



## RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The following is a record of the decisions taken at the meeting of **CABINET** held on **Wednesday 17 April 2024**. The decisions will come into force and may be implemented from **Monday 29 April 2024** unless the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or its Committees object to any such decision and call it in.

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### **Annual Review of the Constitution**

#### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer which presented the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution as part of the annual review process.

The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made, and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The Constitution is reviewed on an annual basis. The last review of the Constitution was presented to Council for adoption on 24 May 2023.

#### **Decision**

##### **The Cabinet:**

- (a) approved the delegation of executive powers as set out in the proposed amendments to the officer scheme of delegation at paragraphs 22 – 43 of the report; and
- (b) recommended that Council agree to the proposed revisions to the Constitution at its meeting on 22 May 2024.

### **Durham County Council becoming signatories to the MIND Mental Health at Work Commitment**

#### **Summary**

The Cabinet considered the joint report of Corporate Director of Adult & Health Services and Director of Public Health that presented an overview of the

ongoing good work to improve mental health and wellbeing. The report also provided an overview of the Mind Mental Health at Work Commitment and propose that Durham County Council becomes a signatory to the Commitment.

Improving mental health, resilience and wellbeing is one of the four key priorities of the County Durham Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28. Work is a key influence on health, and being in good work has a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Previously Durham County Council was a signatory of the Time to Change Employer Pledge, which was a commitment by organisations to change the way we all think and act about mental health in the workplace. The pledge was underpinned by a 12-month Employer Action plan that was founded upon the principles of the Thriving at Work Report (2017). It attracted signatories from a range of County Durham organisations and became a locally recognised approach to improving workplace mental health and wellbeing. It was also complemented by annual 'Time to Talk' campaigns that brought people together to normalise mental health conversations.

Time to Change (the charity) closed in March 2021; however, signatory organisations were allowed to continue to use the pledge. Mind has committed to carry on the pledge work through the Mind Mental Health at Work Commitment, which is based on the following 'Thriving at Work' core standards:

- produce, implement, and communicate a mental health at work plan;
- develop mental health awareness among employees;
- encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling;
- provide your employees with good working conditions;
- promote effective people management;
- routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing.

The council demonstrates its commitment to employee health and wellbeing, through mandatory training for managers, supportive policies and practices, the Employee Assistance Programme, and other good people management initiatives as well as our workplace champions. Signing the commitment will help us move forward in a supported, structured way, enhancing current provision.

'Stamp It Out' is a local charity that is commissioned by Durham County Council to deliver work to address mental health stigma and discrimination. As part of this work, it co-ordinates and oversees the Mind Mental Health at Work Commitment in County Durham and to date, 25 local organisations have become signatories.

The commitment comes at no cost, and by becoming a signatory, the council would not only demonstrate a corporate commitment to mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, but it would also benefit from the quality, evidence-based resources provided by Mind.

Signatory organisations receive access to a range of communication and marketing material, this includes the Mental Health at Work Commitment logo (see appendix 2 of the report), internal communications templates, news items, staff emails, a power-point for staff briefings/meetings, guidance for producing blogs, external communications templates, including templates for media releases, recruitment webpage copy and guidance for social media posts.

Progress against core standards would be monitored through the Better Health at Work group that is chaired by the Corporate Director of Adults and Health Services.

The proposal for Durham County Council to become signatories has been supported by the Better Health at Work group, Corporate Management Team, and the Trade Unions.

If approved, it is planned to launch and promote the commitment during Mental Health Awareness Week in May, to both raise awareness (of the commitment) and encourage other local organisations to sign up and commit to improving workplace mental health and wellbeing. This was a successful means of promoting the previous Time to Change Employer Pledge, which saw engagement by County Durham Partnership organisations, as well and other public, private, and voluntary sector organisations.

## **Decision**

### **The Cabinet:**

- a) noted the contents of the report;
- b) agreed that Durham County Council becomes a signatory to the MIND Mental Health at Work Commitment;
- c) encourage other organisations to become signatories to the commitment.

Helen Bradley  
Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
19 April 2024