

Steps Towards a Single Health & Safety (H&S) Organisation

Summary

- 1 This report provides the Executive Member with an update on the current position of the City of York Council (CYC) Health and Safety (H&S) Service for information.
- 2 To ensure resilience and best use of resources staff need to start working as one workforce so resources and skills can be moved across both services. The Executive Member is asked to endorse the recommendation to second the current five staff members from CYC H&S Team to North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC).
- 3 The report confirms that this arrangement would be short term to last no more than a year. During this time an options paper and business case will be developed for Executive to consider which will seek to establish a formally constituted shared organisation with the options around the various service delivery models available to do so consistent with the council's Future Shape and Size work.

Recommendations

- 4 The Executive Member is asked:
 - (i) to note the progress of closer working between NYCC and CYC H&S Teams operating under a single Head of H&S.
 - (ii) that, given the inter-authority arrangements relating to the management of H&S, to endorse the secondment of five employees from the CYC H&S team to NYCC to ensure resilience and best use of resources, while noting that staffing matters are normally agreed by chief officer.

Reason: To ensure the Executive Member and residents are informed of the CYC/NYCC approach to ensuring the H&S services are resilient and are better able to support the two organisations.

Background

- 5 The post of H&S Manager at CYC was recently vacant and the service needed to find a saving in 2014/15 of £25k consequently the decision was taken to appoint a Shared Head of H&S with NYCC. This arrangement has been working well and a further saving of £47k in 2016/17 has been identified from the H&S service through efficiency improvements. However it has been identified that any further savings through staffing would be difficult and lead to significant risk in providing H&S assurance for the council.
- 6 The service is provided by a team of highly qualified and skilled individuals at CYC but due to its size there is a need to build service resilience and to maintain an effective and professional internal H&S advisory function. This would be increasingly difficult in the face of problems in covering key staff vacancies and difficulties in being able to respond to changing priorities and increasing workload demands.
- 7 There is also the need to retain skilled and experienced staff by creating greater critical mass and providing more opportunities for career development and specialism. There is also a need to make best use of scarce experienced, professional and knowledgeable H&S in specific areas (for example fire safety, education, construction and social care), particularly where both authorities have encountered difficulties in building sufficient capacity without recourse to expensive external providers.
- 8 The Shared Head of H&S has reviewed the current arrangements for providing H&S services for both councils and also considered the impact of the reduced spending power of each council which are expected to continue to reduce until at least 2020.
- 9 From this review it is apparent that there is:
 - duplication in CYC and NYCC in the provision of H&S services to each council;
 - there are examples good practice, experience and skills within each team;
 - problems in covering key staff vacancies and difficulties in being able to respond to changing priorities and increasing workload demands;
 - both authorities encounter difficulties in recruiting and retaining high calibre H&S professionals;
 - resources at both councils are structured very differently at the same time as having synergies in terms of customer requirements.

10 Aside from increasing pressure to drive out savings and efficiencies the following needs have been identified:

- to build service resilience and capacity across both authorities to maintain an effective and professional H&S function;
- to retain skilled and experienced staff by creating greater critical mass and providing more opportunities for career development and specialism;
- to make best use of the scarce professional H&S expertise available (particularly in property risk, construction and education);
- to further enhance the professional standards of the H&S services in both Councils so as to maintain and develop the effectiveness of the function and comply with legislative and regulatory requirements;
- to maximise potential in improving effectiveness and developing the best of both systems and practices, through a coherent single structure;
- to build on existing trading experience to develop a viable commercial offer.

11 There have already been a number of examples of where each organisation has supported each other in relation to H&S:

- following the resignation of a member of CYC staff, a member of NYCC staff was seconded into CYC on a two month basis to fill the gap to allow for a recruitment exercise to be undertaken;
- CYC/NYCC are working on sharing policies and procedures - the most recent example being developing a consistent approach to undertaking Fire Risk Assessment. A member of CYC staff led on the project with the support of NYCC staff;
- there have been joint training initiatives on issues such as fire risk assessment, safety of water systems and ensuring play equipment in schools is safe;
- CYC staff have undertaken joint visits with NYCC staff to provide development opportunities and improve skills e.g. large civil engineering projects relating to highways, bridges and flood defences;
- CYC is currently working on an online accident reporting system which NYCC is supporting and proposing to invest in for their adoption;
- NYCC staff have supported CYC during periods of unprecedented demand;
- mutual aid and support on educational visits;
- joint Continuing Professional Development (CPD being a mandatory requirement for the senior offices) sessions;
- Sharing resources such as professional literature etc.

Benefits of Working as a Single Organisation

- 12 The benefits of integrating the staff resource as a next step to the development of a single service have been considered and if approved would:
- provide greater resilience and capacity. The combined team would be better placed to manage resource pressures, including staff vacancies and/or unexpected service demands;
 - provide greater flexibility to respond to changing priorities, initiatives and/or new working methods;
 - deliver efficiencies through the sharing of best practice, integrating processes and reducing duplication of effort;
 - demonstrate a positive response to the national and local efficiency and service transformation agendas;
 - achieve economies of scale by sharing overheads and reducing unproductive time whilst maintaining or improving current levels of performance;
 - enhance the focus on service delivery, professionalism and quality such that the combined service is seen as a 'beacon of excellence';
 - increase the opportunities for staff to develop specialist skills and thereby enhancing career opportunities, resulting in greater staff satisfaction and retention;
 - provide greater opportunity to develop H&S specialism and reduce the reliance on and cost of bought-in services (e.g. fire risk assessments);
 - provide a robust shared service model which offers greater opportunity for future collaboration with other Councils in the region, particularly the North Yorkshire districts, and which helps to develop the existing market place;
 - improve succession planning arrangements and a reduced reliance on key members of staff for service continuity;
 - the ability of both Councils to develop common approaches to new and developing initiatives.
- 13 The proposal is to create an informal shared service to simplify and streamline management arrangements by seconding CYC staff to NYCC. NYCC staff and the seconded CYC staff will then deliver services to both councils. The service level and related performance measures will be laid down in a formal Service Level Agreement between CYC/NYCC. These arrangements would be short term to last no more than a year.
- 14 During this financial year an options paper and business case will be presented for Executive to consider in order to establish a formally constituted shared organisation with available options around the various

service delivery models available to do so consistent with the council's Future Shape and Size work.

- 15 This option is the only option for consideration given that the NYCC staff base is considerably larger and would not be efficient for CYC to deliver.

Consultation

- 16 Council Management Team has reviewed and support the changes recommended in this report.
- 17 This report has been circulated for comment to the Trade Unions and feedback taken no fundamental objections to the proposed interim shared arrangements have been received.
- 18 The staff have also been consulted and are aware of the contents of this report.

Options

- 19 There are no alternative options for Recommendation ii) as explained in paragraph 15 above.

Analysis

- 20 All information is contained in the body of the report.

Council Plan

- 21 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:

- 22 **a. Financial:** The proposals have been discussed with Finance and have very limited financial implications at this time. Existing staff costs and related budgets will remain with CYC which will remain the employer until other more formal arrangements are in place later in the year if approved by Executive.
- b. Human Resources (HR):** HR have been consulted on the implications of the proposals set out in this report and are satisfied with the arrangements as there will be no TUPE arrangements as each employee will remain under the terms and conditions of their

respective Council. Formal secondments agreements will be agreed with each member of the CYC H&S Team. Consultation with staff and relevant trade unions has occurred. The arrangement will last one year whilst more long term proposals are developed.

- c. Equalities:** There are no equalities implications to this report.
- d. Legal:** Legal Services have been consulted on the proposals. The Council has the necessary legal powers to implement the recommended option.
- e. Crime and Disorder:** There are no crime and disorder implications to this report.
- f. Information Technology (ICT):** There are no IT implications for CYC arising from this report. Work is ongoing to develop appropriate H&S management systems so it will be necessary to make arrangements to enable NYCC/CYC staff to use the systems applicable to each Council. This arrangement is already in place for the Shared Head of H&S.
- g. Property:** There are no property implications to this report. It is proposed that the Council would provide fully serviced accommodation to the staff of the interim shared service, keeping with the provision currently made available to NYCC/CYC H&S staff.
- h. Other:** No known implications.

Risk Management

- 23 The proposed collaboration offers an opportunity to deliver efficiencies and economies of scale. The risks of the project due to the limited scope are minimal at this time as the staff will remain with each of their employer councils. Should the arrangement not be approved then the benefits of joint working will not be realised and the resilience of the service will be affected.

Contact Details Author:

Stuart Langston
Shared Head of Health and
Safety
Tel No. 01904 552621

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Pauline Stuchfield
AD Customers & Employees
Tel No. 01904 551127

Ian Floyd
Director of Customer, Business and Support Services
Tel No. 01904 552909

Report Approved

Date 18/4/16

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Financial: Ian Floyd, Director of Customer & Business Support Services,
01904 552909

Legal: Andrew Docherty, AD for Governance and ICT, 01904 551004

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

All

Annexes

None

Background Papers:

None

List of abbreviations used in this report:

CYC	City of York Council
HR	Human Resources
H&S	Health & Safety
ICT	Information and Computer Technology
NYCC	North Yorkshire County Council