



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Corporate Health and Safety Management Arrangements
Date:	22 August 2008
Reporting Officers:	Ciaran Quigley, Director of Legal Services, Trevor Salmon, Director of Corporate Services, William Francey, Director of Health and Environmental Services
Contact Officers:	Andrew Wilson, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) Andy Harrison, AGRS Liam Mulholland, AGRS James Harrigan, AGRS

Background Information

At the COMT meeting on 27 May 2008 a paper was presented by the Director of Legal Services entitled 'Review of Health and Safety Management Arrangements and Review of the implications of the Corporate Manslaughter Act.' The purpose of this report was to bring Chief Officers up to date with:

- The Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007
- Progress on the ongoing Corporate Review of Health and Safety Management Arrangements (being undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services)
- The Joint Insurance Working Group

At the above meeting COMT agreed that Mr Quigley would convene a meeting with Mr Salmon and Mr Francey when the report by Audit, Governance and Risk Services had been prepared. It was also agreed that, after this meeting, a further report would be submitted to COMT outlining the action that would be required to link the work being carried out by the Health and Safety Working Group (i.e. the group overseeing the corporate review / audit) and the Joint Insurance Working Group; the strategic positioning of the Workplace Health Unit and the resourcing necessary to ensure that the Council discharged adequately its responsibilities in this area.

The purpose of this report is therefore to provide an update to Committee on these issues and to make recommendations regarding how the issues arising can be taken forward.

It should also be noted that, during the course of the ongoing review, the Workplace Health Manager resigned from his post in the Council. This was formally noted by COMT on 9 June 2008.

Key Issues

1. Corporate Review of Health and Safety Arrangements (AGRS audit)

With regard to the Corporate Review of Health and Safety Arrangements, Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) has now completed this review. The key issues arising from the review are as follows:

- AGRS has provided 'amber' level assurance i.e. risks are controlled to an acceptable level but the system of controls could be enhanced.
- AGRS has confirmed that there are controls in place to address the key elements set out in the Health and Safety Management framework "Managing Health and Safety: five steps to success" (HSG65)
- AGRS has identified that the control environment could be strengthened further by the implementation of improvements to the arrangements for the corporate management and reporting of health and safety and that such improvements could improve the provision of assurance to Committee and Chief Officers on health and safety.

2. Meetings of Directors of Legal, Corporate and Health and Environmental Services and AGRS

The Director of Legal Services convened meetings with the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Health and Environmental Services and representatives from AGRS on 21 July 2008 and 30 July 2008 to discuss:

- The findings / recommendations included in the audit report 'Corporate Review of Health and Safety Management Arrangements'
- The strategic positioning of the Workplace Health Unit, including how it related to the Joint Insurance Working Group and the risk management function
- The resourcing necessary to ensure that the Council discharged adequately its responsibilities in this area

The respective officers were in general agreement with the recommendations included in the report and began to discuss the practical issues associated with implementation. The officers agreed that:

- Clarification on the role and responsibilities of a new corporate health and safety manager, at a senior level, is required. It is anticipated that the new senior

corporate health and safety manager will be an enhanced role that replaces the vacant post of Workplace Health Manager.

- A job description should be developed so that the proposed post of senior corporate health and safety manager can be recruited at the earliest opportunity.
- The appointment of the senior corporate health and safety manager is critical to the implementation of the majority of recommendations arising from the audit report on health and safety.
- The newly appointed senior corporate health and safety manager would report, in the first instance, to the Director of Corporate Services.
- The strategic positioning of the new post of senior corporate health and safety manager, the Workplace Health Unit and its relationship with other separate but related risk areas should ideally be aligned to the Councils review of the “centre”.
- If the review of the “centre” is not progressed in the near future then consideration should be given to appointing a consultant to recommend appropriate structures and reporting lines for the new post of senior corporate health and safety manager, Workplace Health Unit, Insurance and Risk Management activities.

Resource Implications

- Financial implications relating to structural changes will be met from existing resources.
- There would also be a financial cost should it be considered necessary to appoint a consultant to carry out a discrete piece of work as outlined above.

Recommendations

Committee is requested:

- To note the legislative change incorporated in the Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007 and the key issues arising from the review of Corporate Health and Safety arrangements.
- To establish a post of Senior Corporate Health and Safety Manager (grade to be determined through job evaluation).
- To delete the post of Workplace Health Manager (post recently vacated).
- To realign the work of the Insurance Unit and the Workplace Health Unit in line with the recommendations of the review of Corporate Health and Safety arrangements.

Key to Abbreviations
AGRS Audit, Governance and Risk Services COMT Chief Officers Management Team HSG65 Successful Health and Safety Management, Author: Health and Safety Executive, Series Code HSG, Series Number 65

Documents Attached
None