

**Report for:** Staffing & Remuneration Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018

**Title:** HR Policy Review

**Report authorised by :** Mark Rudd, AD – Corporate Resources

**Lead Officer:** Ian Morgan – Reward Strategy Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Non-key

**1 Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1 The report outlines the background to the review of HR policies currently being undertaken, the progress made to date and the planned timetable to complete the review.

**2 Cabinet Member Introduction**

Not applicable.

**3 Recommendations**

3.1 The Committee to note the report.

**4 Reason for Decision**

4.1 The majority of HR policies currently in use were adopted several years ago. Changes in case law and employment practices have meant that a comprehensive review is needed to ensure our policies are compliant, coherent and fit for purpose.

**5 Alternative options considered**

5.1 The option of doing nothing and leaving the policies unchanged is not viable. The alternative is to undertake a comprehensive review of HR policies to encompass not only the content but also the format and method of consultation.

**6 Background information**

6.1 The last policy review took place in 2011/12, with the majority of policies being given final agreement by Corporate Committee in 2012. Since then new guidelines and documents have been adopted on an ad hoc basis to cover either changes to HR practice, legislative changes or new areas of work. As a result, we now have a mix of Policies, Guidance Notes, Management Information Notes, Flowcharts and FAQ documents.

6.2 There is no coherent look or feel to the policies and guidelines, and navigating through the separate forty two documents has proved challenging to managers trying to implement them, to HR when providing operational support and

direction, and to staff when trying to make sense of their responsibilities and rights.

- 6.3 One of the key aims of the review is to streamline the number of policies by organising them into clusters by topic. By way of example, a cluster covering employment checks would bring together all our statutory obligations regarding the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, Disclosure and Barring Service, etc., where we have certain duties regarding both directly employed staff and those who are contracted to provide services on our behalf. Appendix A gives details of the proposed clusters.
- 6.4 The new policy format to be adopted will be applied consistently and will follow the format of an introduction outlining the purpose, after which will be the scope i.e. who it applies to, followed by the general principles and finally the specific responsibilities of the individuals, managers, senior managers etc. Finally, there will be a signpost for further reading when specific policies or forms are mentioned in the text.
- 6.5 Where required and especially for policies regarding employment legislation, separate practice notes will accompany the policy which will clearly set out the responsibilities of the line manager, HR, the employee and their representative. This separation of policy and guidance is reflective of the Committee's responsibilities. Whilst guidance documents may be approved by officers, changes to, or the creation or removal of, policies will only be approved by the Staffing and Remuneration Committee, save that authority will be delegated to the Assistant Director Corporate Resources to make any changes required as a result of legislative change, or where a proposed change is:
- a) a minor variation; or
  - b) required in order to remove any inconsistency or ambiguity; or
  - c) required so as to give effect to any decision of the Council or one of its committees or sub-committees; or the Cabinet or one of its committees or sub-committees.

This is to ensure that policies are maintained and to protect the interests of the Council (e.g. by giving effect to legal changes promptly). Where any such changes are made to a policy by the Assistant Director Corporate Resources, these will be reported to the next meeting of the Staffing and Remuneration Committee for information.

The proposal was discussed with the trade union before the review was started and they are supportive of the change as they feel that clear and consistent documents will be of benefit to all parties concerned.

- 6.6 Before the final policy is brought to Committee, the views of HR colleagues, of the Employee side trade unions and of legal colleagues will be sought. If the timing of CEJCC meetings (Council and Employee Joint Consultative Committee) allows within the Committee timetable, the policy will also be taken to that meeting for discussion.

6.7 As a first step, a re-draft of the Grievance Policy and Code of Conduct have been undertaken, both documents have retained their original sense of purpose and their underlying intention. The comments and input of HR colleagues have been included, with the documents being considered at the HR/TU meeting in mid-September. The final versions for approval will be brought to Committee in December.

**7 Contribution to strategic outcomes**

N/A

**8 Statutory Officers' comments**

**8.1 Chief Finance Officer**

This report is for the Staffing & Remuneration Committee to note and there are no financial implications arising from this report.

**8.2 Assistant Director of Corporate Governance**

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report. The report to the Staffing and Remuneration Committee is for noting and there are no direct legal implications arising. Legal advice will be provided for the review of each individual policy.

**9 Use of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Proposed policy clusters

**10 Local government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Not applicable.