

19 September 2013		ITEM: 5
Standards and Audit Committee		
Internal Audit Report on Corporate Health and Safety		
Report of: Gavin Dennett – Head of Public Protection		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Accountable Head of Service: Gavin Dennett, Head of Public Protection		
Accountable Director: Lucy Magill, Director of Environment		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: To advise members on the issues identified in the RSM Tenon audit report of Corporate Health and Safety and to update on actions taken since publication.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the approved internal audit plan for 2012/13 Corporate Health and Safety was audited. Five high and one medium recommendations were made resulting in a red opinion. Action was taken in relation to the recommendations. A follow up report was carried out in August 2013 resulting in one medium recommendation and a green opinion.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Standards and Audit Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 Note the content of this report and the RSM Tenon audit report**
- 1.2 Satisfy itself that the actions taken by the Council in response to the audit report are proportionate and appropriate.**
- 1.3 Note the content of the RSM Tenon follow up audit report**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 An audit of Corporate Health & Safety was undertaken as part of the approved internal audit periodic plan for 2012/13.**
- 2.2 It is the duty of the Council to ensure that Health and Safety legislation is observed by employees of the Council and by those contracted to carry out work for the Council. All employees have a duty to safeguard the health and safety of themselves and of others that may be affected by their acts or omissions. This duty requires the removal of, or protection from, risks to the**

health and safety of all persons who may be affected from the conditions of the premises, access to and egress from the premises and the use of plant, equipment and substances on, in or near the premises.

- 2.3 All Council Departments and premises (excluding schools) are periodically inspected by the Health and Safety Team to ensure compliance with current legislation. The Team consists of a Principal Officer, 3 Corporate Health and Safety Advisors and 2½ full-time equivalent Health & Safety Inspectors (External).
- 2.4 Officers facilitate the Corporate Health and Safety Board which looks strategically at health and safety across the Council and seeks to improve wellbeing at work and reduce negative indices like high absence rates. The corporate health and safety service collects data on health and safety performance to inform the Council through periodic reports.

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The original RSM Tenon audit report was carried out in March 2013 and the results of this audit can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The report found that action needed to be taken to ensure the risks are managed.
- 3.3 The key findings from the report are as follows:
- 3.3.1 Design of control framework
- Accidents are monitored and reported to the Corporate Health and Safety Board and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) whenever appropriate.
 - There is a Corporate Health and Safety Board which meets on a quarterly basis.
 - A work programme has been prepared and agreed by the Corporate Health and Safety Board.
 - An on-line fire safety training programme is being arranged for all staff and there are plans to ensure all management receive health and safety training.
 - There is not a full Corporate Asbestos Register in place.
 - The Council's Asbestos Policy is being reviewed.
- 3.3.2 Application of and compliance with control framework
- Council departments and establishments are not inspected at timely intervals in accordance with the risk assessment.
 - Accident forms are not always sent in promptly by managers following an incident.
 - Not all managers have completed a risk assessment of their workplace.
 - The Council cannot be sure that all departments/establishments are complying with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
 - The Asbestos Register kept by Europa was not up to date.

- 3.4 The report identified 5 high and 1 medium recommendation which can be found in Section 2 of appendix 1.
- 3.5 The actual work in relation to this Audit was carried out in January 2013 and a final report agreed and issued in late March 2013. Following the issue of the final report, senior management reviewed the report and were concerned that the Internal Auditor may not have been provided with the most up to date information available which may have impacted on the assurance opinion.
- 3.6 Since the report was issued the findings have been discussed at a number of meetings of the Directors Board and actions put in place to deal with the recommendations made.
- 3.7 It had already been agreed as part of the 2013/14 that as this was a red report, a follow-up review would be carried out in August 2013. The fieldwork has now been completed and a green assurance opinion for the follow-up work has been issued by RSM Tenon. This report can be found in Appendix 2.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.1 Committee should note the original report and the follow up report which assures them that action has been taken to address the matters raised as recommendations in the original report.

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Directors Board

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 Action has been taken to deal with the matters raised to ensure the health and safety of council employees and visitors to council employees.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
Telephone and email: **2772**
mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk

There are financial implications related to carrying out asbestos inspections and these are being managed from within service budgets.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Daniel Toohey**
Telephone and email: **01375 652049**
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The Council has a Statutory Duty to ensure the health and safety of all employees, actions taken following the audit will ensure that this duty is complied with.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
Telephone and email: **01375 652472**
SDeAlyn@thurrock.gov.uk

None Identified

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

None Identified

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix 1 – RSM Tenon Audit Report March 2013
- Appendix 2 – RSM Tenon Audit Report August 2013

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