

Meeting: Audit Committee

Date: 29th July 20

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Review of Corporate Health & Safety

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

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1. Purpose and Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an overview and to demonstrate the progress being made to improve the delivery, management and culture of health and safety at Torbay Council.

2. Proposed Decision

- 2.1 To note the report.

3. Reason for Decision

No decision is required.

Supporting Information

4. Position

- 4.1 In February 2019, poor working practices at Brixham Harbour came to the attention of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which resulted in a number of visits and a meeting with the senior management of Torbay Council. The outcome of those visits was positive as although the HSE had concerns, they did not identify any ongoing contraventions, and they were also confident in the new approach already being undertaken and implement at Torbay Council.
- 4.2 In May 2019, Devon Audit Partnership reported on their audit of Torbay Council's Corporate Health and Safety provision. It identified a fundamental weakness on managing the corporate health and safety risks. It also reported that there was no clear health and safety direction.

- 4.3 The HSE, however, required Torbay Council to write an action plan by July 2019, and then to provide regular updates, the last of these being in November 2019. The November 2019 letter and the latest spreadsheet (July 2020) are attached in Appendices 1 and 2. These importantly pick up all the issues covered by the May 2019 Audit report. To date HSE have not felt the need to revisit and undertake any audits, which must be seen in a positive light.
- 4.4 The focus of the work has been entirely risk based, with a light touch audit being undertaken across the whole organisation, including the TDA. This resulted in departments and teams being risk rated into high, medium and low for detailed audits. Further to this all high risk audits are now completed as are many of the medium risk ones. This has enabled the organisation to understand and address its higher risks. The grant maintained schools have also been audited. A training programme of all managers and front line staff is being rolled out, as well as relevant specialist training, such as for risk assessors, however as with many work streams, COVID 19 has significantly impacted upon this delivery and this is subsequently impacting on embedding of a H&S culture. However new dates are now in the diary to start the recovery programme.
- 4.5 A Health and Safety Management system, SHE Assure, has been purchased and the incident module rolled out, which is also being used by the TDA, schools and SWISCO. There is currently support training taking place to start to embed the system, following a delay due to COVID 19. This allows for the recording of incidents (including near misses and accidents) and the management of the actions that arise from the investigations. It will also help inform decision making at both departmental and corporate level with regular reports to SLT. Further modules for risk management, training and audits will be completed shortly for further implementation in 2020/21.
- 4.6 A cross department working party has now been meeting for the past 12 months, and this is being used as a conduit to pass information two ways and to help with the cultural change that is taking place. The embedding of both the new management system and a cultural change are key parts of this coming years work plan; along with the completion of the audits; further training roll out and the review of all risk assessments by departmental staff, using the new risk assessment module on SHE Assure.
- 4.7 Although some of the completion dates in the original audit have had to change, due to risk prioritisation, and more recently COVID 19, significant progress is being made in all areas, with some areas being completed.

5. Possibilities and Options

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. Fair Decision Making

6.1 Not applicable

7. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

7.1 Not applicable

8. Risks

8.1 There does still remain a risk, as there is still work to do to embed a culture, and this is the focus of the work plan for 2020/21. However that risk is significantly reduced from 15 months ago.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Torbay Council letter to HSE dated 26th November 2019

Appendix 2 HSE spreadsheet of activities – updated July 2020.

Additional Information