

## Joint Committee: 19 February 2015

### Appointment of Acting Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services

#### Recommendation

The Joint Committee is recommended to:

1. Note and approve the intention of the partner authorities not to recruit to the vacant Head of Service post pending further consideration of the future direction and structure of the service.
2. Appoint the holder for the time being of the position of Chairman of the Management Board as the "Acting Head of Service" for WRS, such arrangement to continue pending a final decision on the future structure of the service.
3. Agree that there will be a reimbursement to the partner authority for whom the Chairman of the Management Board/ Acting Head of Service is employed to reflect the costs of that officer being made available to carry out the Acting Head of Service functions.

#### Contribution to Priorities

Taking steps to arrange for the Chairman of the Management Board to be responsible for the role of acting head of service will ensure that there is clear leadership and necessary authority in place to ensure delivery of WRS objectives and priorities.

#### Introduction / Summary

The post of Head of WRS became vacant on 31 January 2015. The Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership agreement delegates a number of functions directly to the Head of WRS from partner Councils. It is therefore necessary for those functions to continue to be performed pending decision on a permanent appointment.

This report recommends that the Head of Service functions be performed by the Chairman of the Management Board who will be appointed as Acting head of service with the costs being reimbursed to the relevant partner council.

## Background

Steve Jorden who headed WRS from its inception in June 2010 left the service at the end of January 2015 to take up a senior appointment with a council in Devon.

Following the unsuccessful outcome of the procurement for a strategic partnership there is a need to develop and bring forward proposals to ensure the future sustainability of WRS. This may result in changes to the nature and direction of the shared service. It is the view of both partner Chief Executives and WRS Management Board that recruitment of a new head of service is delayed until these changes are agreed to ensure a correct skills match.

The Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership agreement delegates a number of functions directly to the Head of WRS from partner Councils. It is necessary to fill the role on an acting basis pending a permanent appoint to be able to demonstrate continuity of delegation in any enforcement action undertaken by WRS personnel. Legal advice has flagged risks if the post were left vacant.

## Report

It is proposed that the role Head of WRS is covered on an acting basis by the incumbent Chair of the WRS Management Board until agreement has been reached on the future direction of the shared service.

There are a number of benefits to this approach. All members of the WRS Management Board are experienced senior managers of partner Council, able to provide the necessary leadership and strategic management skills. Management Board members have a close knowledge of WRS business strategy and operations and are directly involved in current work to ensure future sustainability of the shared service. They also have established working relationships with members of the Joint Committee and WRS managers. This range of benefits could not be provided by traditional temporary arrangements such as appointment of an interim manager.

It is not proposed to try and provide full time cover for the role of Head of WRS as some of the workload required to cover the vacancy is best met by the two WRS Business Managers. It is anticipated that the Acting role will require an input of around one day per week though this will vary week on week depending upon the exigencies of the service. The current Chairman of the Management Board is Ivor Pumfrey from Malvern Hills. In accordance with the existing arrangements to rotate the role of Chairman of the Management Board from June the Chairmanship and the responsibilities for performing the Head of Service functions will pass to Ruth Mullen of Worcester City Council.

By arranging for the Head of Service functions to be taken on by the Chairman of the Management Board, there is a clear and robust link which will assist implementation of the necessary changes once agreed. This approach also ensures the burden of work is shared between WRS partner councils.

## **Financial Implications**

Section 151 Officers have been consulted on these proposals and have agreed that the relevant partner council be reimbursed in respect of costs incurred in providing cover for the Head of Service functions. These costs will of course be met from savings accruing from the vacant Head of WRS post.

## **Legal Implications**

The Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Agreement, Part II Schedule 1 para 2.4 delegates authority from partner councils to the Joint Committee to appoint a Head of Regulatory Services.

However the partner authorities for the reasons set out in this report have decided not to exercise the ability to make a permanent appointment under that provision at this time. Instead the partners agree that the functions of the Head of Service will be exercised by the Chairman of the Management Board who will be appointed as the Acting Head of Service on a temporary basis

This approach ensures continuity of delegated authority under the Partnership Agreement.

## **Risk**

There are no significant risks arising from these proposals which are intended amongst other things to avoid risks of WRS enforcement actions failing over challenges to the continuity of delegated authority.

## **Sustainability**

These are interim arrangements pending agreement on the future direction of WRS and are sustainable for the anticipated period of operation.



**Contact Points**

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**Background Papers**

Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Agreement 1  
June 2010