

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE –26 APRIL, 2012**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:**

Grievance Procedure

**Author(s):**

Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

**Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of the report is to propose a new grievance procedure for Sunderland City Council

**Description of Decision:**

It is recommended that the new grievance, proposed by the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, be approved.

**Suggested reason(s) for Decisions:**

It is proposed that the Council adopts the attached proposed grievance procedure as it meets the requirements of the ACAS Code of Practice and streamlines the process. In addition it fits with the Council's values, by retaining the appropriate levels of decision making at a senior level within the Organisation, to ensure fair and positive employee relations are maintained.

In summary the proposed procedure consists of the following stages:

- Informal Stage - It is proposed that the role of the manager in the new procedure should be focused upon resolving the grievance informally wherever possible. The availability of mediation is also highlighted in this section to encourage the informal resolution of issues.
- Formal Stage 1 (The Grievance Hearing) - It is also proposed that Stage 1 of the formal procedure is heard by the Head or Service, or someone nominated by them, alongside a representative from Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR&OD).
- Formal Stage 2 (The Grievance Appeal) - It is proposed that Stage 2 of the formal procedure (the Appeal) is heard by the relevant Chief Officer, alongside a representative from HR&OD. The decision at Stage 2 will be final.

The proposed procedure does not include set timescales for responding. Instead it mirrors the language of the ACAS Code of Practice in that responses must be provided by managers without unreasonable delay. The requirement for issues to be dealt with in a timely manner remains an important principle when managing grievance cases.

It is also proposed that a similar process for dealing with collective grievances should be introduced. A collective grievance is a grievance raised on behalf of a number of employees and is fairly common. Currently there is no specific procedure for dealing with such issues other than the collective disputes procedure which is often inappropriate for the majority of cases.

The revised ACAS code has removed the requirement to have a procedure for dealing with grievances from ex-employees. The Council's revised procedure does not, therefore, include a process for this. It is proposed that a representative from HR&OD, alongside the relevant Head of Service will consider how the Council will respond to any grievance received in these circumstances on a case by case basis.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

Alternative options were considered. One option would be to retain the current procedure; however, this option would not address the current problems being experienced. Other amendments to the current process were considered but it was decided that these would not deliver the improvements required. In addition the procedure proposed meets the requirements of the ACAS Code of Practice.

**Impacts analysed:**

Equality  Privacy  Sustainability  Crime and Disorder

**Is this a "Key Decisions" as defined in the Constitution?**

No

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee:**

Management Scrutiny Committee

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?**

No