

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4(7)**

**CABINET – 6TH APRIL 2004**

**SUBJECT: REVITALISING HEALTH & SAFETY**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the next step in revitalising health and safety within the authority by agreeing the new health and safety structure and authorising the creation of extra health and safety posts.

**2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 As part of the Action Plan following the Best Value Review of Personnel Services it was agreed that a review of the provision of Health and Safety would be undertaken. Specifically it was “to conduct a review of health and safety management and activity to ensure that the systems and approaches are co-ordinated and cost effective”.
- 2.2 The terms of reference were agreed, and a group established to consider the current situation and make recommendations to the Corporate Management Team, (CMT).
- 2.3 The Report entitled “Revitalising Health and Safety Within Caerphilly County Borough Council” was received by CMT on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2004. CMT agreed that the Council should seek to provide an exemplar health and safety service and that the existing policy of a devolved structure where each Directorate is responsible for the health and safety of its own staff, visitors, clients and buildings should remain, along with an independent central unit responsible for policy, audits and monitoring. The report contained a broad description of the roles and responsibilities within the organisation. Clarification of the detailed division of roles and responsibilities would need to be agreed at a later stage.
- 2.4 Directorates will employ their own health and safety practitioners, and be supported by a central unit (headed by a Strategic Health and Safety Officer) providing corporate policy development, co-ordination across the Council and professional support and leadership. It was estimated that each Directorate would require at least two health and safety professionals and that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit would consist of four officers (this did not take into account clerical and administrative support). This would mean an additional five members of staff across the Council.
- 2.5 It was agreed that the Occupational Health Service, which specialises in the relationship between health and work should remain within the Personnel Division, but maintain a close working relationship with all health and safety professional staff.
- 2.6 The Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2004/05 have now been agreed by Council and provision made for a Corporate Revenue growth of £170,000 for Health and Safety purposes.
- 2.7 This report seeks permission to implement the proposals of that report in respect of agreeing the roles of the Corporate unit and Directorate staff, as well as approving the new staffing structure.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

3.1 Protecting the health and safety of its staff and the public is a key element in the Health and Social Care Strategy of improving the health, safety and well being of all sectors of the community.

### **4. THE REPORT**

4.1 Corporate Management Team received the report of the Cross-Directorate Working Group on Health and Safety, which had conducted a review of health and safety management within the Authority.

4.2 The report followed meetings and consultation with users and employees, including groups made up of trade union representatives and health and safety liaison officers, existing providers and a cross-section of managers.

4.3 Consideration had been given to the legal responsibilities, role and function of health and safety within the Council as well as the specific roles and responsibilities of staff.

4.4 Benchmarking comparisons were carried out as well as analysis of the cost of the service and the results of consultation.

4.5 This was not a Best Value Review, and the conclusions and recommendations should be read in that knowledge.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

4.6.1 The conclusions of the report are outlined below.

4.6.2 The Review Panel has concluded that the way that the Authority organises health and safety at both Corporate and Directorate level is in need of revitalisation. Indeed, the Council should seek to provide a service that goes beyond the basic legal requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act, and be seen as an exemplar in local government.

4.6.3 This means that the Council needs to invest increased resources into the health and safety function. Ambitious aims should be set for the service which are intended to help deliver the Council's corporate aims and values, specifically to improve the safety and quality of the workforce around the values of equality, fairness and best value (now the Wales Programme for Improvement).

4.6.4 The Review Panel also concluded that any new structure should ensure:-

- Senior level commitment to health and safety within the organisation;
- Knowledge of legal duties for Members and Officers;
- Employee awareness of the importance of health and safety;
- Broad employee access to health and safety information;
- Improved employee participation;
- An independent health and safety audit programme;
- Effective incident reporting to reduce accidents;
- Professional safety competence; and
- Measurement of the performance of health and safety throughout the organisation.

#### **4.7 Report Recommendations to CMT**

4.7.1 The reports recommendations to the Corporate Management Team are outlined below.

- 4.7.2 The Council should seek to provide an exemplar health and safety service, which goes beyond the basic legal requirements of legislation.
- 4.7.3 The existing policy of a devolved structure where each Directorate is responsible for the health and safety of its own staff, visitors, clients and buildings should remain, along with an independent central unit responsible for policy, audits and monitoring.
- 4.7.4 This would be achieved by Directorates employing their own health and safety practitioners, supported by a central unit providing corporate policy development, co-ordination across the Council and professional support and leadership.

#### **4.7.5 Directorate Organisation**

Each Directorate should maintain devolved responsibility for the health and safety of staff, service users and buildings within its portfolio (including business units), and would need to employ adequate competent and qualified health and safety practitioners to support the Council's objectives. These practitioners would achieve this by:

- Developing and maintaining Directorate health and safety policies and procedures;
- Leading on health and safety matters within their Directorate and advising managers, Directorate staff, service users and contractors on health and safety issues;
- Leading on developing and organising internal training courses on health and safety for the Directorate;
- Organising and carrying out health and safety inspections of Directorate premises, workplaces and equipment to ensure compliance;
- Monitoring accident reporting procedures within their Directorate;
- Providing information to the Central Health and Safety Unit.

#### **4.7.6 Central Organisation (Health and Safety Unit)**

An independent corporate unit, embracing both health and safety, should exist at the centre of the organisation, which should be headed by an experienced, and qualified Manager who should act as the competent person for the Authority in matters of health and safety. The management of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit should remain in the Directorate of the Environment under the current Head of Service.

The role is to act as the corporate focal point by:

- Liaising with the HSE, Fire Service and other agencies;
- Leading on awareness campaigns and the development of corporate policies, practices and training on health and safety;
- Advising CMT, Directors and Heads of Service on health and safety issues;
- Maintaining corporate health and safety systems such as SYPOL, Corporate Accident Recording, Violence at Work Register etc.;
- Advising Members, Managers and staff representatives on health and safety issues

through meetings of the (re-named, see below) Corporate Health and Safety Committee;

- Carrying out independent safety audits and monitoring of practices throughout the Authority, and reporting to Directors on the findings, and any recommendations;
- Undertaking specific health and safety project work as required by the Corporate Management Team.

4.7.7 The Occupational Health Service provided by the authority specialising in the relationship between health and work should remain within the Personnel Division, but maintain a close working relationship with all the health and safety professional staff.

4.7.8 The Corporate Safety Committee should be re-named the Corporate Health & Safety Committee, and its terms of reference and constitutional position reviewed.

4.7.9 The provision of extra resources will be required to deliver the service outlined above. Estimates suggest 12 f.t.e. will be required i.e. an increase of 5 over current establishment across the Council.

4.7.10 It is estimated that each Directorate will require at least two health and safety professionals, and that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit should consist of four. This does not take into account clerical and administrative support. Standard job descriptions and person specifications should be drawn up and the salary agreed by the Corporate Gradings Review Panel. Health and Safety staff should be qualified professionals, and this should be reflected in the grade for the posts

4.7.11 It is recommended that the extra resources (estimate between £150,000 and £200,000) should be sourced centrally from the 2004/05 revenue budget.

4.7.12 If the proposed reorganisational structure, outlined above, is agreed it will be necessary for the current SLA arrangements for Corporate Health and Safety to be reviewed.

4.7.13 In order to provide this high profile effective service, an action plan to revitalise and re-invigorate health and safety within the Council should be implemented.

4.8 The reports recommendations were considered by CMT and accepted.

4.9 The Council has agreed extra funding in the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2004/05 of £170,000 for Health and Safety.

4.10 Work is continuing on a Health and Safety Revitalisation strategy to develop an exemplar Health and Safety Service for the Authority in 2004/05 and beyond and this will be presented to CMT and Cabinet in due course.

4.11 Elements of that Revitalisation Strategy have already begun with a series of one day Health and Safety Courses for Members and Senior Officers and 4 day courses for more 'hands-on' managers, supervisors and officers.

4.12 Approval is now sought to implement the new structure within Directorates and the Corporate Health and Safety Unit, based on the broad division of responsibilities outlined in 4.7.5 and 4.7.6 above.

4.13 The proposed new structure is that each Directorate will have two health and safety professionals, and that the Corporate Health and Safety Unit should consist of four. This does not take into account clerical and administrative support staff. Job descriptions and person specifications are in draft form but will be finalised by the Review Panel.

4.14 The proposed structure is as follows:

**Each Directorate**

Senior Health and Safety Officer	-	P.O 1 – 4
Health and Safety Officer	-	SO1+

**Central Health and Safety Unit**

Health and Safety Manager	-	P.O 9 – 12
Senior Health and Safety Officer	-	P.O 1 – 4
2 x Health and Safety Officer	-	SO1+

This would result in the following posts within the Authority

1 x Health and Safety Manager	- P.O 9 – 12
5 x Senior Health and Safety Officers	- P.O 1 – 4
6 x Health and Safety Officers	- SO1+

4.15 Currently the Authority employs the following health and safety professionals

1 x Senior Corporate Safety Officer	- P.O 1 – 4
1 x Health Safety and Welfare Officer	- P.O 1 – 4
3 x Corporate Safety Officers	- SO1+
2 x Directorate Health and Safety Officers	- SO1+

4.16 The creation of the five new posts is estimated to cost £170,000 at the top of the grades.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The report proposes to use the £170,000 'growth' put into the 2004/05 Revenue Budget for corporate health and safety issues.

**6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The report proposes the creation of five new posts as outlined in 4.14 – 4.15

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- (i) Approve the health and safety structure outlined in 4.14 and the broad division of responsibilities outlined in 4.7.5 and 4.7.6.
- (ii) Await the production of a further report on a revitalisation strategy to develop an exemplar health and safety service within the Authority, during 2004/2005 and beyond.

**8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 In order to revitalise health and safety within the Authority and to implement the recommendations of the Corporate Management Team.

## **9. STATUTORY POWERS**

9.1 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Local Government Act 1972. This is a Cabinet function.

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Background Papers:

None other than published documents.

These recommendations are endorsed by Corporate Management Team