

Corporate Committee

17 May 2011

Health and Safety Update

All Wards

Report authorised by: Chief Executive: Derrick Anderson

Executive summary

The London Borough of Lambeth has come under increasing scrutiny by professional organisations such as the London Fire Brigade and the Health and Safety Executive. This is a strategy of 'raising awareness' by those organisations about critical issues facing the public sector. Lambeth is well placed to respond to these challenges and have demonstrated that we have robust processes in place to protect colleagues and residents who use our buildings or live in accommodation owned by the Council. This report summarises this ongoing health and safety focus to identify risk, and mitigate and reduce that risk.

Summary of financial implication

The London Borough of Lambeth may be subject to heavy financial liabilities if Health and Safety processes are not in place, are not robust, or are not fit for purpose. There are no anticipated additional costs to the Council if we are to move towards the OHSAS 18001 accreditation process.

Recommendations

- (1) That the Committee's note this report for their information.

Consultation

Name of consultee	Department or Organisation	Date sent	Date response received	Comments appear in report para:
Councillor J Meldrum	Deputy Leader – Lead Member HR	19/04/11		
Derrick Anderson	Chief Executive	19.04.11		
Nana Amoa-Buahin	Division Director HR	18/04/11		Comments throughout
Nadia Okraku	Governance and Democracy	19/04/11	28.04.11	
Martin Crump	Departmental Finance F&R	19/04/11	20/04/11	3.0
Corporate Finance	Finance & Resources	19/04/11	20.04.11	

Report history

Date report drafted:	Report deadline:	Date report sent:	Report no.:
18.0411	20.04.11	20.04.11	12/11-12
Report author and contact for queries:			
Dr Kyron Peters-Bean, Head of Resilience 020 7926 5573 kpeters-bean@lambeth.gov.uk			

Background documents

None

Appendices

None

Health and Safety Update.

1. Context

- 1.1 There is a recognised scheme of delegation and process for addressing Health and Safety issues at Lambeth. The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring health and safety within the Council and its environs. There is a named person who may deal with operational matters arising and the executive directors for departments are required to manage their own risks. These processes are overseen by the Corporate Health and Safety section, who works in partnership with departments and the relevant agencies and stakeholders – to identify risks to the Council and to minimise or remove those risks.

2. Proposals and reasons

- 2.1 The Corporate Committee at their meeting on 11 November 2010 considered a lengthy report setting out the challenges the Council had faced with regard to health and safety issues. This report detailed our move towards a self regulating H&S process within departments, through the OHSAS 18001 standard. We do not propose to repeat sections of this report, since the Corporate Committee agreed with our way forward.
- 2.2 As part of the OHSAS process, Corporate Health and Safety Advisers have been active within their respective departments, to raise awareness of the need to audit, manage and report on the main issues affecting their strategic and operational works. This body of work is progressing exceedingly well, with the relevant departmental lead officers holding regular health and safety meetings, which in turn informed the Corporate Joint Health and Safety Group (which manages H&S issues on behalf of the Chief Executive).
- 2.3 Recently as outlined above, the London Fire Brigade inspected some of our housing stock and expressed concern about the potential vulnerabilities with residents in some sheltered accommodation, with special needs and then again with some generalised housing blocks.
- 2.4 We are pleased to report that these issues had also been identified as part of the OHSAS process and working in partnership with the Council, Lambeth Living and the contractors, all remedial action has been taken to safeguard residents and protect the community.
- 2.5 To achieve this aim, we also identified a need to put in place joint working arrangements between Lambeth Living, the Council, and now other ALMOS (including United Residents Housing and Tenant Managed Organisations).
- 2.6 At a meeting with the London Fire Brigade Policy Group and key officers from the Council and Lambeth Living we were able to demonstrate our robust focus on the health and safety of tenants and others who use our buildings.

- 2.7 Key to this success is early risk assessment and action plans which prioritise short, medium and long term activities. The joint working arrangements outlined above is fundamental to the strategic and operational commitments by all parties concerned.
- 2.8 Lambeth Living and their Head of Safety and Health also positively indicated that they were committed to a process of identifying urgent and remedial works in buildings and that there was corporate `buy-in` from their directors to ensure that no one was compromised on fire risk management and any other H&S issues.
- 2.9 A similar challenge has been brought to attention by the HSE. We are pleased to report that we quickly demonstrated that our schools were being expertly maintained and were fit for purpose. Throughout the year, Head Teachers and Premises Officers received extensive training on the management of H&S issues within their boundaries. We are committed to ensuring that Schools are aware of their responsibilities and work with them to reinforce the audit and inspection cycle.
- 2.10 Using the OHSAS audit and inspection template, we were able to provide guidance and support to departments and other organisations – to ensure that we identify risks early, and manage those risks appropriately, with reference to economies of scale. Any challenges that have been levelled at the Council direct or its stakeholders is met with a wealth of experience and robust protocols to reassure any one that Lambeth does not compromise on the Health and Safety of officers, residents and others.
- 2.11 As part of the continuing Well-Being Strategy, corporate health and safety issues affecting individuals or groups of colleagues are also given priority. We work alongside Workforce Development and all the departments undergoing their re-structure to ensure that our health and safety ethic is addressed and our safety culture is strengthened. Health and Safety is very much `business as usual`.
- 2.12 The departments also have well established health and safety meetings and have identified issues relevant to their operational needs, which the Corporate Health and Safety Advisors regularly advise.
- 2.13 Recognising that colleagues are leaving the organisation, for example, we have audited the First Aid and Fire Controllers/Marshalls requirement for the core buildings and have taken measures to ensure that we have sufficient people as a resource to meet this lawful necessity.
- 2.14 We are also reviewing this requirement throughout the year with a view to providing the additional training necessary to provide a robust response to fire management and first aid and reassure colleagues.
- 2.15 Similarly, working with departments; Value Asset Management Group - through Building Technical Services and contractors we audit and monitor the initiative currently designed to provide routine and planned maintenance to our building assets. In turn this informs our own Facilities Management section and reporting to Corporate Asset Management Group, for the core and non-core buildings.

3. Comments from Executive Director of Finance and Resources

- 3.1 The London Borough of Lambeth may be subject to heavy financial liabilities if Health and Safety processes are not in place, are not robust, or are not fit for purpose. There are no anticipated additional costs to the Council if we are to move towards the OHSAS 18001 accreditation process.
- 3.2 The budgets for dealing with the day-to-day best practice associated with Health and Safety are embedded within base budgets across the organisation, and, therefore, with the exception of one-off issues, there is not expected to be any additional pressure incurred against budgets. Any additional expenditure resulting from one-off issues will be met from within the existing budgets of the relevant business units, divisions and departments concerned.
- 3.3 There are no capital implications arising as a direct result of this proposal.

4. Comments from Director of Governance and Democracy

- 4.1 Section 2 of The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and regulations made under that Act make it a duty of an employer to provide safe systems of work, adequate training and instruction and maintenance of plant and machinery for employees, contractors and visitors.
- 4.2 To meet these requirement Section 2(3) imposes a duty on an employer to prepare, and revise as appropriate , a written safety policy which must contain a general statement of the employers general policy with regard to Health and Safety and the organisation and arrangements that exist for carrying out that policy.
- 4.3 The employer must also bring the policy and any revisions to the attention of employees.
- 4.4 Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 puts a duty on the HSE and Local Authorities to make adequate arrangements for enforcement of Health and Safety legislation.

5. Results of consultation

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. Organisational implications

- 6.1 **Risk management:**
All risks are managed within the Corporate Risk Register.
- 6.2 **Equalities impact assessment:**
All Health and Safety policies, protocols and procedures are carefully checked to ensure that they apply to everyone and that they are inclusive.

6.3 **Community safety implications:**

None.

6.4 **Environmental implications:** We are committed to minimising our impact on our environment and where necessary commission contractors who are similarly committed.

6.5 **Staffing and accommodation implications:**

None.

6.6 **Any other implications:**

None.
