HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

Item No. 4
Halifax Regional Council
January 28, 2014

TO:	Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council
SUBMITTED BY:	Original signed by
	Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE:	January 14, 2014
SUBJECT:	HRM Policy Framework

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

January 31, 2012 Regional Council motion that staff provide a report on current HRM policies to include a list of current policies, the process in place for disseminating policy to staff and elected officials and the difference between policy and Administrative Orders.

Staff initiated review of the HRM policy process.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, Part III, Sections 58 and 59 on Policies.

BACKGROUND

As per direction from the CAO in December 2012, the Government Relations and External Affairs unit (GREA) initiated a process to review and enhance policy coordination in HRM. As a result, a team consisting of GREA, supported by Legal Services and the Municipal Clerk's Office, has been working to establish a policy framework and develop a coordination function for both internal and council policies in HRM. This function is broadly grouped into central corporate support for policy development; provision of strategic policy advice; centralized organization and maintenance of policies; and some specific corporate policy development. Specific activities have included a best practice review of other jurisdictions; internal and external consultation; an organizational scan of existing HRM policy and creation of a draft inventory; development of draft policy tools and resources, and testing of policy tools through existing policy development projects. In addition, as part of the process GREA is exploring ways to enhance discussion of public policy in HRM.

DISCUSSION

The term "policy" is neither well defined nor fully integrated within HRM. Moreover, the policy environment in the organization is complex, often spanning multiple Business Units, areas of service delivery and operational settings. Areas of the organization have policies in place, but overall support, monitoring and/or tracking of specific policies is inconsistent. Lack of effective policy coordination can increase financial and reputational risk. Therefore, developing better policy coherence is a significant opportunity for the municipality. The idea behind policy coherence is to ensure that policies are well planned, aligned, and coordinated to meet the needs of citizens and achieve the proper outcomes.

As part of the process to improve and achieve policy coherence, the project was broken into three main phases. The background phase of the project included the development of policy categories and related definitions. These categories are identified by the approval process required for each - Council approved policies and corporate policies (approved by the CAO or Business Unit Directors). The main categories are as follows, and detailed definitions have been developed for each:

Council-Approved Policies	*Corporate Policies*
o Resolutions	o Corporate Operational Policies
o Administrative Orders	o Corporate Directives and Guidelines
o By-Laws	o Business Directives and Guidelines

To address the January 31, 2012 Council motion, it is important to note that Administrative Orders cannot be differentiated from policy because Administrative Orders are one vehicle used to make policy. Administrative Orders are used by Council to approve polices on any matter that Council considers conducive to the effective management of the municipality, or for matters where Council is required to exercise its powers by policy under legislation. Administrative Orders do not include resolutions of Council that provide strategic direction and/or state a public policy position of Council.

Building on the categories listed above, the second phase of the project has involved the establishment of a draft policy framework package, which will be used as a resource guide for staff who develop policy in HRM. Establishment of these tools was informed by current HRM practices, public policy resource material, and information received during the above-noted jurisdictional scan. This package will help to bring clarity to policy development in HRM, as well as ensure consistency throughout the process.

The policy package includes standardized templates, policy development guidelines, a scoping document and process maps. The templates assure a common look and feel is applied to all HRM policy, while the guidelines provide a policy development resource for staff. The scoping document is for use early in the policy development process to ensure the issue being addressed is properly defined and all relevant stakeholders are identified. Process maps have been created which clearly outline the step-by-step process required to develop and approve each category of

policy. In relation to this, a separate Council report has been prepared by the Municipal Clerk's Office which outlines a new process for developing and categorizing Administrative Orders.

The third phase of the policy project involves refinement of the tools, structures, and governance required for organization-wide implementation of the framework. It also involves updating an inventory of existing HRM policies, guidelines, procedures, etc., which has been prepared and organized according to the policy categories identified through the project work. The inventory is being reviewed to identify policy gaps and new policies requiring development, overlaps in existing policies, required amendments or updates to existing policies, and better ways to organize and access internal policies. A list of Council-approved policies currently included in the draft inventory is available through the Clerk's Office.

The end result of developing a policy framework, comprehensive inventory of policies, and implementing the associated work plan will be increased accountability and minimized risk to HRM by ensuring all policies are properly developed organized, documented, and understood. In addition, gaps and overlap in existing policies will be minimized and required review and/or amendments of policies will occur more regularly and strategically.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The policy project and coordination function has been undertaken using existing resources.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Most of the project engagement has involved consultation with HRM employees, but some meetings have been held with relevant external stakeholders such as provincial staff and UNSM. Engagement will continue as the policy review and coordination review progresses.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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