

## **Requirements Specification**

### **1. Background to Requirements**

An independent review of the industrial relations culture and operational effectiveness has been jointly agreed between the council and the non-schools based trade unions (Unison, GMB and UNITE). It will explore a number of specific areas that have previously been raised, by either trade unions or management, as areas for concern or comment. The council's workforce broadly separates into two distinct groups: schools based staff and non-schools based staff. There are a variety of negotiating bodies that set the conditions of service for different groups of council staff and, in the case of teachers, there are also statutory provisions. Schools operate under local management arrangements and, consequently, this project focuses on non-school based staff; however this review will take the opportunity to consider matters of common interest.

Current working practices will be assessed against best practice from leading organisations in the field, with the aim of creating a more productive industrial relations framework and culture within the council. The project will look at a number of processes and behaviours that govern and contribute towards the industrial relations culture, recommending ways to improve these processes and behaviours, and the principles that govern them. The review will look at these in relation to both management and the Trade Unions.

The review will focus primarily on following areas: -

- Recognition Agreement
- Facilities Agreement
- Staffside
- Consultation and negotiation
- Communication
- Culture
- Behaviours
- Dispute Resolution
- Policies and Procedures
- Action against Trade Union Officials
- Length of Investigations (CHAD/Grievance/Disciplinary)

### **2. Requirements**

The expected deliverables and outcomes from the review will be: -

- To highlight and adopt best practice in the areas identified above and to be able to move the industrial relations culture of the organisation forward, in light of the transformational change that will need to be achieved over the coming years.

- To undertake engagement with stakeholders, including elected Members, for example by undertaking interviews, holding focus groups etc., to understand the current culture and the areas that work well and those requiring improvement. This will include consideration of matters of common interest with other recognised Trade Unions.
- To produce a set of options and recommendations for consideration and approval, on each of the areas covered in this document based on best practice.
- To produce an agreed implementation programme for management, HR and the Trade Unions around the recommended changes and best practice in regards to industrial relations.
- To produce an organisational change plan – to include the actions needed to achieve a culture of mutual trust and collaboration.
- To identify areas where joint working could be utilised and made more effective, e.g. joint training.
- To produce a communication framework – covering when communication will take place, what will be communicated, how it will be communicated and by who.
- To produce a consultation framework – covering what mechanisms should be used to consult at different levels in the organisation and what escalation processes there should be.
- Provide suggestions on any other elements of a best practice approach to industrial relations that are not specifically covered in this document.

The role and operation of HR Committee or the constitutional governance of the council's decision making approach to major terms and conditions of staff, or the political approach of the organisation to the role of Trade Unions are not within the scope of this review.

The review will acknowledge that Trade Unions have a right to independently campaign and communicate with their members and more broadly within an agreed framework or protocol.

A final report with recommended actions will be presented to the council's Corporate Management Team and the Mayor within 4 months of the conclusion of the project. The report presented to CMT will take account of the views of the Trades Unions, with the aim of ensuring a jointly agreed report and recommended actions. Any actions not agreed by the Trades Unions will be set out in the report, with any proposed alternatives also included.

Benefits that are expected as a result of the review include: improved industrial relations culture; fully embedded industrial relations framework; reduction in the average number of days to complete investigations/restructures; increased two way communication with Trade Unions and a collaborative approach to problem solving; more joint working; reduction in the number of disputes; and improved workforce morale and employee relations.