



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14TH JULY 2015

SUBJECT: TIME OFF FOR RESERVISTS POLICY

**REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151
OFFICER**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members of the recent review of the Time Off For Reservists Policy.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has had a Time Off For Reservists Policy (Reservists Policy) since 1996, with the latest version becoming effective in 2013. As Members are aware, the Council's HR policies are reviewed on an on-going basis and the Reservists Policy was scheduled for review in 2015. This report brings the outcome of the review and the revised policy to Members for information.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Policy links to the People Management Strategy and therefore to all other strategies, including the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance. The Council relies on employees to deliver its strategies and to provide services.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has had a Reservists Policy since 1996, with the latest version becoming effective in 2013. The current Reservists Policy was scheduled for review in 2015.
- 4.2 The Council grants employees who are in the Reserve Forces up to 15 days paid leave per annum (pro rata'd for part time employees) to meet their commitments in relation to training to the reserve forces. This leave must be approved in advance and booked as soon as the employee becomes aware that they need to take time off.
- 4.3 Traditionally, the Council has recognised that many of the skills that reservists gain during their training are transferable to the workplace and as a result it has assisted reservists as far as possible, for example by taking into account unusual leave requirements or the need to amend working patterns. There are only a small number of employees who are reservists but there is a planned recruitment exercise in the near future.
- 4.4 There is no requirement for the Council to pay reservists during their absence on military operations. During this period reservists receive service pay from the Ministry Of Defence

(MOD), along with a standard award to make up any difference (up to the statutory limit) between their service pay and normal average weekly earnings.

- 4.5 Prior to returning to the Council's employment, reservists undergo a period of debriefing before they are demobbed. After being demobbed, reservists are entitled to a period of leave during which they continue to be paid by the MOD.
- 4.6 Research amongst other Councils in the South Wales area has shown that Caerphilly is still one of the most supportive employers with regard to the provisions within the policy. As a result, the review has identified that there are no fundamental changes to the policy required. The only changes that have been made are
- a sentence has been included to make it clearer that part time employees have a pro rata entitlement as they do for all leave of absence, with the exception of bereavement leave.
 - the layout of the policy has been changed to the new format that we are using.
 - changes to the terminology that the reserve forces themselves use for example Territorial Army is no longer a term that is used, Army Reserve is used instead.
 - the support agencies available have been updated.
- 4.7 The Council's recognised trade unions, both the Armed Forces Lead Officer and Chair of the Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum (CAFF) and the Elected Members' Armed Forces Champion and relevant Cabinet Members have been consulted on the policy and their feedback has been included in the final draft of the policy, which is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.8 The policy will be placed on the Council's HR Support Portal and employees will be made aware of its introduction via an all user email to employees and Managers. Managers of employees who do not have access to the Council's email system or Intranet will be asked to make their employees aware of the new policy.
- 4.9 The policy will apply to all employees except those employees directly employed by schools. For the policy to apply to schools each School Governing Body is required to adopt the policy. HR staff Team will facilitate this process via agreed consultation process for school policies.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Senior Policy Officer (Welsh Language and Equalities) has been consulted on this policy and all equalities issues have been addressed.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The financial implications of implementing this policy refer to the 15 days per year for training and are unknown as it will depend on the numbers of reservists that the Council currently employees and those it will employ in the future. However, traditionally numbers of reservists have been low so there has been no onerous financial implication.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising from the implementation of the revised policy.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no other consultation responses other than those included in the report. The Council's Trade Unions, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language), the Armed Forces Lead Officer and Chair of the Caerphilly Armed Forces Forum (CAFF) and the Elected Members' Armed Forces Champion and relevant Cabinet Members have been consulted on the introduction of the new policy.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Members note the content of the report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 There are no fundamental changes to the policy from last time.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972
Local Government Act 2000
Employment Rights Act 1996.

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Gail Williams, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer Angharad Price, Interim
Deputy Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Manager
Dave Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Welsh Language and Equalities)
Howard Rees, Armed Forces Lead Officer and Chair of the Caerphilly Armed Forces
Forum (CAFF)
Councillor David Poole – Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Christine Forehead – Cabinet Member for HR and Constitutional Affairs
Councillor Alan Higgs – Armed Forces Champion
HR Strategy Group
Councils recognised Trade Unions

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Time Off For Reservists Policy