

Report of the Assistant Director, Customer Service and Digital

Implementation of Actions Arising from the Internal Audit Report on Health and Safety

Summary

1. This report responds to the specific issues identified in the Internal Audit Follow Up Report presented to this Committee on 28th September 2016.

Background

2. Internal Audit regularly undertake investigation audits on the health and safety performance of the Council. In 2016 it undertook a review of progress regarding the completion of any outstanding actions from the 2013/14 and 2014/15 audits. These audits were undertaken prior to the implementation of the new health and safety advisory arrangements involving sharing health and safety services between City of York Council (CYC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC). The shared Head of Health & Safety was appointed in Autumn 2014 with an objective to improve health and safety management arrangements throughout the council.
3. In July 2016 a report was published following a review of performance against the agreed actions from previous health and safety internal audit reports. This review provided the opportunity to consider the earlier reports to ensure any actions that had not been fully completed where still appropriate following the introduction of the new arrangements. The report, following this review, was submitted to this committee on 28th September 2016. This purpose of this report is to provide a further update as to progress in relation to the outstanding actions. Members of the Committee are asked to note that many of these actions relate to contractual and/or corporate arrangements which needed to be established or changed and so will always take longer to implement than single service actions.

Health and Safety in CYC

4. Health and Safety in CYC is well managed with a robust Health and Safety Policy, endorsed by the Chief Executive, Corporate Management Team and Trades Unions and supported by a comprehensive Safety Management System. The Internal Audit Review Report identified that there were no significant risks that did not have controls but the level of reassurance was not sufficient to confirm that the controls were effective. Consequently greater reassurance has been introduced and a summary of the action and mechanism of improving reassurance is shown in Annex 1.
5. It should be noted that CYC is committed to continuous improvement particularly in relation to health and safety and one mechanism by which CYC is looking to simplify processes by the appropriate use of technology. The launch of the Yorsafety accident reporting and investigation system in April 2016 is an example of where a bureaucratic paper based system has been replaced by a system of instant reporting, with e-mail escalation followed by reminders, to ensure timely completion of investigation reports. A key element of the software is the Staff Warning Register. This register allows individuals to check addresses prior to undertaking visits to ensure that appropriate precautions can be taken where there are known risks. For example dogs, needles through to violent individuals. This is one of the key controls for lone working staff. Lone working being a key concern identified by the internal audit report.

Council Plan

6. The information outlined in this report is in line with the Council Plan and the People Plan which has health and wellbeing as an area of priority.

Implications

Financial

7. Failure to adequately implement health and safety systems can lead to accidents and ill health and potentially litigation costs.

Legal

8. Failure to ensure robust health and safety may result in legal action against the council.

Human Resources

9. If health and safety is not managed appropriately, the implications for staff members could be significant due injury from accidents or by causing or aggravating ill health.

Equalities

10. The poor recording of sickness absence reasons and related management action could result in reasonable adjustments or occupational health advice not being provided where staff are covered by the Equalities Act in relation to any disability.

Crime and Disorder

11. There are no Crime and Disorder implications

Information Technology (IT)

12. Matters relating to the Yorsafety system are covered in the report.

Property

13. There are no property implications.

Risk Management

14. The main risks relate to failure to provide assurance that adequate health and safety controls are in place. Mitigations will be put in place as detailed in the main body of the report.

Recommendations

15. Members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the report.

Reason: To respond to concerns raised in a follow up report into health and safety undertaken by internal audit.

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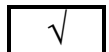
**Report
Approved**



Date 28 November 2016

Wards Affected:

All



Background Papers:

- Audit & Governance Committee Minutes at:

<http://modgov.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=437&MId=9185&Ver=4>

Annex: Summary of Actions and Response: Health & Safety

List of abbreviations used in this report:

CMT	Corporate Management Team
CYC	City of York Council
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council
DMT	Directorate Management Team
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology