

Supplementary Papers



Listening Learning Leading

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FOR THE MEETING OF

Joint Audit and Governance Committee

on Monday 13 July 2020 at 6.30 pm

This will be a virtual, online meeting.

Open to the public including the press

7. Health and safety progress update (Pages 2 - 9)

To consider the report of the acting deputy chief executive – transformation and place.

Joint Audit and Governance Committee



Report of the Head of Corporate Services

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To: Joint Audit and Governance Committee

DATE: 13 July 2020

Health and safety progress update

Recommendations

- (a) That the Committee notes the findings of the recent health and safety strategic review and the actions being progressed; and
- (b) Notes that biannual health and safety reports will be presented to the Joint Audit and Governance Committee.

Purpose of the report

1. To inform the Committee of the key findings and recommended actions of a recent strategic review of health and safety aimed to provide assurance on health and safety compliance and enable the councils to demonstrate adherence to the requirements of UK health and safety legislation.

Strategic Objectives

2. Managing the business effectively.

Background

3. As part of the ongoing commitment to a robust health and safety management system, this review was commissioned by the Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Transformation and Operations and the Programmes and Assurance Manager, with the support of SMT. It followed a period where a number of changes had occurred at the councils and it was felt timely to review the current approach, identify the strengths and prioritise areas for improvement; and to remedy any gaps in the management arrangements for health and safety. There are two FTE vacancies in the new Customer Assurance team, we have employed a Health and Safety Consultant on a part time basis to undertake all health and safety at the councils pending recruitment to these roles.
4. The recommended actions identified support and contribute to more efficient and effective procedures and services; provide assurance of health and safety compliance; introduce mechanisms for the escalation of health and safety performance outcomes and enable the councils to demonstrate adherence to the requirements of UK health and safety legislation.

Key Findings

8. There is a corporate commitment to the implementation of a robust health and safety management system. While the motivation to act on health and safety in an organisation is often driven reactively due to an unwanted incident, event or accident, this review has been driven proactively to seek improvement.
9. There is a need to re-establish the prominence of health and safety as a key priority in two organisations with multiple priorities and limited resource.
10. Stakeholder feedback identified health and safety gaps and weaknesses, as well as examples of best practice, where some operational teams have a good reputation for working with health and safety as a priority, and a commitment for the highest standards of health and safety.
11. Quantitative metrics and formal reports to verify strong performance and to initiate action are currently unavailable, for example, health and safety training is provided, but mechanisms are required to monitor delivery vs. requirements. The councils' need to formalise a system of governance and assurance to verify the positives and focus effort on areas requiring improvement in the councils health and safety performance, through performance metrics, oversight and formal audit.
12. There is currently an inconsistent health and safety culture, which will become more consistent over time as a consequence of an enhanced governance framework. This will provide the mechanisms through which SMT and councillors will receive regular performance reports and prioritised recommendations for actions to improve performance and support service delivery across all teams.

Key Recommended Actions

13. Position the corporate health and safety team as independent from service delivery, analogous to the relationship of internal audit within finance.
14. Introduce service safety champions (SSC's) to support managers in the delivery of health and safety and be the 'glue' between the independent corporate health and safety team and service delivery, embarking on a joint programme of work to implement the health and safety management system in all services.
15. Revise the governance and assurance arrangements to facilitate independent oversight and challenge and ensure effective reporting.
16. Introduce a systematic approach to enhance the councils' reputation as an employer with compliant procedures and a consistent health and safety culture that is characterised by a drive for continual improvement.
17. Review the current operational arrangements in a prioritised and coordinated approach to improve compliance.
18. Adopt a corporate landlord model, to facilitate the strategic management of buildings, property and facilities management.
19. Commit to quarterly reporting to SMT and six-monthly reporting to the joint audit and governance committee.

Next Steps

20. SMT reviewed the findings and supported all the actions identified in the agreed action plan attached to this report (Appendix 1) for noting, outlining the key actions and proposed timeframe. Work is underway to recruit to the health and safety vacancies and the new property manager joined the councils in June. The health and safety policy outlining roles and responsibilities is currently being drafted for review.
21. **Covid 19 council response.** The assurance team leader and health and safety consultant attended the councils' triage response meetings, to advise on health and safety matters related to the community hub response and recorded any health and safety risks and mitigations. There were weekly reviews both at triage and SMT to ensure due diligence and to support the councils' decision making. The Covid-19 health and safety risk register is attached to this report as Appendix 2 for noting, which is linked to the corporate risk register where the impact of Covid-19 has been recorded across a wider context.

Financial Implications

22. The health and safety posts within the agreed structure are within existing budgets, and the current health and safety consultant is being funded from the budget for these posts. Any cost implications as a result of progress against agreed actions, that cannot be met within existing budgets, will be considered in accordance with normal budget approval processes.

Legal Implications

23. The councils have a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to ensure we have a robust health and safety management framework in place.

Risks

24. Risk identification is an integral part of this progress review.

Other Implications

25. None

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Next steps - Action Plan
- Appendix 2: Council response to Covid19 Health and safety risk register summary April 2020.

Appendix 1: Health and Safety Action Plan

Action	Priority RAG	Lead	Status	Target Date
Undertake recruitment to the role of Senior Health and Safety Advisor		Customer Assurance Manager Assurance Team Leader	In progress	Aug 2020
A revised Health and Safety Policy statement and accompanying roles and responsibilities document to be produced which will include the role of the service safety champion		Senior Health and Safety Advisor	In progress	Sept 2020
Revisions to the governance structure		Senior Health and Safety Advisor	To start	Nov 2020
Heads of Service will be asked to identify suitable service safety champions		Senior Health and Safety Advisor	To start	Aug 2020
A programme of meetings will be convened to progress a programme of work between the Senior Health and Safety Advisor and the service safety champions approved by SMT		Senior Health and Safety Advisor	To start	Oct 2020
The Health and Safety Team and the service safety champions in collaboration with the service managers will undertake a detailed review of operational compliance within all service areas and develop a prioritised list of actions based on the findings		Senior Health and Safety Advisor, Heads of Service	To start	Nov 2020
Review progress as part of regular health and safety reporting, including biannual reports to Joint Audit and Governance Committee		Head of Corporate Services and Head of Development and Regeneration	To start	Dec 2020
Proposals on health and safety performance indicators, the form of health and safety audit and a programme of audit will be developed		Senior Health and Safety Advisor	In progress	Aug 2020
Amendment of the constitution outlining key roles and		Head of Corporate Services and Head	To start	Sept 2020

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responsibility for health and safety		of Development and Regeneration		
Agree roles and responsibilities for health and safety training and development with the HR team		Senior Health and Safety Advisor	To start	Sept 2020
Agree detail of the structure and resourcing of the agreed corporate landlord model		Head of Corporate Services and Head of Development and Regeneration	Completed	June 2020
An ongoing programme of communications will be initiated to inform staff of the proposed changes to health and safety management and to reinforce the new arrangements		Senior Health and Safety Advisor	In progress	Sept 2020

Summary

There are 4 key risks identified on the health and safety register. The common theme throughout is the increased risk of transmission of Covid19 potentially leading to the death of members of staff or within the community.

Mitigation relies on carrying out risk assessments of the activities to identify the potential for transmission from personal contact, contact with objects or airborne transmission arising from the activities, and the provision of suitable control measures such as frequent washing, disinfection and the provision of face masks. The hierarchy of control within the legal framework states that elimination of the hazard (in this case by avoiding the activity) is the preferred option, followed by the use of control measures. It is imperative that the potential for fatalities to result must be to the fore in the decision making.

The register also recognises the duty of care of the councils to continue to address less immediate risks to the safety or health of its staff and others affected. There is an increased likelihood of harm when new or revised procedures are in place due to the absence of the benefit of experience and the inexperience of the members of staff carrying out the work.

Risk No/Ref	Strategic objective	Risk description/ consequences	Gross risk	Risk owner	Mitigation actions	Action owner	Net risk	Tolerable Y/N	Further mitigation actions if required	Review by
HS1	Maintain legal compliance during pandemic	Description: New methods of working and temporary procedures require new or revised risk assessments to be undertaken and recorded that identify the relevant statutory legal requirements and the suitable control measures. Consequences: SMT are the controlling mind of the organisation and failure to undertake the assessments, implement the measures and document the outcomes because this risk carries statutory duties for the organisation under Management of the workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regs and Health And Safety At Work Act section 2 & 3, and individual personal responsibility under HASAWA Section 37	5	SMT	1. SMT to maintain H&S as an ongoing SMT meeting agenda item. 2. SMT to require HoS to initiate a review of risk assessments in their services. 3. SMT to monitor completion of risk assessment review by services. 4.SMT to address actions arising from risk assessments	SMT, HoS, service managers, line managers	1	Y	Consultation by SMT with Strategic H&S Consultant on risk assessment methodology for assurance of completion. Consultation by managers with Strategic H&S Consultant on specific risk assessments	Ongoing

HS2	Safety and health of our staff and community	Description: New activities and procedures pose greater risk than established ways of working. Existing risk assessments require review to take into account new ways of working, risk assessments for new activities required. Consequences: exposure to hazards of work by staff and others who may be affected by the outcomes if unmitigated may lead to ill-health, injury, damage, lost time, loss of goodwill, reputation etc.	9	SMT	As above, actions 2, 3 & 4. Eg.DSE for homeworkers, lone workers, manual handling, driving at work, contact with unpredictable members of the public etc.	HoS, service managers, line managers	6	Y	Monitoring of performance by SMT	Ongoing
HS3	Business continuity in light of Covid-19	Description: transmission of Covid-19 has the potential to infect large numbers of staff. Consequences: death, disease, multiple staff absence, loss of ability to provide essential services. etc.	9	SMT	Ongoing review required of risk assessments and control measures to take into account government and NHS advice, including social distancing, PPE, disinfection.	HoS	8	Y	Ongoing review essential	Ongoing
HS4	Mental health and wellbeing	Description: Risk of staff suffering from poor mental health and wellbeing due to social isolation and anxiety from health risk. Consequences: staff harm, absence, loss of productivity, loss of goodwill, reputational risk etc.	7	SMT, service managers, line managers	Staff working from home Provide regular updates from SMT and from individual managers to maintain contact with staff. Work with HR and H&S to provide support mechanisms.	SMT, service managers, line managers	5	Y	Monitor through feedback from managers and staff experience. Ongoing action to maintain contact, particularly with more vulnerable staff members. Staff resilience toolkit to be produced to support staff.	Ongoing