

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

27 APRIL 2016

REVIEW OF THE SUBSISTENCE AND EXPENSES POLICY

Report from: Carrie McKenzie, Head of HR and Organisational Change

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Summary

The report seeks agreement to the revised Subsistence and Expenses Policy

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 This policy lies within the Council's policy and budget framework and the Committee's terms of reference. Therefore, this is a matter for the Employment Matters Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Policy has been revised to align with current practice, it reflects the changes to payment methods at the Dartford Crossing and where there is the requirement to pay for Congestion Charge fees; it reinforces the requirement for colleagues to submit authorised itemised receipts within a three month period for expenses to be reimbursed

3. Advice and analysis

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all employees, permanent and temporary and other workers who through the performance of their duties incur personal expenditure related to those duties (such as business mileage, car parking fees, meals and/or overnight accommodation).

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation on these changes has taken place involving the Trade Unions and the employee forums using the agreed consultation protocol.
- 4.2 Comments were received from Unison and Prospect. Unison challenged the original revised draft that removed the entitlement for colleagues make a claim for meals related to Tea as defined within the Policy (Section 11). It was agreed that this element could be retained and the Policy was amended accordingly to reinstate this entitlement.

Both Unison and Prospect commented on the proposed revisions to Section 12 (Car Parking) of the Policy. They raised concerns that the Policy states that fees incurred for parking could only be claimed when free parking was unavailable, and that this was causing issues requiring staff to park further away from their destination and that there were health and safety issues, especially where staff have restricted mobility. It was agreed that there was no wording that could be applied to the policy to ensure that Managers were applying this requirement fairly and consistently and that the most appropriate governance of this was to deal with any issues on a case by case basis.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 It is important that all eligible staff are made aware of this Policy and their responsibilities within it.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Failure to adhere to the Policy	Impact on staff.	Consistent application of the Policy through advice and coaching from hr services	E4

6. Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA)

- 6.1 A Diversity Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 It is not envisaged that there will be any additional financial implications with the implementation of this Policy.
- 7.2 Implementation of this Policy enables the Council to comply with its various statutory obligations and is within the council's powers. It is essential that a fair and consistent approach is to be applied to all staff in order to minimise successful legal challenges.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That the Employment Matters Committee approves the revised Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 8.2 That this Policy is reviewed in two years time and any proposed changes are referred to this Committee.

Lead officer contact

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Background papers

None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Revised Subsistence and Expenses Policy

Appendix 2 - Diversity Impact Assessment