

APPENDIX C: Secondment Policy

From time to time secondment opportunities, both full and part time, arise both within and external to the Council. The Council recognises that secondment is a valuable tool in staff development, enhancing skills, communications and resourcing of short term projects. For the individual, it allows the employee to gain wider experience and exposure to a differing range of situations.

Type of Secondments

A variety of positions may be advertised as suitable for secondment but will usually fall into one of the following categories:

- Short term project;
- Introduction of new initiative;
- Policy Development;
- Specific time-limited task;
- Receipt of external funding for a time limited period;
- Short-term appointment.

The duration of the secondment will depend on the circumstances giving rise to it but it may last from 1 month to 11 months. The duration must be clearly specified at the time of advertisement. Extensions beyond 11 months will only take place in exceptional circumstances with the formal agreement of the Director and Head of HR and Transformation on receipt of a business case. No extension will take a secondment beyond 23 months.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure this Policy is followed and to ensure that secondment requests are fully considered to maximise career development opportunities for employees, increase the skills mix of employees and to reduce the risk of redundancies.

It is also the responsibility of Managers to ensure that the lengths of secondments within their service area(s) are monitored to ensure that the timescales set out in this policy are.

It is the responsibility of People Services to make sure Managers are trained in this policy. It is also People Services responsibility to review and update this policy in line with new legislative requirements.

Eligibility

This Policy is applicable to all employees, although any employee wishing to take advantage of a secondment opportunity must seek agreement from their Manager before applying for a post. The Appointing Officer must speak to the Line Manager to confirm agreement prior to any secondment offer being made.

This Policy does not apply to acting-up arrangements which are likely to be more temporary in nature, for example to cover periods of sickness.

The Secondment Process

Secondment opportunities will be advertised internally and appointed to in accordance with the Council's Recruitment Policy.

Any applicant must discuss their application with their Manager and obtain agreement prior to submitting their application.

Employees whose request for a secondment is refused by their Manager will have the right to refer their request to their Head of Service or Director for further consideration. Any decision not to support a secondment will be explained fully to the employee and confirmed in writing. There will be no further right to appeal.

For an employee returning to their original post after an 11 month secondment or less, the Council undertakes to provide re-employment in the original post or where this is not reasonably practical, on duties of broadly similar nature and on an equivalent salary point.

When an employee is on secondment and a change is proposed under the Management of Change Procedure the employees rights are to their substantive post. In this case the employee may be asked to end their secondment early and return to their substantive post.

Where a Manager provides a business case to extend a secondment beyond 11 months up to a maximum of 23 months this must be agreed by the Director and Head of Service with responsibility for HR and Transformation.

Any extension of a secondment beyond 11 months may mean that the employee would lose their right to return to their substantive post, or may be in competition for their substantive post if the role has been filled with a fixed term contract.

The Council's aim must be to retain employees and not lose them when a seconded role comes to an end. This means an extension will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The business case must consider the following areas:

- the nature of the employee's substantive post and contracted terms
- the nature of the seconded post
- the length of the secondment
- the arrangements the Manager is able to make to cover the secondment
- the contracted terms of the person covering for the employee on secondment

In the event of a secondment being extended beyond 11 months and the employee not being able to return to their substantive post, where possible suitable alternative employment will be sought via the redeployment pool. If no employment is found the full notice period as stated in their Terms and Conditions of Employment must be given unless agreement to an alternative arrangement is reached with their substantive Manager. However, it is not the purpose of this policy to terminate employees at the end of a secondment and this must be considered in full before appointing an employee to a secondment position.

If an employee wishes to apply for a secondment to an external organisation, the above paragraphs will apply. It is also expected that the employee and their line Manager will agree to keep in touch throughout the secondment either by visits or by letter, at regular intervals of no more than 3 months.

Terms of Employment

Whilst on internal secondment the employee will be paid the appropriate grade and be entitled to annual leave levels commensurate with the duties and grade of the advertised post.

For an employee obtaining an external secondment the individual will not receive payment from the Council nor will accrue annual leave with the Council during the term of the secondment. Individuals undertaking an external secondment will be subject to the terms and conditions of the external organisation, but the secondment will not break their continuity of service with the Council providing their secondment does not exceed the maximum of 23 months.

Employees whose employment is subject to being registered with a professional body must either maintain their registration during a secondment, if it is to another area of work, or must ensure that they re-register prior to their return to their pre-secondment post. Employees who must fulfil specific service or training criteria to maintain or renew their registration must take these into account when considering making an application for secondment.