

Report for: Staffing and Remuneration Committee

Item number: 11

Title: Reviewed HR Policies – Probation

Report

authorised by: Richard Grice – Interim Director Transformation & Resources,

Lead Officer: Julie Amory, HR Business Partner, Human Resources

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This reports presents the Probation Policy and Probation Guide to be recommended by the Council for adoption, which falls within the employment theme ‘Getting and Retaining the Right People’.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

2.1 Not applicable

3. Recommendations

3.1. That the Committee approves the Probation Policy and Probation Guide attached at Appendices A and B of this report.

3.2. These new documents will replace any existing policies and guidance that is currently in place related to probation.

3.3. That the Committee authorises the Assistant Director Transformation and Resources in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to make such amendments to the Probation Policy and Probation Guide as he considers minor, any such amendments to be reported back to the meeting of the Committee following the making of the amendments.

4. Reason for decision

4.1 Having good HR policies and procedures assists in providing the workplace with a structure that supports the Council’s Corporate Plan, Workforce Plan and Values, while allowing it to

consider and implement changes in employment law, and guidance. Regular review of these documents ensures they remain fit for purpose and compliant with the law.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 The alternative would be to not conduct any reviews and continue to the existing versions. It is, however, accepted that reviewing HR policies is necessary to ensure these address changes in employment legislation and case law and are adapted to meet the Council's new Vision and Values. It is therefore accepted that regular reviews of the HR policies will be conducted.

6. Background information

- 6.1 The attached Probation Policy is an update of the current version, which was last reviewed in 2005. The 2005 version of the Probation Policy was attached to the Induction Policy and during the review process comments employees and line managers fed back that having the two policies combined created difficulty in locating the probation policy as it was stored under 'I' for induction. The decision was therefore made to separate the two into standalone documents. The revised Induction Policy was approved by this Staffing and Remuneration Committee in September 2016.
- 6.2 The content of the revised Probation Policy remains unchanged from the 2005 version, however, it has been transposed into the new template, which aims to make Haringey Council's HR policies consistent with its peer Local Authorities and best practice. A new element has been added to make it clear that individuals who are engaged under the Newly Qualified Social Workers or Qualified Practitioners scheme are subject to a longer probation (i.e. 12 months instead of 6 months).
- 6.3 The Council has various HR policies and procedures that cover its employment relationship with its workforce. Owned by HR these documents are periodically presented to the Staffing and Remuneration Committee for their approval prior to implementation. It is good practice to review HR policies regularly to ensure that these meet the Council's vision and values.
- 6.4 The documents presented to Committee today are in the new policy template that aims to make Haringey Council's consistent with its peer Local Authorities, increase transparency through merging similar policy issues into one document and streamline information to make it easier for the workforce to understand and access information on the behaviours and standards that the Council expects of its employees.
- 6.5 The documents continue to cluster similar policies into themes that cover the employment relationship that the Council has its workforce.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The draft documents were provided to Trade Unions on 10 August 2017 and later discussed at the Corporate Industrial Relations meeting chaired by HR on 23 August 2017.

72 The Statutory Officer's Group (SOG) were presented the documents for their consideration on 19 September.

73 Formal consultation also took place with Legal, HR SSC, Assistant Directors and the HR Business Partners. Following this process, refinements were made.

8. Review of the Probation Policy and Guide (Appendix A and Appendix B)

8.1 The existing Probation Policy was last reviewed in 2005 and was attached to the Induction Policy. The proposed version at Appendix A has been updated to the new format and as such the supporting Guide is located at Appendix B.

9. Contribution to strategic outcomes

9.1 The Council's Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious agenda, and one that will require significant change to deliver. Having clear, robust HR policies and procedures is a key element of how the Council will meet the Corporate Plan objectives by having fair and consistent approaches on how it manages and develops its workforce.

10. Statutory Officers' comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities Assistant Director of Corporate Governance Comments

Chief Finance Officer Comments

10.1 There are no financial implications associated to the Probation Policy and Probation Guide.

Assistant Director of Corporate Governance

10.2 Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report and makes the following comments. The policies comply with all relevant legal requirements.

11. Use of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft reviewed Probation Policy;

Appendix B – Draft reviewed Probation Guide.

12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

12.1 Not Applicable.