol & Drugs Policy & Procedure. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that the last review was in 2013 and the policy was therefore due an update. It was important to keep this policy under review because being under the influence of intoxicating substances has serious health and safety implications, including in areas of the Council where staff are operating machinery.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee approve the amended Alcohol & Drugs Policy & Procedure attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

29 Adoption of a New Menopause Policy

The Sub-Committee considered the adoption of a new Menopause Policy. The Corporate Director – Planning and Governance presented the report and explained that people suffering from symptoms related to the menopause are the fastest growing demographic in the workplace. Supporting and creating a positive and open environment between the Council and someone affected by the menopause can help prevent the person from:

- Losing confidence in their skills and abilities
- Feeling that they need to take time off work and hide the reason for it
- Having increased mental health conditions (stress, anxiety, panic attacks)
- Leaving their job.

Sub-Committee Members expressed support for the Policy.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee approve the new Menopause Policy attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

30 Outcome of Postal Vote Review - May 2021 Elections

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the findings of the review carried out by the Returning Officer together with the Electoral Services Team into why 502 electors who had requested postal votes for the 6th May 2021 elections failed to receive their packs at the same time as the initial delivery. The Corporate Director – Finance and Resources had been the Returning Officer for these elections and he presented the report, which included a summary of key findings and proposed system changes.

The overall conclusion of the investigation was that running three elections in parallel had resulted in multiple file transfers between the Council and the service provider, CES, which led to one batch of processing not being completed in full. It was evident that quality control processes over the transfer of data can be improved to avoid a reoccurrence of this situation and maintain the integrity of the process for the delivery of elections.

In the ensuing discussion, several Members acknowledged that remedial action was taken swiftly, but remained concerned that a significant number of electors had been unable to vote as a consequence of not receiving their packs in good time. It was also noted that, whilst the investigation had identified a system failure, it was difficult to establish the reasons for this from the report. Members asked for clear operating procedures to be put in place for future elections.

The Returning Officer acknowledged the points made and assured Members that lessons have been learned and process improvements will be implemented for the May 2022 elections. A further report can be presented to the next meeting, setting out what steps will be taken for the issue of postal votes for those elections.

The Returning Officer was satisfied that CES were not responsible for what had happened and that their services should be retained for the 2022 elections.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee agree to note the findings of the review and the proposed additional measures identified in the report to maintain the integrity of the process for the delivery of elections.

31 Employee Facilities for Cycling to Work

At the March 2021 meeting of this Sub-Committee, it was agreed to request Officers to develop a fresh package to boost sustainable travel by employees. The Deputy Director – Policy and Strategy presented a report on proposals to encourage employees to commute via cycling.

In summary, the following were recommended as the most feasible and affordable options which are likely to cater for the greatest number of staff:

- Guildhall – conversion of former toilets adjacent to rear entrance to provide shower and changing facilities. Provision of secure (lockable) covered cycle parking within the car park. Total cost £28,100.
- Crematorium – reinstatement of existing shower facility (which would also benefit grounds maintenance staff), purchase of outdoor storage facility to compensate for loss of the storage area, and installation of public bike rack with open shelter. Total cost £15,535.
- Sixways Depot – replacement of the existing cycle locking facility with more secure, easier to use 'Sheffield' cycle stands and refurbishment of the outdated shower facilities. Total cost £5,750.
- St Martin's Gate Car Park – provision of 'Sheffield' cycle stands in the car park (utilising one parking space). Total cost £615.
- Museum and Art Gallery – existing facilities adequate, although capacity of cycle parking post-Covid will be kept under review.
- Trinity Street – no on-site facilities proposed due to lack of external space. Alternative facilities at Museum and Art Gallery and Guildhall.
- Commandery – existing cycle parking facilities are available. No additional facilities proposed due to the nature of the building. Alternative changing facilities available at Guildhall.

The total cost of these recommendations was £50,000. In addition, it was proposed to offer free cycle training (Bikeability) to employees to increase confidence to cycle. This will be funded from the existing corporate training budget as required.

Reports on other aspects of sustainable travel to work, including public transport, will follow.

In the ensuing discussion, a considerable number of questions were asked. In summary, Officer responses were as follows:

- Shower provision is just one aspect of a wider review of staff facilities across the Council estate as this facility would be beneficial to employees for a variety of reasons.
- The cycle to work scheme is mentioned as part of the induction programme but it is acknowledged that more can be done to promote it.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on the number of employees travelling to work and so the number of responses to the staff survey was small. Officers have relied on examples of best practice to establish what facilities to provide and are satisfied that the package is appropriate.

- It is acknowledged that bike storage facilities need to have adequate lighting as they will be used not just in daylight hours.
- Consideration can be given to providing storage facilities at the Cornmarket public car park for Trinity House employees. There are lockable storage spaces for staff at locations such as parks and depots, but consideration can be given to improving the facilities, such as racks.
- Bikeability training can be offered to Members.
- Offering a cycling allowance for Members mileage may require consideration in the first instance by the Independent Remuneration Panel. Officers will check this point in the first instance.
- There are plans for a cycle rack to be located in the car park at the Crematorium.
- A report on the impact of providing the additional facilities proposed can be provided in 12 months' time.
- It is possible for Enforcement Officers to use e-bikes to cycle to locations outside the city centre. The proposed scheme includes provision of cycle storage at St. Martin's Gate car park and Bikeability training, and it is hoped that this will encourage Enforcement Officers to take up the opportunity to cycle.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee agree to support the recommendations in this report to provide and improve facilities to support staff to cycle to work to be added to the Council's capital programme.

32 Any Other Business

None.

Duration of the meeting: 6.30p.m. – 7.38p.m.

Chair at the meeting on
2nd March 2022