

Employment policy – Updates noted - Recommendation to City Administration Committee.

3 There was submitted a report by the Head of Human Resources regarding employment policy updates required to relation to meeting new legislative duties, advising that

- (1) the Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Paternity Bereavement Act 2024 had introduced new statutory employment rights to be implemented on a phased basis over 2 years, with the 1st phase to take effect from 6th April 2026 which as a result the Council was required to update a range of its employment policies to meet legislative compliance;
- (2) in parallel with these changes, the Council was reinforcing its approach to preventing bullying and harassment, with a particular emphasis on meeting the requirements introduced under the Worker Protection Act 2023 to evidence that the Council was pro-actively taking action to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace;
- (3) the Council was progressing towards Bronze accreditation under the Close the Gap's Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) programme, following the Council's decision in 2021 to participate in the ESAW which provided a structured framework for improving gender-sensitive policies, workplace culture and support for women affected by gender-based violence;
- (4) to ensure compliance with the new statutory requirements coming into force on 6th April 2026, several reforms introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Paternity Bereavement Act 2024 must be incorporated into the Council's employment policies, as detailed in the report;
- (5) the Council had agreed to participate in the Close the Gap's Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) accreditation programme, which supports employers to advance gender equality and improve workplace support for women affected by gender-based violence and the ESAW framework assesses organisations across 6 standards namely, leadership, data, flexible working, occupational segregation, workplace culture and organisational responses to violence against women; and
- (6) to achieve Bronze accreditation of the ESAW accreditation programme, completion of the remaining actions and the submission of required evidence was necessary by 31st March 2026 and a gap analysis had identified a series of policy and guidance updates, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, which were required to meet the Bronze accreditation criteria and to strengthen the Council's approach to gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence.

After consideration, the committee

- (a) noted

- (i) the forthcoming statutory legislative changes and the actions required to ensure legislative compliance as required by the Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Paternity Bereavement Act 2024; and
 - (ii) the actions required to progress the Council's participation in the Close the Gap's Equally Safe at Work programme to support achievement of the Bronze accreditation by 31st March 2026; and
- (b) referred the report to the City Administration Committee for approval of changes required to the employment policy, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.