

## **Health & Safety Annual Report 2016/17**

### **Summary**

- 1) This report gives an overview of the Health & Safety (H&S) governance arrangements, key risks and activity in operation during 2016/17. It also gives a progress update on the newly formed H&S shared service formed by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and City of York Council (CYC) operating under a collaboration agreement.

### **Recommendations**

- 2) The Executive Member is asked to:
  - a) note the governance arrangements in place, in addition to the key H&S risks together with the council's response to managing and responding to those risks;
  - b) note the progress made in establishing and commencing the H&S shared service; and
  - c) note the focus of current and future work and agree that a follow-up report summarising any H&S activity following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower is considered at a future Decision Session under this portfolio.

*Reason: To ensure the Executive Member and residents are assured that H&S services are resilient and the council has proper arrangements in place for managing and responding to H&S risks.*

### **Background and Summary Conclusions**

- 3) The H&S governance arrangements are the main driver for the council's improvements in health and safety management, and continue to come from the commitment of the Chief Executive, supported by the Council Management Team (CMT) and Heads of Service. Integral to this is the work undertaken by colleagues across the council to ensure services are delivered in a safe and healthy manner.

- 4) This is further improved by elected member oversight of the management of health and safety undertaken by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, and the Audit and Governance Committee who have requested reports in the past year in order to effectively scrutinise the activities of the council in relation to health and safety.
- 5) The council continues to have an on-going emphasis on a sensible, risk-based approach which minimises the risks to staff but is also mindful that council services also need to be delivered in a cost effective way. The attitude of all staff and those with management responsibilities in adopting this approach is to be commended particularly considering the current challenging financial climate. It should be noted that it has been proven that effective health and safety management can have financial benefits due to reduced sickness absence and lost time. It can also minimise damage to equipment.
- 6) This report covers the council's financial reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

### **Main Activities 2016/17**

- 7) The council's Health & Safety Policy is what drives our commitment to health and safety and is reviewed, in accordance with best business practice, at least annually. The latest version was adopted in August 2016 following the appointment of the new Chief Executive. The policy is implemented through the work of CMT, individual directors and the Health and Safety Champions for each Department. The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) which consists of health and safety champions for each department with Trade Union colleagues drive forward the health and safety agenda.
- 8) In addition to the work of council employees and partners there is independent scrutiny of health and safety activity and performance. Each year an activity in relation to health and safety is audited independently by Veritau and these audits are considered by the Audit and Governance (A&G) Committee. A report was provided to the A&G Committee during the financial year and a follow up is planned for July 2017 demonstrating a clear commitment to continually improve with clear progress in implementing all recommendations.
- 9) To assist in easy and accurate recording of incidents and monitoring of H&S performance, in April 2016 a new accident reporting system was launched which allowed people to report accidents, incidents and near misses directly and securely through the use of smart technology (e.g. using their mobile phone). The application is then used to track

investigations and more importantly ensure actions to minimise a similar incident occurring are adequately achieved. As with all new systems there have been initial glitches but it has had a significant beneficial impact in ensuring incidents are reported, recorded and actioned. Work is continuing to ensure all staff are aware of the system and that it is used fully.

- 10) As a result of the murder of a Member of Parliament during the year, a review of security arrangements in West Offices was undertaken and revised briefing developed and circulated using a learning/compliance system to ensure staff are familiar with the arrangements. In addition specific good practice guidance on personal safety was circulated to elected members in order to minimise risk but ensuring access is maintained. Policies, processes and risk control for officers working alone or in risk areas have been reviewed over recent months.
- 11) Following terrorist attacks further afield and more recently here in the United Kingdom, the Health and Safety Team have approved over 700 school educational visits and some of these are to areas that have suffered from attacks. The Team advise or issue guidance to schools on whether these trips should go ahead depending on the information received from either the Foreign Office or Home Office.

### **Employee Wellbeing/Occupational Health**

- 12) A significant current part of the work of the service in protecting health and safety is employee wellbeing and as such the occupational health service is managed through the Health and Safety Service until 1st July 2017, after which it will be managed by Human Resources. The Team are currently working with CMT, the JHSC and over the next few months Departmental Management Teams and joint departmental meetings with trade unions, to understand trends in referrals to Occupational Health and access to support on offer through the council's wellbeing Employee Assistance programme.

### **Accident/Incidents**

- 13) Over the last financial year there were 389 work related incidents and the top 5 causes were:
  - Slip/trip/fall
  - Physical violence/aggression/verbal abuse
  - Handling/lifting/carrying

- Falling/moving/flying object
  - Injured/infected/affected by persons accidentally.
- 14) Where an accident is serious these must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive via the Incident Contact Centre under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. The council had to report 24 of these accidents using this system.
- 15) A key element to avoiding accidents, particularly in relation to handling and carrying activities, is to ensure staff are competent to undertake their activities in a safe and healthy manner. In CYC this is a mixture of on the job support through line managers/supervisors and formal off the job training. During 2016/17 the council provided 14 H&S related courses to 413 staff including for example Risk Assessments, First Aid, Asbestos Awareness, Manual Handling and Conflict Management.

### **Looking forward to the Year 2017 /18**

- 16) From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 a Shared Health and Safety Service has been created by merging the staff providing health and safety advisory services from NYCC and CYC. The new service will deliver services across the region including to over 450 schools, a number of other councils and council-owned companies. This combined service will allow for duplication to be minimised, to be far more resilient and flexible to respond to peaks and troughs in demand, and allow for the development of knowledge in specialist areas.
- 17) The work of the H&S Shared Service, and compliance with the collaboration agreement will be monitored by a client officer group consisting of senior managers from both councils. The agreement was being finalised at the time of the publication of this report and when available will be published in due course on the council's website. Performance measures have been developed in relation to resources for the service the key priorities for the service have yet to be finalised, however for CYC they will include:
- **Asbestos** –Review of asbestos management arrangements;
  - **Lone Workers** – Review arrangements for the protection of lone workers;
  - **Contractors** - Review arrangements for the control of contractors undertaking construction work;
  - **Audits and Inspections** – Deliver a programme of pulse and detailed audits and inspections to provide assurance on health and safety performance;

- **Fire Risk** – Review the implementation of fire risk assessment actions, particularly in high risk (sleeping) locations.

- 18) Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower it is appropriate to provide a short update on how CYC has approached the management of fire risk in CYC property. Fire risk is considered at the design stage for any project in consultation with building control and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service as appropriate. Staff from CYC undertake fire risk assessments of CYC property and provide action plans to managers where these are required. Where there are significant risk or the costs involved are substantial then appropriate action plans are developed so the risks can be appropriately addressed.
- 19) Prior to these tragic events CYC was already reviewing its fire safety arrangements and currently chairs a Local Government Fire Safety Sub Group to ensure we are fully aware of best practice and consider ways of minimising fire risk. A special meeting of this group has been scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> July to consider any early learning points from the fire at Grenfell Tower.

### **Consultation**

- 20) The Council Management Team have received the detail from this report.

### **Options**

- 21) There are no options in this report given that the recommendations are to note the content only.

### **Analysis**

- 22) All information is contained in the body of the report.

### **Council Plan**

- 23) Outcomes achieved by the activities covered in this report help to deliver priorities in the Council Plan 2015/19 in support of 'A prosperous city for all', ensuring that as an employer the council sets a positive example of supporting employees to achieve their full potential.

## Implications:

24)

- a. **Financial:** None
- b. **Human Resources (HR):** The report relates to all employees of the council. The H&S shared service is hosted by NYCC.
- c. **Equalities:** None
- d. **Legal:** The content of this report contributes to evidence that the council is complying with H&S legislation.
- e. **Crime and Disorder:** There are no crime and disorder implications to this report.
- f. **Information Technology (ICT):** None
- g. **Property:** None
- h. **Other:** No known implications.

## Risk Management

- 25) The shared service collaboration offers an opportunity to deliver efficiencies and economies of scale, it reduces the risk of either councils' services becoming unsustainable. The controls and evidence in this report mitigate/minimise risks associated with any breach of H&S regulations.

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**Report Approved**

**Date** 22/06/17

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

Financial: Ian Floyd, Director of Customer & Corporate Services

Legal: Andrew Docherty, AD for Legal & Governance

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**Background Papers:**

Report and decision record from Executive Member for Environment Decision Session on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The record is [here](#).

Report and decision record from Executive Member for Environment Decision Session on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The record is [here](#).

Report and decision record from Executive on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The record is [here](#).

Report and decision record from Executive Member from the Environment Decision Session on 12th April 2017. The record is [here](#).

**List of abbreviations used in this report:**

CYC	City of York Council
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council
HR	Human Resources
H&S	Health & Safety
CMT	Council Management Team
A&G	Audit & Governance Committee