

# Somerset County Council

## HR Policy Committee

– 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021

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### Covid 19 Vaccination Policy – 2021

Cabinet Member: Cllr Mandy Chilcott, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources

Lead Officer: Chris Squire, HR&OD Director

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	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	Legal	Honor Clarke	06/04/21
	Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	12/04/21
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	07/04/21
	Cabinet Member	Mandy Chilcott	06/04/21
	Monitoring Officer	Scott Wooldridge	12/04/21
	<b>Summary:</b>	The Report sets out a proposed policy for the Authority on vaccinations against Covid 19 in Somerset County Council.	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>The HR Policy Committee is asked to :</b>  <b>1. Agree to the implementation of the Covid 19 Vaccination Policy.</b>		
<b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b>	To ensure that the Council complies with the expectation that staff, particularly those in relevant frontline roles, are encouraged to take up the offer of the vaccine.		
<b>Links to Priorities and Impact on Service Plans:</b>	The policy reflects national government guidance and therefore meets the expectation that a public body, such as Somerset County Council encourages staff to protect those they serve, especially those in vulnerable groups.		
<b>Financial, Legal and HR Implications:</b>	The new policy meets the requirements of government guidance and is in line with other guidance relating to vaccinations. There are no specific financial, legal or HR implications at this time.		
<b>Equalities Implications:</b>	The Council's duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have "due regard" to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions. There are no direct equality impacts associated with implementing the policy itself. We are mindful of those in BAME groups who are statistically less inclined to take up the offer of the vaccination.		

	There are some potential impacts on health and safety and community safety as a result of those in frontline roles not taking up the offer of a vaccination. Risk assessments will be key to addressing these matters.
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	If the Council fails to comply with the government drive to ensure that all eligible individuals are offered and encouraged to take up the offer of a vaccination, then there is risk of challenge.
<b>Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):</b>	None

## 1. Background

- 1.1.** This policy outlines the Council's stance on employee's being vaccinated against COVID-19, including manager and employee responsibilities, considerations when undertaking risk assessments and paid time off provision to attend vaccination appointments.

## 2. Options Considered

- 2.1.** Consideration was given to the possibility of making it mandatory for individuals occupying certain job roles to be vaccinated. This was not accepted at this point due to the law not currently supporting this. However, this is a subject of national debate and will be revisited if appropriate.

## 3. Consultations undertaken

- 3.1.** The Policy has been fully shared and discussed with the relevant unions. Feedback received at the Joint Negotiating Forum on 25<sup>th</sup> March has been incorporated.
- 3.2.** SLT has also been consulted and views taken into account. Particular attention was given to the vulnerable groups the Council provides services to. The commitment was to revisit this policy if the national picture changes in relation to mandating vaccinations for specific roles.

## 4. Implications

- 4.1.** The recommendations are intended to ensure that the Covid Vaccination Policy maintains an appropriate balance between the voluntary nature of a vaccination offer and the welfare of the service users.

## **5. Background papers**

### **5.1** Appendix 1 – Proposed Covid 19 Vaccination Policy.