Report for: **Staffing & Remuneration Committee, 11th February 2019**

Item number:

Title: **HR Policy Review Progress Update**

**Report
authorised by :** **Mark Rudd**, **Assistant Director for Corporate Resources**

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

Ward(s) affected:

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

1   Describe the issue under consideration
The report outlines the progress made to the HR policy review and details of policies to be reviewed in the coming months.

2   Cabinet Member Introduction
Not applicable.

3   Recommendations
The Committee to note the report.

4   Reason for Decision
The need for a review of HR policies was outlined to Committee in October 2018. Approval was given to carrying out a review of existing HR policies and guidelines with the aim of ensuring that our policies are compliant and fit for purpose in the light of recent changes in case law and employment practices.

5   Alternative options considered
Not applicable. The report is a progress report and is for noting.

6   Background information

6.1   The format of HR policies and guidance notes have been amended to better reflect the different nature of the two documents.   The main document (the policy) outlines the main purpose of the policy, what the orgnaisation is trying to achieve, a clear indication of who it applies to, the key provisions and the core principles and accountabilities.

6.2   The practice note on the other hand expands on the policy to set out the organisation's operational requirements. The practice note summarises of the roles and responsibilities as they relate to managers, individuals, the HR team and, where appropriate, staff representatives. In addition timescales for the completion of each element will be given, where applicable.

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6.3 Developing a comprehensive communication and training plan for new policies is critical in ensuring that managers are aware of their role in carrying out day to day practical application of the policy, and in ensuring that staff are made aware of the changes and where they can access the information. HR Advisers, as the first point of contact to give advice and guidance on policy implementation, will be involved in the content and delivery of the training programme.. Internal communications are arranged in conjunction with the Communications team.

6.4 HR policies scheduled for approval by the Staffing & Remuneration Committee have already been through a number of stages to ensure that all relevant stakeholders have the opportunity for comment.

Stage 1   New or updated version formulated by HR
Stage 2   Legal services provide comments regarding new or amended legislation and / or case law.
Stage 3   Trades union input and comments are facilitated through the monthly Corporate IR meeting
Stage 4   Corporate Board consider the drafts of all HR policies
Stage 5   CEJCB review draft (where the timing of the meetings allows for this)
Stage 6   Approval of final version by S&R Committtee

The time it takes to complete the stages varies depending on the amount of revision needed, the complexity of the content and the timing of governance meetings.

6.5 For ease of review, signposting and navigation we have started to group the HR policies into clusters. The cluster titles include but are not limited to:

- Family Friendly – Adoption, Maternity, etc.
- Leading & Coaching – Grievance, Code of Conduct, etc.
- Managing Change – Restructuring, Redeployment, etc.
- Resourcing – Recruitment, Induction, etc.
- Work & Wellbeing – Flexible Working, etc.

6.6 The policies currently undergoing review include:

- An update to the Code of Conduct. Comments have been received on the first draft and it will now be sent to legal for their comments.
- Family Leave Practice Note which combines into one practice note existing Employee and Managers Guidelines for Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave and Leave for Nominated Carers. The new document has been updated to include details of Parental Leave and Shared Parental Leave.
- Recruitment Practice Note. This is an update to the existing guidelines which need reviewing in the light of changes to the internal recruitment process.

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- Dignity at Work policy, which updates and widens the scope of the existing Bullying & Harassment policy to include discrimination and victimisation.
- Employment Reference Practice Note. A new practice note which gives managers clear guidance on the process to be followed if they are asked to provide a reference in connection with an application for employment.

Policy revisions which are planned for the coming months include

- Sabbaticals Policy. This is provisional as research will be undertaken to look at the current practice across neighbouring boroughs before a decision is taken whether a separate policy is need to cover requests or whether they can be accommodated as part of an existing policy.
- A review of all the policies that influence and inform our Planned and Unplanned Leave practices. This will include policies and guidelines relating to TOIL, flexi-time, family leave, sickness absence, disability leave and special leave. As a number of these policies are interlinked, a working group will be set up to look at them holistically making sure that they are consistent and that they all meet the council's equality and diversity agenda in establishing an inclusive workforce.
- An updated Social Media policy to be owned and revised jointly by HR, IT and Communications. Recent changes to internal systems and processes require a policy to better meet our needs.
- The policies relating to Redundancy, Retirement, Restructure and Redeployment need revision to reflect the changes due to be made to the pay and grading arrangements from April 2019.

8   Contribution to strategic outcomes
Not applicable.

9   Statutory Officers' comments

9.1   Chief Finance Officer
There are no financial implications arising from the report.

9.2   Assistant Director of Corporate Governance
There are no legal implications arising from the report.

10   Use of Appendices
Not applicable.

11   Local government (Access to Information) Act 1985
Not applicable.

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