

REPORT TO THE PERSONNEL LICENSING AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Report No. 10

Date of Meeting	3 September 2007
Title of Report	Transition to Unitary Authority - Delegated Authority Request
Link to Corporate Priorities	This report links to all of the Council's corporate aims.
Public Report	Yes

<p>Summary of Report</p> <p>To provide Members with information on progress thus far in developing and agreeing joint HR policies, process and procedures related to the transition to One Council for Wiltshire. Also to seek delegated authority for the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Chief Executive to agree and implement joint HR policies, processes and procedures directly and specifically related to that transition.</p> <p>To ensure that management, trade union and Members are kept informed there will be meetings with Corporate Management Board, the trade union and Executive portfolio holder, with briefing notes provided to the Chairman of Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee. In addition copies of the policies will be brought to Local Joint Consultative Committee and Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee on normal committee dates.</p>
<p>Officer Recommendations</p> <p>That the Personnel Licensing and Administration Committee is asked agree the recommendation in Option 1, that is to delegate responsibility to the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Chief Executive to agree and implement joint HR policies, processes and procedures related to the transition to One Council for Wiltshire.</p>

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.				
Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
None	Yes	None	Yes	Yes

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on progress thus far in developing and agreeing joint HR policies, processes and procedures related to the transition to One Council for Wiltshire. In addition it seeks seek delegated authority for the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Chief Executive to agree and implement joint HR policies, processes and procedures directly and specifically related to that transition

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 Option 1: To give delegated authority to the Head of Human Resources in consultation with the Chief Executive to agree and implement joint HR policies, processes and procedures directly and specifically related to the transition to One Council for Wiltshire. This will allow the smooth development and implementation of joint HR policies, processes and procedures and assist in maintaining staff confidence through the early provision of information.
- 2.2 Option 2: Not to give delegated authority to the Head of HR in consultation with the Chief Executive to agree and implement joint HR policies, processes and procedures directly and specifically related to the transition to One Council for Wiltshire. If the Council opts to continue with its current process for consulting and approving joint HR policies, processes and procedures there will be a need to hold Local Joint Consultative Committees and Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committees on a considerably more frequent basis than at present. It is possible as time goes on that these could be fortnightly and or possibly weekly.

3. Background Information and Current Position

- 3.1 On 25 July 2007 the Government was minded to approve Wiltshire County Council's bid for One Council for Wiltshire. As a result North Wiltshire District Council and the other 3 District Councils in Wiltshire will be dissolved on Vesting Day of the new authority. The Vesting Day is yet to be confirmed, it is known that Wiltshire County Council wish this to be as early as August 2008, however, it could be as late as 1 April 2009.
- 3.2 As a result of the Government decision there will be several strands of work to be carried out to ensure services are successfully brought together. This work can be divided into two areas for Human Resources, the first being to work with the County and other District Councils to manage the transition to a new authority. The second to identify and implement the HR service for the new authority. This report focuses on the transition work.
- 3.3 Wiltshire County Council has set up a HR Transition Team, which intends to work with the Heads of Human Resources from the 4 District Councils. This group has met twice already once before the decision and again immediately after the decision. The purpose of this group is to develop joint HR policies, processes and procedures directly and specifically related to the transition. The first joint HR policies, processes and procedures being worked on are Recruitment, Secondment and a Joint Consultative process.
- 3.4 At present all HR policies, processes and procedures in North Wiltshire are consulted and approved through consultation at Local Joint Consultative Committee and approval at Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee. This process

ensures that policies, which solely affect employees in North Wiltshire, are implemented through an effective consultation process.

- 3.5 The joint HR policies, processes and procedures being worked on do not solely impact on employees in North Wiltshire; they also impact on employees in the County and the other 3 Districts. The County Council and other 3 Districts either have or will be seeking to obtain delegated authority to approve the transition-related policies, processes and procedures.
- 3.6 The Chief Executives of all 5 authorities have met and agreed that they will approve all joint HR policies, processes and procedures prior to implementation. They will be meeting on regular basis, if no meeting is arranged and a policy needs to be approved this will be done through e-mail discussion. Prior to any joint HR policy, process or procedure being taken to Chief Executive's group, the Head of Human Resources will take them through our Corporate Management Board.
- 3.7 To ensure that there is a proper consultative process similar to that we are used to in North Wiltshire there will be a Joint Consultative Committee made up of Regional Unison, GMB and T&G and management representatives. A joint Unison working group, comprising two union representatives from each authority will support this. The North Wiltshire Branch has selected their representatives. In addition the Head of Human Resources has set up weekly meetings with the local Branch to share information and will provide reports to Local Joint Consultative Committee on joint HR policies, processes and procedures that have been agreed.
- 3.8 To ensure that Members are kept informed the Head of Human Resources has set up monthly meetings with the Executive portfolio holder and will send briefing notes to the Chairman of Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee. The purpose of these meetings and the briefing notes will be to provide the Executive and Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee with regular information and updates. In addition to this the Head of Human Resources will provide reports to Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee on joint HR policies, processes and procedures that have been agreed.
- 3.9 It is essential for staff morale and well being that joint HR policies, processes and procedures are developed and agreed quickly. We have already received several requests from staff for clarification on human resources related matters. The request for delegated authority with the additional measures to ensure union and Members are kept informed has been made to ensure that we have appropriate action at the right time.

4. Transition related joint HR policies, processes and procedures – thus far

4.1 Recruitment

- 4.1.1 It is essential that a process for managing vacancies and recruitment is put in place across all 5 authorities as soon as possible, to maintain business continuity as well as protect the rights of the individual. An interim process has been agreed whereby vacancies are being shared and internal applicants are being given prior consideration. This is a short-term policy to ensure that rights of permanent employees are protected into the future.
- 4.1.2 The intention is to have an agreed policy, which identifies risk categories and ensures that those who are at the highest risk will have opportunities in the new authority. Therefore the likelihood is that permanent appointments will only be

made to front-line posts such as refuse loaders and social workers (NB these are illustrative roles there are many other posts yet to be identified). In all other cases decisions based on business need, will be made on whether a post should be filled on a temporary or permanent basis. Temporary recruitment may be in the form of secondment, agency, and appointment of consultant or shared with another affected authority. A copy of the draft protocol is attached at Appendix A.

4.2 Secondment

4.2.1 There will be several projects related to the implementation of One Council for Wiltshire that the County Council will be running. Clearly several of these projects relate to District only services such as Planning and Revenues and Benefits. To run these projects there will be opportunities for District employees to be seconded to the County Council. In addition as identified above to ensure that business critical services are able to continue to maintain the appropriate level of service there may be secondment between authorities on a shared service basis.

4.2.2 The intention is to have an agreed policy, which enables secondments between authorities without affecting business critical services in the seconding authority. In the same way that our existing policy allows a manager to refuse a secondment, this policy will ensure that the manager can refuse a secondment and is not left unable to run the service. A copy of the draft protocol is attached at Appendix B.

4.3 Joint Consultative Committee

4.3.1 All of the affected authorities are committed to collective bargaining processes within their authorities. Therefore, it is deemed essential to have a joint consultative process to look at the joint HR policies, procedures and protocols and to discuss staffing issues as they arise. It is not possible to give this committee executive powers as there are no elected Members for the new authority.

4.3.2 The intention is to set up a joint process, which allows all of the major unions to represent their employees across the 5 authorities. It will use regional representatives who will be supported by in the case of Unison a joint working group. Other unions have smaller numbers of members and will be making alternative arrangements to ensure their members are involved. A copy of the draft protocol is attached at Appendix C.

4.4 All of the above policies are in a draft format and are under consultation in all 5 authorities. Members will note that there are several question marks against areas of the protocols many of these are due to there being a need to set up the relevant boards and appoint people to head up workstreams.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 All of the joint HR policies, processes and procedures will have regard for employment related legislation and the forthcoming staff transfer regulations.

6. Human Resources Implications

6.1 All Human Resources implications are contained within the body of the report.

6.2 The local branch has been consulted on the content of this report and have agreed that this is a sensible way forward to ensure that the joint HR policies, processes

and procedures are developed and implemented without undue delay due to local conventions.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 When developing and agreeing policies, processes and procedures the responsible Human Resources Officers will ensure they have regard for equality and diversity implications.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1 The joint HR policies, processes and procedures being developed do not only impact on employees of North Wiltshire but also those in the other 4 affected authorities. There is a risk that if North Wiltshire continues with its current process it will lead to delay in achieving agreement and implementation, which will impact on those authorities as well. Any delay on the provision of HR information will impact on staff morale.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix A – Draft Recruitment Protocol• Appendix B – Draft Secondment Protocol• Appendix C – Draft Joint Consultative Committee Protocol
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
None		