

Report to: Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 20 September 2019

By: Chief Operating Officer

Title: Proposed amendments to the Employee Loans Policy and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers

Purpose: To seek the Committee's approval for the introduction of an additional loan scheme for employees and related amendments to the scheme of delegation to officers

Recommendations

The Governance Committee is recommended to:

1. approve the scope of the employee loans policy being extended to provide for funding a rental deposit and associated costs for employees of the County Council; and
 2. recommend the County Council to agree to amend the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report
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1. Background

- 1.1. The County Council has a range of schemes under which employees can request a loan:
 - bicycle purchase
 - public transport season ticket
 - car purchase
 - learning to drive.
- 1.2. Following a recent round of recruitment of social workers, some Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) reported difficulty in funding a rental deposit when looking to accept roles with the Council. As a result of discussions between HR & OD and social work managers, it is proposed to introduce an additional purpose for employee loans to support with this, available to all staff (not just NQSWs).

2. Supporting information

Additional loan purpose

- 2.1. The additional purpose for loans to employees would be for paying a rental deposit and associated costs such as referencing. The Council is permitted to use its funds for these purposes and there would be no costs to the organisation beyond administration of the loans.
- 2.2. The terms and conditions of the scheme would mirror those of the other existing schemes. Notably, a loan would be offered at 0% interest (of the current schemes, only vehicle loans – which tend to be of higher value – attract any interest). As with all other employee loans, evidence such as a receipt would be required from the employee that they have used the money for the intended purpose.

- 2.3. While the issue which has prompted these proposals relates to NQSWs, it is recommended that the scheme is made available to all staff. Whilst recognising that there are well documented national social worker recruitment and retention issues, this will also be a tool which could support recruitment and retention of staff in a range of scenarios, such as:
- those who have recently left full-time education with significant debts
 - those looking to leave the parental home for the first time to move geographically closer to their place of work
 - those dealing with the breakdown of a family unit such as a divorce.

Scheme of Delegation to Officers

- 2.4. The current Scheme of Delegation to Officers contains the following delegation:
In accordance with the policy of the County Council to authorise...
- e) an employee to use his/her private vehicle on official business and, in consultation with the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and Chief Operating Officer, to grant applications for loans under the County Council’s Assisted Car Purchase Scheme.
- 2.5. The Assisted Car Purchase Scheme has been replaced by the opportunity to apply for a loan to purchase a car under the employee loan policy. In practice, there is no involvement for the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport or the Chief Operating Officer in the approval of employee car loans. It is therefore proposed to amend the Scheme of Delegation to Chief Officers as set out below

Current	Proposed
8. In accordance with the policy of the County Council to authorise... e) an employee to use his/her private vehicle on official business and, in consultation with the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and Chief Operating Officer, to grant applications for loans under the County Council’s Assisted Car Purchase Scheme	8. In accordance with the policy of the County Council to authorise... e) an employee to use their private vehicle on official business f) approval of applications for loans to employees in accordance with the Employee Loans Policy

3. Conclusions and recommendations

- 3.1. Introducing the additional purpose for loans would serve to support the recruitment and retention of employees across a range of scenarios. It would mirror an existing set of business processes and as such requires no additional resourcing.

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