

**Audit Sub Committee - Health & Safety**

Further to a Member question, I write to advise the following:-

- The Council is committed to fulfilling its legal obligations principally under The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999. The Council will use its best endeavour to find the right balance between any health & safety risks and competing resources.
- There are no significant health & safety related incidents/accidents, currently or in the recent past, requiring internal or/and external investigations, or health & safety prosecutions.
- Contractors e.g. Veolia, Liberata etc. are responsible for their staff and operations even though the Council has responsibility for premises occupied by contractors and their staff.
- The Council's estate is managed on its behalf by Amey as part of the outsourced facilities management contract. The Council monitors Amey's health & safety responsibility/compliance as part of the contract monitoring arrangements.
- Given that health & safety applies to everything we do and every operation/service, and in light of the comment in the first bullet point above, it is vitally important that we identify and resource the high risk issues first.
- To that end the key areas requiring improvement are as follows:-
  - General risk assessments
  - Fire risk assessments
  - General health & safety cultureThe first two were identified by the internal audit process and these are being addressed as a matter of priority.

- The governance arrangement currently in place is as follows:

- There is a Corporate Health & Safety Group chaired by the Director of HR & Customer Services, comprising representatives from all key services/divisions in the organisation and key contractors i.e. Veolia, Liberata and Amey. The Group provides corporate leadership steer on health & safety issues and feedback to the Corporate Leadership Team, chaired by the Chief Executive, on a regular basis, focusing on priority health & safety policies/procedures and high risks.
- Following the last corporate departmental restructuring by the Chief Executive, the 3 re-constituted departments, namely the Chief Executive's, People and Place Departments are firming up their departmental health & safety committees. The latter already has a well-established departmental health & safety committee chaired by a senior officer and comprising representatives of Veolia and other key relevant contractors responsible for environment services.
- Separately, health & safety is a standing agenda item in the quarterly meeting between the Unions and the Chief Executive and the Director of HR & Customer Services.
- In response to the gaps identified above (i.e. risk assessments), each of the 8 major divisions in the Council are required to identify a minimum of 4 priority risk assessments linked to the core business(es) of the division. This will be required every year as part of the business planning process. Every division, with the assistance of HR, has now identified their 4 priority risk assessments for the new financial year 2020/21. The deadline for completing the task i.e. carry out and complete the 4 risk assessments is 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020. This approach will create a 'do culture' because managers can see the clear link between the prioritised risk assessments and the business bottom line.
- The process has identified a couple of common risk assessments across the organisation, namely, a) lone working and b) dealing with aggressive customers/clients. Our approach on this is to commission a corporate piece of work on these common risk assessments for departments/divisions to incorporate department/divisional specifics or 'customise' to suit their specific needs. That way, resources will not be duplicated unnecessarily.

- Finally, there is a part-time corporate health & safety advisor post, as well as a graduate intern post and an apprentice role. The first 2 posts are being recruited into following recent resignations.