

**Joint Committee**  
**23rd February 2012**

**JOINT COMMITTEE – HUMAN RESOURCES & FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Recommendation**

That the Committee

- Approve the adoption of the personnel (Human Resources) policies and procedures of Bromsgrove District Council subject to revisions that are required to reflect the partnership arrangements
- Approve the delegation to the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Management Board to agree the wording revisions to individual HR policies
- Approve the adoption of the Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations of Bromsgrove District Council subject to revisions in relation to the references to the shared service management hierarchy and committee approval arrangements.

**Contribution to  
Priorities**

The adoption of clear and consistent Human Resources and financial policies will ensure that the services are delivered in a transparent and compliant way whilst meeting priorities.

**Introduction/Summary**

The purpose of the report is to present to the Joint Committee the arrangements for managing Human Resources (HR) and financial issues in line with robust policies and procedures.

**Background**

Human Resources

Following the establishment of the Worcestershire Shared Service Partnership for Regulatory Services in June 2010, arrangements were put in place for Bromsgrove District Council to act as the Host Authority for employment matters. Below is the relevant wording taken from the Shared Service Partnership Legal Agreement :

*“The Host Authority acts as the Employing Authority in relation to all staff employed in connection with the provision of the Shared Service.*

*The Host Authority delegates all functions concerning the management and the terms of employment of those*

*staff, including all matters relating to remuneration, conditions of service, recruitment and selection , discipline and grievance procedures, termination of employment, management and supervision)to the Joint Committee ..... provided that such terms and conditions of employment remain consistent with those of the Host Authority.”*

In practical terms this means that staff working in the Shared Service partnership are governed by a number of Human Resource Policies which have been developed and are owned by Bromsgrove District Council, relating to the legal, ethical, organisational and functional management of staff.

Within certain policies however problems of implementation arise from the practical applications of policy frameworks across the organisational structure of the Shared Service which is different in hierarchy, terminology and purpose from the District Council. These particularly relate to functions discharged by Bromsgrove District Council Councillors and senior managers which must be dealt with by the Joint committee or a sub-committee appointed by it. An example was the constitution of a sub –committee to appoint the Head of WRS.

It is essential that the wording of adopted policies correctly reflects the relationship between the Joint Committee and Bromsgrove District Council so that no opportunity for legal challenge is created in the event that WRS has to defend an Employment Tribunal, etc.

### Finance

All financial transactions for Worcestershire Regulatory services are accounted within a separate entity of Bromsgrove District Council. It is proposed that to ensure a consistent and compliant approach to financial arrangements the Contract and Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations of Bromsgrove District Council are adopted by the Joint Committee.

These documents will be amended to reflect that in the context of the shared service the reference to Cabinet shall be changed to the Joint Committee, the references to Corporate Management Team to be the WRS Management Board and the references to Portfolio Holder to be the Chairman of the Joint Committee.

The documents can be made available to members on request or via the Bromsgrove District Council website.

In order to obtain clarity and consistency across the policies the requirements of the Shared Service are being written in to HR Policies to reflect the different

## **Report**

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structures and terminology, and levels of delegated responsibility within the Joint Committee. These policies will then become jointly applicable to BDC and the Joint Committee.

A number of business critical policies have been amended to reflect the requirements of the partnership arrangements in agreement with the Management Board. These are:

- *Disciplinary Policy*
- *Grievance Policy*
- *Recruitment, Selection and Employment Policy*
- *Sickness Policy*

The wording of the remaining policies will be revised in due course and be subject to delegated approval by the Management Board.

The adjustments to reflect the partnership arrangements include:

- 1) To insert a form of wording at the start of each policy as the stated principle that both parties will adhere to the central tenant of the Hosting agreement of consistency for employees, and
- 2) To amend HR policies as they come up for review following changes to legislation, national conditions or other initiatives, and
- 3) Where reviews take place and the only resultant amendment to policy is terminology around the operation of the Shared Service Partnership with regard to the management of employees, that such changes will be approved by the WRS Management Board under the delegation arrangements described above, and
- 4) For the Joint Committee and Host Authority to agree an understanding of equivalence of terminology so that those operating the policies (i.e. Managers within the Shared Service and Human Resources for the Host Authority) will have a clear understanding of how such policies will operate, so that staff will be treated consistently, equally and fairly regardless of the Service, hierarchy or job they work in. This will be delivered through the host HR officer in consultation with the Head of WRS.

The adoption Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will ensure a consistent and compliant approach together with supporting the compilation of the final accounts by the host finance team and subsequent External Audit.

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**Financial Implications**

None

**Sustainability**

None as a direct result of this report

**Contact Points**

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**Background Papers**

Detailed financial business case  
Bromsgrove District Council HR Policies  
Bromsgrove District Council Contract Procedure Rules &  
Financial Regulations