

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	25 April 2006
Subject:	Health and Safety Executive Inspection Update Report.
Responsible Officer:	Myfanwy Barrett, Director of Finance and Business Strategy.
Contact Officer:	P Williams, Health and Safety Service Manager
Portfolio Holder:	Sanjay Dighe, Portfolio Holder for Business Connections and Performance.
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

Note the findings of this report and associated action plan.

Reason for report

To report on the outcome of the HSE management audit during January and February 2005 and to appraise the Scrutiny Committee of the action plan developed to address the issues raised.

Copies of the attached post audit feedback from the HSE and the post audit action plan set out action and progress to address health and safety issues identified by the HSE audit.

The post inspection action plan is important as its effective delivery impacts on the council's Corporate Plan, community strategy and other strategic initiatives. Through the implementation of the plan the Council can impact on health and safety at work

and serve to improve the vitality profile of staff, visitors, customers and other stakeholders.

Benefits

The outcome should enable better use of resources by reducing the incidence of work related ill health and injury which lead to absence and diminished service to the public. Further benefits include;

- Improvement the council's management of health, safety and welfare across all services
- Gives assurance that all employees and managers are aware of their responsibilities and are competent to carry out their work on behalf of the council in a safe and healthy way.
- It could position the council in the frontline as a beacon and exemplar of excellence in health and safety with a positive boost to other areas of the council and wider community such as local businesses.
- It will assist the council in meeting the duties laid down in health and safety statutes

Cost of Proposals

Staff in directorates will implement the proposals with the assistance of the Health and Safety Service within existing budgets.

Risks

Failure of the council to make progress in meeting the terms of the post inspection action plan could lead to prosecutions and or compensation claims. Specific risks to implementation are;

- Mistaken priorities leading to Insufficient staff time to complete the work
- Lack of leadership and commitment to the tasks
- Lack of competent staff to complete the work required
- Management changes and lack of continuity in key result areas

Implications if recommendations rejected

In the short term, lack of action being taken to raise awareness and promote health and safety across the council. In the longer terms increased potential for accidents and ill health, and staff demoralised and stressed. Increased risk of enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive against the authority and individuals.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

The overarching reason for the HSE's inspection and audit programme is built around central governments "Revitalizing Strategy" and government targets for

reductions in cases of work-related ill health and injury. Harrow Council, along with other local authorities in London have been targeted for audit by the HSE because we are;

- A major employer of labour.
- Enforcers of health and safety legislation in the community.
- A major client of other sectors as a procurer of goods and services.

Hence Harrow Council is in a strong position to influence and to lead businesses in their communities, particularly small and medium sized organizations to help them improve their own health and safety standards.

Additionally, a number of other criteria may have influenced their decision to audit Harrow during the first wave of local government audits including;

- 1) They had not carried out a major inspection of the borough for over 10 years;
- 2) A fatality occurred in 2002: (no legal action was taken against the borough or its major contractor).

Post Inspection Action Plan.

This document details the work that has been done to meet the recommendations in the HSE inspection feedback of 2005. The action plan has been structured in accordance with the HSE document "HSG 65 Successful Health and Safety Management" and sets out work done as at March 24th 2006. HSG 65 lays out the HSE recommended basic framework of effectively managing health and safety. The key elements of the management system are Policy, Organizing, Planning and Implementing, Measuring Performance and Audit. This process is cyclical and the aim is to develop a culture of continuous improvement. The main achievements to date are;

- Development of an overall strategy.
- Revision of the Health and Safety Policy.
- Issue of revised specific policy and Codes of Practice.
- Development of an executive Directorate Health and Safety Policy.
- Development of a Group Health and Safety Plan template.
- Strengthening the Health and Safety Service function.
- Developing a comprehensive health and safety learning framework.

Establishment of;

- The Health and Safety Partnership Board.
- Executive Directorate Health and Safety Groups.
- The Stress Strategy Group.

HSE revisit on the 13.04.06

An additional report will be presented regarding feedback from the HSE revisit on the 13th of April.

Consultation

UNISON were involved at every stage of the process. They had opportunities to meet with inspectors in the course of the audit and to receive feedback afterwards. UNISON is also represented on the Council's Health and Safety Partnership Board and contributed to the development of the action plan.

2.2 Options considered

N/A

2.3 Consultation

Unison and other stakeholders were involved at every stage of the process. They had opportunities to meet with inspectors in the course of the inspection and to receive feedback afterwards. UNISON and GMB are also represented on the Council's Health and Safety Partnership Board and contributed to the development of the action plan.

2.4 Financial Implications

Staff in directorates will implement the proposals with the assistance of the Health and Safety Service within existing budgets.

2.5 Legal Implications

Council responsibilities to its employees with respect to duty of care and health and safety emanates from the Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 and subsequent legislation and guidance

2.6 Equalities Impact

Since initial development of the post inspection action plan, a review of Health and Safety under the Race Equality Scheme and an Equality Impact assessment have been carried out and these are currently being consulted on. The feedback and recommendations arising from those will be incorporated into the plan along with targets for service delivery.

2.7 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

The purpose of this report is to highlight the action that the Council is taking to reduce risk from health and safety hazard, some of which will have crime and disorder connotations.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Appendix 1 - Harrow Council (HSE Management Inspection) Post Inspection Action Plan April updated March 24th 2006.