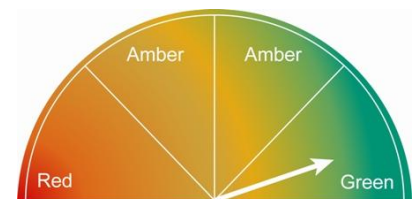


Thurrock Council

Follow-up
Corporate Health & Safety

Internal Audit Report 2013/14
2nd September 2013

Overall Opinion



CONTENTS

Section	Page
Executive Summary	1
Action Plan	2
Findings and Recommendations	3

Debrief meeting	20 August 2013	Auditors	Chris Harris – Partner
Draft report issued	27 August 2013		Gary Clifford - Client Manager
Responses received	30 August 2013		Dina Lucchesi - Senior Auditor
Final report issued	2 September 2013	Client sponsor	Lucy Magill - Director of Environment
		Distribution	Graham Farrant – Chief Executive Gavin Dennett - Head of Public Protection Lucy Magill - Director of Environment Tony Sprackling - Principal Officer (Health & Safety) Sean Clark - Head of Corporate Finance



This review has been performed using RSM Tenon's bespoke internal audit methodology, **i-RIS**.

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during our internal audit work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist, or of all the improvements that may be required. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that the information provided in this report is as accurate as possible, based on the information provided and documentation reviewed, no complete guarantee or warranty can be given with regard to the advice and information contained herein. Our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

This report is prepared solely for the use of Board and senior management of Thurrock Council. Details may be made available to specified external agencies, including external auditors, but otherwise the report should not be quoted or referred to in whole or in part without prior consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended for any other purpose.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

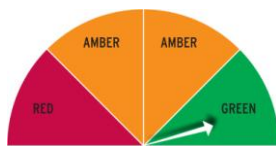
As part of the approved internal audit periodic plan for 2013/14 we have undertaken a review of Corporate Health and Safety to follow up on the progress of implementing internal audit recommendations made, following the Audit undertaken in March 2013. The last review identified 5 high and 1 medium recommendation.

Staff members responsible for the implementation of recommendations were interviewed to determine the status of agreed actions. Where appropriate, audit testing was completed to assess the level of compliance with this status and the controls in place.

It was pleasing to note that a considerable amount of work has been undertaken since the last audit and this is reflected in the improvement in the assurance opinion provided.

Objective	Council departments and premises are the subject of periodic Health and Safety audits and inspections to ensure the Council complies with the Corporate Health and Safety Policy and current legislation.
Risk	<p>Council departments and other establishments may not be inspected regularly.</p> <p>Accidents may not be monitored or reported and remedial action not taken.</p> <p>Managers may not assess risks in their work place and take steps to control them.</p> <p>Asbestos in Council's premises may not be managed effectively.</p>

1.2 CONCLUSION



Taking account of the issues identified, the Council can take substantial assurance that the actions agreed to address internal audit recommendations have been implemented.

1.3 LIMITATIONS TO THE SCOPE OF THE AUDIT

This review only covered audit recommendations previously made and did not review the whole control framework of the areas listed above. Therefore, we are not providing assurance on the entire risk and control framework of those areas. Testing was carried out on all recommendations rated High or Medium. Where testing has been undertaken, our samples have been selected over the period since actions were implemented or controls enhanced.

Our work does not provide any guarantee or absolute assurance against material errors, loss or fraud.

2 ACTION PLAN

The priority of the recommendations made is as follows:

Priority	Description
High	Recommendations are prioritised to reflect our assessment of risk associated with the control weaknesses.
Medium	
Low	
Suggestion	These are not formal recommendations that impact our overall opinion, but used to highlight a suggestion or idea that management may want to consider.

Ref	Recommendation	Categorisation	Accepted (Y/N)	Management Comment	Implementation Date	Manager Responsible
3.1	When submitting the list of "Council Senior Management Team Responsibility Areas Where Risk Assessments Have Not Been Produced" to Director's Board, the Principal Officer (Health & Safety) should include a comparison with the previous quarter to assist the Board in identifying those areas where no progress has been made. Relevant managers can then be chased up to complete their risk assessments.	Medium	Y	This has already been discussed within the team and actions have been taken to provide this information to the next Directors Board	1 st September 2013	Gavin Dennett

3 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

	Controls (actual and/or missing)	Adequate Design (yes/no)	Test Result / Implications	Recommendation	Categorisation
Risk 1: Council departments and other establishments may not be inspected regularly.					
1.1	Council departments and establishments are inspected regularly	Yes	<p>Since the last review, the Health & Safety audit timetable has been reviewed and the risk rating removed from the list. This is due to the fact that premises will now be inspected corporately for the perceived highest risks such as Asbestos, Legionella etc. Risk Assessments will now be put in place by managers for each area. The new programme will concentrate on a general inspection and the frequency of any re-inspections will be dependent on the risk assessment for each premises. If there is a change of use of premises, an inspection will be instigated promptly.</p> <p>There was evidence that a target number of audits for each quarter, starting from July 2013 have been allocated to each Officer.</p>		
1.2	There is a Corporate Health & Safety Board	Yes	From minutes of meetings it was ascertained that the Health and Safety Board is still active and is chaired by the Chief Executive. The Board meets on a quarterly basis.		
Risk 2: Accidents may not be monitored or reported and remedial action not taken.					
2.1	Accidents are reported and monitored	Yes	A sample of accident reports was reviewed to ascertain whether they were investigated and remedial action taken when appropriate. No discrepancies were identified. The Section now monitor whether accident forms are sent in promptly and completed fully. Reminders are also issued at Corporate Health & Safety Board (CHSB) meetings.		

	Controls (actual and/or missing)	Adequate Design (yes/no)	Test Result / Implications	Recommendation	Categorisation
Risk 3: Managers may not assess risks in their work place and take steps to control them.					
3.1	Managers assess the risks in the workplace	Yes	<p>The Principal Officer (Health & Safety) confirmed that manager's performance in respect of submission of risk assessments for their area of work had improved after the audit of March 2013. Since then reports have been submitted to Director's Board, on a quarterly basis, highlighting which areas have risk assessments outstanding.</p> <p>A comparison was made between the list of "Council Senior Management Team Responsibility Areas Where Risk Assessments Have Not Been Produced" submitted to Director's Board as at the 22nd May 2013 and the latest list as at the 5th August 2013. It was noted that only 3 risk assessments out of 38 had been carried out between the two periods. It was further noted that out of the remaining 35, 12 related to Civic Offices 1 and 2 where there are significant office moves due to the transformation programme. A further 6 areas are to have a health & safety audit carried out before the end of 2013.</p>	When submitting the list of "Council Senior Management Team Responsibility Areas Where Risk Assessments Have Not Been Produced" to Director's Board, the Principal Officer (Health & Safety) should include a comparison with the previous quarter to assist the Board in identifying those areas where no progress has been made. Relevant managers can then be chased up to complete their risk assessments.	Medium
Risk 4: Asbestos in Council's premises may not be managed effectively.					
4.1	There is a Corporate Asbestos Register	Yes	There is an asbestos register on the J drive which is accessible by all staff and kept up to date by the Building Surveyor within Investment and Development. In cases where establishments have arranged for independent inspections, managers are required to inform the Building Surveyor with details of the work undertaken so that the corporate list can be updated.		
4.2	The Asbestos Register is kept up-	Yes	Checks confirmed that the asbestos register is now		

	Controls (actual and/or missing)	Adequate Design (yes/no)	Test Result / Implications	Recommendation	Categorisation
	to-date		<p>kept up-to-date with 1055 buildings. Following the previous audit, when the Register was found to be incomplete, a number of measures have been put in place including the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments were sent a link to the Corporate Register to update for their area; • Those properties which were unallocated were allocated to a holding Department; • Asbestos awareness courses were made mandatory for building managers and caretakers who deal directly with contractors on site and have direct responsibility for building repairs or plant maintenance; • The Register is regularly monitored by the Corporate Health and Safety Team; and • The first monthly report on asbestos management and an analysis of compliance by Directorate went to Director's Board in August 2013 and future reports will show progress against the previous month. 		
4.3	Re-visits are carried out to update Asbestos Survey	Yes	<p>The majority of re-visits to update asbestos surveys are within Housing. There was evidence that the Head of Housing (Investment and Development) has given instructions to her Team to start a programme of inspections. A contract and programme, which has been prioritised in order of risk, are now in place. Actions to inspect other areas have also been taken.</p>		
4.4	There is not an Asbestos Policy in	Yes	There is an up-to-date and comprehensive Asbestos Policy in place which was approved by the Health		

	Controls (actual and/or missing)	Adequate Design (yes/no)	Test Result / Implications	Recommendation	Categorisation
	place		and Safety Board in January 2013.		
4.5	It is the Tenant's responsibility to manage asbestos in leased properties.	Yes	<p>It was confirmed by the Commercial Property and Lands Manager that commercial properties are now inspected for asbestos whenever they become empty.</p> <p>Legal opinion was sought on whether the Council is responsible for asbestos management in properties which are already leased. As the properties are leased on a full repair and insurance lease, the duty to manage asbestos rests with whoever is responsible for maintenance of the premises, which is usually the tenant.</p>		