



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET 8 JANUARY 2026</b>
Subject	<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF TWO NEW POLICIES</b> <b>1. CARERS LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE AND</b> <b>2. DOGS AT WORK POLICY</b>
Wards affected	None
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Summary/Purpose	Cabinet to consider the implementation of two new policies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Carers Leave Policy and Procedure – Introduces the statutory entitlement to carers' leave following recent legislative changes and outlines how the Council will support employees who need to balance work with caring responsibilities.</li><li>2. Dogs at Work Policy – Sets out when and how dogs may be permitted in the workplace, including the conditions and safeguards required to ensure a safe and appropriate working environment.</li></ol>
Annexes	Annex A – Carers Leave Policy and Procedure Annex B – Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form (Carers Leave Policy and Procedure) Annex C- Dogs at Work Policy Annex D- Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form (Dogs at Work Policy)



Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: a) Approve the Carers Leave Policy and Procedure and b) Approve the Dogs at Work Policy
Corporate priorities	• Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Carers Leave Policy and Procedure and Dogs at Work Policy have been shared with the two recognised trade unions of Unison and GMB. The policies have also been shared internally with the Cotswold District Council Culture Club.



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.1** The Carers Leave Policy and Procedure has been drafted to ensure that we comply with legislation. The policy sets out the statutory right of employees to carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependent with a long-term care need, and other support that we offer to combine work with care. We recognise the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health. We are committed to doing what we can to help ensure the health and wellbeing of employees with caring responsibilities is looked after.

**1.2** The Dog at Work Policy sets out the circumstances in which dogs are allowed to be in the workplace. We recognise the challenges that being a responsible dog owner presents and that usually dogs require daily exercise, affection and companionship. As a Council we are committed to providing a safe, productive and respectful workplace and we believe that having dogs present would present significant challenges to this commitment for staff, visitors and councillors. There are only a limited set of circumstances in which dogs are permitted to be in the workplace.

**1.3** HR Policies provide general and practical advice and guidance for managers and staff on a range of employment issues. The policy supports fairness and consistency across the Council and helps to protect the Council against legal claims.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

**2.1** Regular policy review and revision need to be carried out on a regular basis and in line with employment law updates in April and October. Delegated authority to make reasonable amends was given to the Chief Executive Officer of Cotswold District Council.

## **3. MAIN POINTS**

**3.1** A Carers Leave Policy and Procedure has been drafted to set out the statutory right of employees to carer's leave. A carer is anyone with caring responsibilities who provides care, assistance and support to any other individual who may be seriously ill or unable to care for themselves. The amount of carer's leave that you can take is up to one week (pro rata) in any 12-month rolling period. It can be taken in one block, as individual days or as half days. Carers leave is unpaid.



- 3.2** The Dogs at Work Policy states clearly that dogs are not permitted on Council premises during working hours. The exception is in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 where the Council will make reasonable adjustments to support staff with disabilities. Assistance dogs are fully exempt from this policy and are permitted access to all areas of the workplace. The Council is responsible for making reasonable adjustments to ensure that the employee and their assistance dog are safe and comfortable in the workplace.
- 3.3** HR policies provide legal protection for the Council. Clear guidance is provided that reflects employment law and regulations and can help mitigate risk for the Council.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1** Not having a clear policy may put the Council at risk of challenge and not being compliant with legislation.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1** The policies have been drafted to ensure the Council is legally compliant.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The introduction of the two policies outlined in this report is not anticipated to result in any significant financial burden for the Council. Existing resources are expected to accommodate the changes without requiring additional funding or staffing.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides for the right to unpaid carers' leave (section 80J & K), as further specified in the Carer's Leave Regulations 2024.
- 7.2** Regulation 4 of the Carer's Leave Regulations 2024 defines "carer" and requires notice to be served from the carer on the employer before leave can be taken. Regulation 5 entitles carers to up to one working week of leave for caring duties over the last 12 months, the minimum period to be taken being half a day. Any shorter period would be covered by the Council's flexi policy.
- 7.3** There is no requirement in legislation to allow pets in the workplace, except when linked to a disability.



**7.4** Both policies intend to bring into place the latest legislation, which the Council is required to comply with.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**8.1** By not updating and implementing these policies, the Council may fail to comply with employment legislation, namely the Carer's Leave Act 2023 and The Equality Act 2010 and leave itself exposed to costly employment law cases.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**9.1** An Equality Impact assessment has been undertaken, and the policy has been considered to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## **10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

**10.1** There are none arising.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

(END)