

Date of issue: 29th October 2012

MEETING	EMPLOYMENT & APPEALS COMMITTEE (Councillors Sharif (Chair), Plenty, Aujla, Chaudhry, Chohan, Coad, A S Dhaliwal, S K Dhaliwal and Sandhu)
DATE AND TIME:	TUESDAY, 30TH OCTOBER, 2012 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	MEETING ROOM 3, CHALVEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE GREEN, CHALVEY, SLOUGH, SL1 2SP
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	CATHERINE MEEK 01753 875011

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

The following Papers have been added to the agenda for the above meeting:-

Item 5A was not available for publication with the rest of the agenda.

PART 1

<u>AGENDA</u> <u>ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment & Appeals Committee
DATE: 30th October 2012
CONTACT OFFICER: Surjit Nagra, HR Business Partner
David Warren, JTUC
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875727
WARD(S): All

PART I
For Information

Dress Code

1 **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this is to update the Employment and Appeals Committee on the implementation of the new Dress Code.

2 **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights and other Legal Implications.

(c) **Equalities Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached for information.

It is considered that there will be no disproportionate impact on any specific groups of staff.

(d) **Workforce**

The provision of a Dress Code promotes and supports the Council's wishes to project a positive professional image to all residents, customers and colleagues.

4 **Supporting Information**

4.1 **Background**

Managers had raised that without a policy or dress code they were finding it difficult to encourage some staff to more appropriate standards of dress. There were concerns

regarding the appearance of some staff and the possible negative image this may present for Slough.

As an organisation we need to acknowledge that all employees act as representatives of the organisation and should therefore be dressed accordingly. How employees dress and present themselves plays an important part in conveying a professional image that Slough Borough Council portrays to its customers and the general public.

This Dress Code was drafted jointly by David Warren (from JTUC) and Surjit Nagra (HR Business Partner). The draft was put together after undertaking research as to how other organisations tackle this issue.

The Staff Disability forum was consulted with and their comments and views reviewed and incorporated into the code.

The key elements of the code include

- Encouraging a corporate awareness of the need for appropriate dress
- Recognising service areas where there is a requirement to have a formal dress code in line with the service they provide i.e. Customer Service Centre
- Supporting managers in how to address issues around inappropriate dress
- Making employees aware of the acceptable standards of dress and the consequence if this is not adhered to

4.2 Implementation Process

The implementation process to introduce the new Dress Code will include various communication methods including;

- Grapevine staff newsletter
- News round email
- All user e-mail
- To include in the HR Policy briefings to staff and managers
- HR Business Partners at Senior Management Team Meetings.

5. Background Papers

None.

6. **Appendices (attached)**

Appendix 1 Dress Code

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Dress Code Statement

The Council wishes to give a good impression and project a positive professional image to all users of its services, whether residents, customers or colleagues. The appearance of employees is a key element in this.

Slough Borough Council recognises that like most organisations, all employees act as representatives of the organisation and should therefore be dressed accordingly. How employees dress and present themselves plays an important part in conveying the professional image that Slough Borough Council portrays to its customers and general public. For this reason employees are asked to be aware of how they present themselves and to adhere to the dress code standards at all times when representing Slough Borough Council.

1. Scope

This Code applies to all employees and workers of the Council.

In some service areas uniforms are provided and these should be worn in accordance with agreed local dress code standards

2. Key Principles

The appearance of our employees can affect the way customers and residents view the Council. While understanding of the differences individuals display is necessary, consideration must be given to the impact appearance has on others. Clothes, footwear, hair, make-up, jewellery, piercing, tattoos and personal hygiene all contribute to how the Council and its employees are viewed.

Employees should dress appropriately and look professional at all times related to their duties they undertake in their role and be mindful of their overall appearance.

Consideration of health and safety factors must be taken into account and personal protective clothing and equipment must be worn when required. This includes exposure to weather (e.g. sun protection).

Employees required to wear a uniform have a responsibility to keep it clean, smart and in good repair, and ensure they comply with the local dress code standards set for the service area.

High standards of personal hygiene are required and inadequate standards will be addressed through this code.

Clothes may be worn for cultural or religious reasons, providing they comply with this code. The Equality Act 2010 requires that reasonable adjustments need to be made for disabled employees. This is to ensure that they are not indirectly discriminated against by a particular general requirement. An example of this could be:

An employer has a policy which states that certain types of footwear are unacceptable. This may disadvantage a member of staff who has conditions relating to their feet and may not be able to wear "standard" footwear.

All employees are required to wear identity/name badges at all times whilst at work.

Any breach of this code by council employees may result in disciplinary action being taken. Breaches of this code by agency workers and contractors may result in termination of their services for the Council.

3. Procedure

If an employee is in breach of this code the manager must:

- draw this code to the attention of the employee
- inform them how they have breached the code
- consider the employees' responses
- advise them of the standards required
- and that further breaches may be subject to disciplinary action

This should be confirmed in writing to the employee.

In cases where breaches may compromise health and safety, or are inappropriate to front line services, employees will be required to carry out suitable alternative duties for the remainder of their working day. In all these cases HR advice must be sought.

In some instances it may be more sensitive and appropriate for a manager of the same gender as the employee to be asked to deal with breaches of this code.

4. Management Guidance

Managers have a responsibility for ensuring that employees are made aware of this code and that it is adhered to at all times. Appropriate and smart appearance must be taken into account when considering the specific factors, circumstances and environment of the job. These factors may include;

- Respect for colleagues (avoid causing embarrassment or intimidation)
- Meeting clients and the nature of the client group
- Representing the Council in a public facing role
- Health and Safety, including personal protective clothing and equipment

Employees have a corporate duty to comply with this code and to project a professional image encouraging public trust and confidence and to contribute to the corporate image. They should be mindful of the effect their appearance (clothes, make-up, jewellery, piercing, tattoos) has on others and should, for example avoid:

- clothes that may cause embarrassment through being revealing or over exposing parts of the body e.g. strapless tops, shorts
- cloths that could be seen as provocative e.g. transparent tops
- an appearance that may appear intimidating

Whilst there may be differing views of the meaning of “appropriate and smart” the following provides a guide to what is not acceptable.

This list is an indication and is not exhaustive.

- sports clothes and footwear (other than in appropriate areas e.g. leisure services)
- slogans / inappropriate images. Small designer logos are acceptable
- beach type clothing and footwear e.g. flipflops
- evening / night club wear e.g. strapless tops
- torn or dirty clothing (taking into account the nature of the role)
- any badges/ logos of a political nature

It may on occasion be appropriate to wear more casual clothing during office moves / specific tasks as authorised by the Manager.

Whilst it is recognised that environment will influence appearance (i.e. during hot weather) employees must maintain appropriate standards in line with this code.

5. Review Process

This code will be reviewed within the next 12 months of approval.

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Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: Resources and Regeneration	
Service: Human Resources	
Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Christine Ford/Surjit Nagra	
Date of Assessment: October 2012	
Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Dress Code Statement	
1.	<p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the code, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>To provide clear and consistent guidance to managers and staff about acceptable standards of dress for SBC employees. The council recognises that how employees dress is important in conveying a professional image to internal colleagues, customers and the general public. The main areas of the code are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging a corporate awareness of the need for appropriate dress • Recognising service areas where there is a requirement to have a formal dress code in line with the service they provide i.e. Customer Service Centre. • Supporting managers in how to address issues around inappropriate dress • Making employees aware of the acceptable standards of dress and the consequence if this is not adhered to
2.	<p>Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function? State if this is undertaken by more than one team, service, and department including any external partners.</p> <p>This is within the HR policy and procedures which are applicable to all employees. Managers are responsible for ensuring staff are aware of the code and that appropriate standards of dress are adhered to. Employees are responsible for ensuring they have read the code. Monitoring of the code remains with HR.</p>
3.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc. Please consider all of the Protected Characteristics listed (more information is available in the background information). Bear in mind that people affected by the proposals may well have more than one protected characteristic.</p> <p>Age: ✓ Disability: ✓ Gender Reassignment: ✓ Marriage and Civil Partnership: ✓ Pregnancy and maternity: ✓</p>

	<p>Race: ✓ Religion and Belief: ✓ Sex: ✓ Sexual orientation: ✓ Other:</p> <p>All staff will be affected by the dress code. The council has a diverse workforce and some staff dress in accordance with cultural and religious requirements. Some staff have specific dress needs related to their disabilities. The code clearly states that reasonable adjustments should be made to accommodate the needs of disabled staff (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010) , and to allow for cultural and religious dress to be observed.</p>
4.	<p>What are any likely positive impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? You may wish to refer to the Equalities Duties detailed in the background information.</p> <p>The code exists to support both managers and staff in setting appropriate standards of dress; managers are supported in being able to challenge inappropriate dress that may be causing embarrassment for internal colleagues and customers, and/or projecting an unprofessional image. Staff are aware upon commencing employment with the council what standards of dress are expected. The code is not exhaustive or hugely prescriptive – it seeks to set some minimum standards and enable managers to exercise judgment and reasonableness in relationship to the work of their specific teams. It also seeks to increase overall awareness of the impact that dress has on both internal colleagues and the general public.</p>
5.	<p>What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? If so then are any particular groups affected more than others and why?</p> <p>It is possible that certain groups may feel discriminated against if they feel they cannot dress to meet their needs and individual self expression. The code specifically states the need to make reasonable adjustments to support disabled staff and to allow for religious and cultural dress choices. The code identifies a process whereby a manager can challenge a member of staff for inappropriate dress but allows for the employee to give a reasonable response.</p>
6.	<p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Please state evidence sources and conclusions drawn (e.g. survey results, customer complaints, monitoring data etc).</p> <p>Workforce profile of the council :</p>
7.	<p>Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results, e.g. have the staff forums/unions/ community groups been involved?</p> <p>Full consultation with Joint Trade Union Secretaries, Directors and 2nd Tier Managers through August and September 2012. Consultation with Employees with Disability Forum and Equality and Diversity Manager.</p>

	There was widespread support for having guidance as some managers expressed they were finding it hard to move some staff to appropriate standards of dress with nothing in place corporately.
8.	<p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? For example what plans, if any, will be put in place to reduce the impact?</p> <p>Publicity around promoting the code and full review after 12 months. Managers with queries will be supported by guidance from HR.</p>
9.	<p>What plans do you have in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? (The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented). Please see action plan below.</p> <p>This code will be fully reviewed after 12 months to ensure that it is meeting its stated aims, and is providing consistent support to managers and staff in identifying appropriate dress. In particular, the equalities implications of this code will be re-considered to ensure that staff are not being unfairly disadvantaged and particular groups are not being discriminated against. (i.e. disabled staff and those wishing to observe religious or cultural dress).</p>

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply	✓
Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	✓
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified? (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 3: Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You will need to ensure that the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact (see questions below). (Complete action plan).	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (Complete action plan).	

Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

At this stage a timetabled Action Plan should be developed to address any concerns/issues related to equality in the existing or proposed policy/service or function. This plan will need to be integrated into the appropriate Service/Business Plan.

Action	Target Groups	Lead Responsibility	Outcomes/Success Criteria	Monitoring & Evaluation	Target Date	Progress to Date
October 2013	All staff	Surjit Nagra	Review of impact of dress code; staff consultation/feedback, analysis of breaches and complaints			

Name: Christine Ford
Signed: (Person completing the EIA)
Name: ...Surjit Nagra – HR Business Partner.....
Signed: (Policy Lead if not same as above)
Date: