

**Committee:** Performance Select Committee  
**Date:** 13 November 2008  
**Title:** HR Audit Recommendations  
  
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**Agenda Item**

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Item for information

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### Summary

1. As requested at the last meeting of this Committee, this report provides an update on the HR audit recommendations raised in the audit report dated 13 February 2008.

### Recommendations

2. None.

### Background Papers

None.

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	The audit report was originally agreed with the Acting Head of HR in consultation with the HR staff
Community Safety	There are no specific community safety implications contained in this report
Equalities	There are no specific equalities implications contained in this report
Finance	There are no specific finance implications contained in this report
Human Rights	There are no specific human rights implications contained in this report
Legal implications	There are no specific Legal implications contained in this report
Ward-specific impacts	There are no specific ward implications contained in this report
Workforce/Workplace	All HR staff are being kept informed

**Situation**

3. The council was without a permanent Head of HR for approximately 18 months and this significantly impacted on the development of the service.
4. To address this, the way in which the council delivers its HR function changed in early March 2008 as a partnership with Essex County Council was formed.
5. The partnership was requested to look at a number of areas which have accordingly taken priority over some areas covered by the Internal Audit review:
  - a. The Appraisal Scheme
  - b. Urgently needed policy notes
  - c. Senior management and Member training needs analysis
6. Attached at appendix one is the action plan from the internal audit report dated 13 February 2008. The action plan includes an update as to the current position.

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Report Paragraph	Recommendation	Risk Level: * Low ** Med *** High	Officer Comments	Implementation date
1.4	A sample of qualifications claimed by applicants should be verified by reference to the awarding body. <b>(re-iterated from the 2005-06 report)</b>	**	This is being done on an essential to the post basis. For key posts such as the Chief Finance Officer the qualifications required for the post were verified with the declared body. The implication of doing this is that it tends to extend the recruitment timescale as many bodies require written not emailed requests and they provide written replies. It is intended to continue verifying qualifications that are essential to the post.	Done
1.5	<p>a) A standard format should be adopted for PPNs which should be made more user-friendly;</p> <p>b) The index of PPNs published on the Intranet should be reviewed and steps taken to ensure that the links actually relate to the PPN listed. <b>(re-iterated from the 2005-06 report)</b></p>	*  *	<p>a) Some PPNs are being drafted at the moment and are subject to final approval. The council in partnership with its HR service provider are currently exploring opportunities around using Essex County Council policies rather than reinventing UDC ones.</p> <p>b) This has been done.</p>	<p>a) Review to be completed by June 2009</p> <p>b) Done</p>
1.6	<p>a. The Appraisal System is discussed with Management and Staff representatives to identify improvements which better meet the organisation's needs;</p> <p>b. A PPN is prepared specifying the frequency of appraisals and the method to be used;</p> <p>c. The appraisal system is enforced</p>	**	<p>a) A new performance measurement system has been established and implemented.</p> <p>b) Comprehensive guidance notes are available to all staff. A Specific PPN is not required</p> <p>c) Regular reports on compliance are presented to Senior Management Board and less frequently to this Committee.</p>	<p>a) Done</p> <p>b) Done</p> <p>c) Done</p>

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Report Paragraph	Recommendation	Risk Level: * Low ** Med *** High	Officer Comments	Implementation date
1.7	<p>a) The Induction Programme on the Intranet should be revised, brought up-to-date and thereafter kept up to date to reflect current management, organisational, political and Committee structures, and</p> <p>b) New starters should be encouraged to view the Programme.</p>	**	<p>a) Induction is an area that the partnership is due to review in the first quarter of 2009/10.</p> <p>b) The intranet is due to be replaced in the first quarter of 2009/10 and the induction content will be updated at that time.</p>	<p>a) June 2009</p> <p>b) June 2009</p>
1.8	To ensure that leavers' access to all IT systems is cancelled, HR should take responsibility for informing ICT of all starters and leavers.	***	ICT now receive a regular list of starters and leavers from HR. Users are not removed from the system until the relevant section authorises due to the need to access information and potentially continue to receive emails.	Done
1.9	A skills inventory should be created by acquiring the necessary data and populating the skills database in Snowdrop at the earliest opportunity.	**	The way in which Snowdrop is used is under review at present. This is primarily to enable the outcome of the staff performance system (UPerform) to be entered onto the HR system.	March 2009
1.10	Steps should be taken to increase the HR department's capacity so that it can fully support the Council's present and future staff, and the Council's aims and objectives.	***	<p>a) The new HR Partnership has addressed the perceived technical knowledge shortfalls within the section.</p> <p>b) A review is to be undertaken into the administrative element of the service.</p>	<p>a) Done</p> <p>b) February 2009</p>
1.11	To ensure that HR is aware of ongoing training and development and that at least a proportion of fees paid are recovered if an employee leaves shortly after completing training, HR should assume responsibility for arranging and funding training and development	**	This relates to professional qualification training. Staff undertaking this are required to sign an HR agreement relating to repayment of fees should they leave the council's employment. This policy is enforced when necessary	Done