



CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 22ND NOVEMBER 2010

**SUBJECT: PROPOSALS TO ADDRESS OUR HEALTH & SAFETY STRUCTURE
AND RESOURCES**

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on progress following a review of our Health & Safety arrangements and resources conducted by Dr Catherine Gill, an external consultant from our Risk Management Insurers (Marsh).
- 1.2 To seek Members views on some of the proposals outlined in the review and their operational impact.

2. SUMMARY

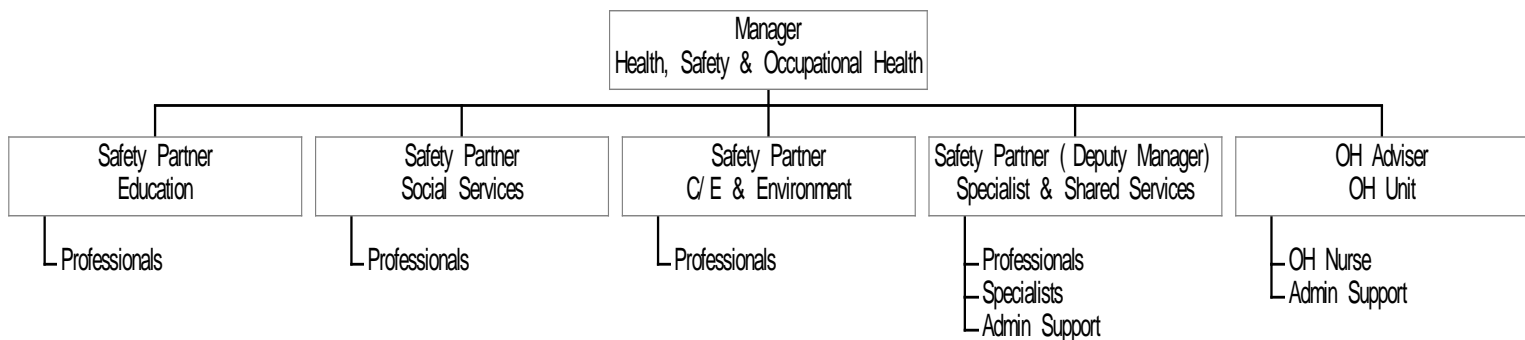
- 2.1 It should be recognised that Dr Gill's objective report had been targeted specifically at areas for development. The authority's H&S performance has improved considerably in recent years as a result of the introduction of the Corporate Health and Safety arrangements. Our improved corporate arrangements have received positive feedback from Inspectors at the Health & Safety Executive, as well as internally with managers. As an authority we are well regarded within the WLGA Safety Network where we are seen as a leading player (indeed our Education team were ranked highest in an all Wales Survey). This a sound base to further develop the service.
- 2.2 Dr Gill produced her report on the 20th April 2010. Subsequently, this has been presented to a meeting of our Corporate Management Team, and the Corporate Health & Safety group, in person by Dr Gill.
- 2.3 Since that date, some initial progress has been made in relation to the recommendations outlined, and this report brings forward an implementation plan to address all of the relevant recommendations contained in the report. It should be noted that some of the lesser risk actions are more readily achievable as in many cases they require little resources or time to resolve.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report relates primarily to how we are organised to discharge our legal liabilities under the legislative Health & Safety Framework.
- 3.2 This naturally links to the efficient and effective use of the Council's revenue resources in its Health & and Safety Resources and arrangements.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The report identified 10 key issues for us and outlined some recommendations as to how the Council may address these issues.
- 4.2 These areas were risked prioritised for us as Red (High), Amber (Medium) and Green (Low), and can be identified in pages 2 – 4 of Dr Gill's report (to be provided at meeting). We will consider each of these on its own merits and deal with these in turn.
- 4.3 Proposals for dealing with implementing the Recommendations, and progress made to date.
- 4.3.1 **H&S Structure & Resources – Risk prioritised high:** Dr Gill identified that previously the service had become fragmented and was not as effective as it could be. The recommendation for a new structure for a joined up service reporting to one Health, Safety & OH Manager reporting to the Head of HR & OD, is recommended for adoption. This would also transfer responsibility for the line management of our Occupational Health Unit to this post holder, along with the reporting and budgetary responsibilities for all seconded H&S Staff. The team would have a mix of dedicated support focussing on the needs of client directorates, coupled with specialist support in the centre dealing with auditing, training, policies etc, and areas of specialist expertise such as manual handling, asbestos, fire etc. This would provide greater flexibility to deploy resources across the authority in line with risks and priorities that exist at the time, and provide a more varied development opportunity for staff. The structure would therefore appear as follows:



There are presently 2 staff who are more Senior within the H&S team, and are both at an equal grade in the structure (Grade 11). Both currently manage teams, and have the necessary skills and expertise to carry out the new role. The Manager role is anticipated to be at Grade 12 in the structure given the additional responsibilities entailed. It is therefore proposed to ring fence this opportunity to the 2 most senior post holders in the structure in a competitive process. The unsuccessful candidate would be slotted into the Deputy Manager post (Grade 11), and therefore would be redeployed without any detriment. It is planned to conclude this process in the autumn, as the successful candidate will be integral to the successful delivery of the service.

The successful postholder would then be responsible for appointing staff to the relevant roles in the structure. For many this will mean little or no change, for others they may be required to work across client directorates rather than dedicated to one. This process will be ringfenced to the existing staff, to protect against potential redundancies.

There are other related H&S posts that sit out side the current seconded arrangements, which again it is recommended are brought in line with this structure to ensure the most effective and joined up working arrangements are in place. Further discussions will be required with the relevant HOS to ensure that the appropriate arrangements can be put in place. It is planned that this should be concluded and new arrangements in place before the end of the financial year.

It is anticipated that by bringing the expertise and resources together, efficiencies will be achieved on Health & Safety contract spending and on staffing budgets. This report envisages that adopting the recommendations will lead to the ability to reduce the headcount on both administrative and professional staffing costs once the new arrangements have bedded in.

- 4.3.2 **Occupational Health Service – Risk prioritised high:** The proposal to bring OH under the management of H&S is recognised and recommended for adoption. We have recently appointed a qualified OH Nurse Advisor, which will provide supervision and direction for the unit. In addition we have recently changed providers for our external OH Medical examiner, joining a collaborative contract with Blaenau Gwent CC. The early feedback gained from managers has been positive, and we will continue to monitor this new provider. We have the ability to remain with this arrangement up to October 2011.

To enable us to be able to resource a longer term contractual provider, we will enter a WPC collaborative procurement framework contract, that will be led by CCBC Procurement and H&S teams for a future source of qualified external OH Medical Examiner.

- 4.3.3 **H&S Training - Risk prioritised high:** A full and thorough mapping exercise of current training is required. It is proposed that once the new structural arrangements are in place that this will be undertaken as a priority. It is envisaged that this will be complete by Calendar year end. This will be followed by a Training Needs Analysis (TNA), undertaken in the final quarter of the financial year, to be ready for the new Financial year. This will then inform decisions on expenditure and priorities for next years training plan. This TNA will need to actively engage managers in high risk areas.

- 4.3.4 **H&S Improvement Plans – Risk prioritised high:** Individual areas have produced their own service improvement plans to a greater or lesser extent. The quality and standard of these are not consistent, and we have set about improving this. All directorates now have working groups where line managers are actively engaging with H&S Officers to improve the process of identifying areas for improvements, and have also included our Insurance & Risk Management team, to ensure that our liabilities to our insurers are also recognised. It is proposed that this activity will be continued and further developed to feed both a directorate and corporate Service Improvement plan for Safety. In addition the Corporate HR Manager has developed a SIP for OH in conjunction with the Corporate H&S Manager as a foundation for future development. If the proposals within this report are accepted, there will be a Corporate SIP to cover the whole authority in readiness for next year.

- 4.3.5 **Risk Reporting – Risk Prioritised high:** Dr Gill identified that whilst individual service areas may actively manage risks, there was a lack of consistency across the authority. We are proposing moving to a centralised database that would manage our risk register for the authority in a consistent fashion. We have an existing software product (RAMIS) that we have identified as suitable for this purpose, and we propose to have all our risks actively recorded and managed through this process by the end of this financial year. This will enable us to be more robust in our production of an Authority wide risk register. This will also allow us to inform the budget allocation of the Corporate Health & Safety Budget.

- 4.3.6 **Corporate H&S Policies – Risk prioritised medium:** Dr Gill identified that our policy document and arrangements are overly lengthy and complicated. This does not assist our managers in being able to discharge their safety responsibilities. Whilst being critical in this regard, Dr Gill also identified evidence of good practice within services and has recommended that this be adopted authority wide. Work will need to be undertaken on revising our arrangements to move towards this model of best practice, which will commence in the autumn. We plan to have this completed on a rolling programme basis (looking at our high risk areas first), and work will commence this autumn. All new documentation will be produced using the guidelines provided by Dr Gill. An additional concern was the length of time that the consultation process took to approve and release new policies and documentation. Changes have already been made, and the process has been streamlined.

This will be monitored to review its effectiveness, and further changes sought if required.

- 4.3.7 **Auditing – Risk prioritised medium:** When established in 2004, the Audit regime put in place was addressing real issues and concerns at the time. Dr Gill's evidence has identified that the audit arrangements have been successful and met their aim, and that the number of issues now being raised as a result has significantly diminished. This now means that we need to review the level of resources dedicated to auditing and the audit strategy. The Corporate Team has commenced this work, and it is planned to bring forward revised arrangements in time for next years Service Improvement Plan.
- 4.3.8 **Corporate H&S Group – Risk prioritised medium:** This is an area that we have been able to address quickly, with the recommendations already adopted. The Corporate Health & Safety Group has new terms of reference, and a revised membership. Operational HOS are now members of the group representing Education, Social Services and Environment; and have been joined by the Corporate Insurance & Risk Manager and the Head of Building Consultancy to improve the outcomes. The postholder referred to 4.3.1 would also join this group along with the Head of HR & OD. This group is under the stewardship of the Director of Corporate Services.
- 4.3.9 **H&S Professionals Group – Risk prioritised medium:** Whilst recognising that the structural changes referred to in 4.3.1 will bring the biggest improvement, changes have already been put in place by the Corporate Safety Manager to improve this group's outcomes and contribution. This has produced positive feedback from the staff concerned, and is an early success. This will be further developed in line with changes recommended in 4.3.1.
- 4.3.10 **H&S Management System Standard – Risk prioritised low:** The report identifies that we have successfully developed a Corporate Health & Safety System in line with the guidance available from the HSE at the time. Dr Gill's report highlights that this is a positive building block that could be improved upon by the future adoption of a modern management system such as OHSAS 18001. Many of the earlier findings would be required to underpin the move towards a new management system. It is therefore recommended that we prepare an implementation plan to commence this work at the beginning FY11/12 financial year, with a view to having the system accredited and operational by the end of this financial year.
- 4.4 It should be recognised that we have very capable staff within the H&S team. The proposal to bring these together into a co-ordinated group under one common direction will provide additional opportunities for staff, and improve services to client managers.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is difficult to accurately provide the detailed savings that can be achieved at this stage due to the disparate nature of the staff and budgets being spread in a variety of areas. Consolidating the financial budgets under the leadership and ownership of a common management structure will allow for efficiencies.
- 5.2 Proposals contained within this report will contribute to the savings targets required. It is anticipated that we will be able to utilise the opportunity to make efficiencies in staffing and contractual spend which we undertake on client departments behalf – e.g. fire risk assessments, statutory electrical testing etc.
- 5.3 When the rationalisation of the budgets is complete a detailed savings plan will be presented to demonstrate the efficiencies available. At this stage it would be reasonable to assume that circa £100k of staffing savings alone would be deliverable in the FY11/12 budget, in addition to efficiencies in contractual spend.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Introducing change on this scale will require careful management, as we bring together a variety of staff. We will ring-fence relevant posts to staff within the service to protect them from potential redundancy / redeployment. At this stage it is not envisaged that compulsory redundancies will be required.
- 6.2 There are however, a number of staff who are currently on fixed term contracts across the safety teams. These would all require a review of their intended duration. It may be necessary for some or all of these contracts to be brought to their planned conclusion without renewal, or terminated on an earlier basis.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 This paper and the appendices are being used as the basis for consultation with staff, trade unions and Members.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members views are sought in the proposals contained within this report.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Proposals are designed to achieve the savings targets.

10. STATUTORY POWER

- 10.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

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