

Item 9 - Question Time

To the Leader of the Council

“What has been done to review and strengthen the Council’s internal procedures in respect of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, ensuring that people can raise concerns directly and in confidence to an appointed person or person(s), who will be available and approachable by anyone wishing to make a confidential complaint?”

Response to Ms M Smith

“The Council is committed through the Harassment at Work Policy to tackle harassment in the workplace and to deal with complaints and allegations in a fair, consistent and sensitive way.

Under this policy any incident of harassment will be regarded as extremely serious, and could be grounds for disciplinary action including dismissal. All employees are made aware that harassment (whether intentional or not) will not be tolerated or deemed acceptable by the Highland Council. This policy is supported by equal opportunities training and e-learning.

Depending on the circumstances and nature of the allegations, employees can raise concerns, and seek support, through a Harassment Counsellor, HR Officer or Service Director.

The Head of People and ICT Commissioned a review of the Harassment at Work Policy in October 2017 in order to ensure that it continues to reflect best practice.

We are also planning to undertake training for elected members covering bullying and Harassment during (before / after) a Full Council meeting in the New Year where its easiest to catch all elected members in a group – hopefully there will be cross party support for such an initiative which will send a powerful message of support from members.“