

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

3 JUNE 2009

### REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES UPDATE REPORT

#### **1. Purpose of Report .**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU) against the recommendation contained in the Internal Audit report on CHSU of August 2008.

#### **2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.**

2.1 BCBC's Corporate Improvement Plan identifies health and safety as a high risk area.

2.2 Robust health and safety management will contribute to Corporate Priorities of reducing sickness absence.

#### **3. Background.**

3.1 An audit review of CHSU was undertaken as part of the 2007/08 audit plan. The Audit Report of August 2008 was presented to Audit committee 19 November 2008.

3.2 The report reported that "the overall Audit opinion on the Health & Safety Unit at the time of the audit is that there is inadequate control over the key risks to the operation and assurance can not be given to the authority that significant Health & Safety risks are appropriately controlled".

3.3 The report recognised that the CHSU had "only been in operation for a short period of time" and had "experienced significant staffing difficulties during this period."

3.4 This was reinforced at Audit Committee by Head of Property and Finance who advised that the audit had been carried out within a few weeks of the Unit being established and that the report, therefore, established a starting point for future development.

#### **4. Current situation.**

4.1 At the time of the Audit Committee a number of measures had been taken to address the issues raised within the report. Most significant among these being a revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy which had been accepted by Cabinet, and the development of a Health and Safety Business Plan. Other developments included the creation of an additional post and subsequent appointment of a Fire Safety Officer on a two year contract.

4.2 Subsequently progress has been made in establishing formal consultation arrangements via the Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group. Links with the Directorates have been clearly established with Health and Safety Officers identified to

support each of the Directorates and managers within the directorates identified as Health and Safety Champions.

4.3 Health and Safety Officers now support health and safety committees throughout the Directorates and CHSU is now able to provide detailed accident summary and statistical reports to help these committees.

4.4 Commitment to health and safety by senior management is demonstrated through the Corporate Director for Resources who is identified as the Corporate Director with health and safety Responsibility.

4.5 A unit plan of work was developed identifying the key pieces of work to be addressed by the unit. Many of these addressed or complimented the areas of concern identified by the audit report.

4.6 Standards for accident investigation reports have been established ensuring that significant findings and recommendations for action are clearly identified. The quality of investigation and reports from the health and safety team has received praise both internally from the Risk Manager and Insurance Officer and externally from the Health and Safety Executive.

4.7 A significant omission in health and safety management in BCBC historically appears to be absence of an effective audit process. CHSU has developed an audit format which is designed to test for the key aspects of health and safety management arrangements. The audit is structured to test compliance against recognised management standards, British Standard OSHAS 18001 and therefore allows BCBC arrangements to be benchmarked against best practice.

4.8 Communication of health and safety messages continues to be an area of development. The intranet pages have been developed to include more guidance for managers, this information will grow as health and safety procedures are reviewed and supporting documentation is developed. Hazard notices have been developed to alert managers and staff of particular issues which may have been identified through accident investigations.

4.9 Furthermore the unit has developed electronic bulletins to which staff can sign up to, these will provide information on new procedures and material added to the web pages. The first edition of this was published on 13<sup>th</sup> May and has received positive feedback.

4.10 The Learning Module on Trent is now used to record all Health and Safety training delivered or organised by the unit. CHSU has also developed the Health and Safety module on Trent to allow effective recording and reporting of incidents and accidents.

4.11 Although outside the scope of findings presented to Audit Committee, the work on the Health and Wellbeing Audit is worthy of comment. This has been a significant piece of work examining the aspects of the work environment within BCBC which contribute of stress. Stress related absence is the single largest cause of days lost within BCBC.

4.12 CHSU has also undertaken several health promotion events such raising awareness of testicular cancer, promotion of no smoking day, free eye tests.

4.13 The above provides an indication of the main developments in CHSU since the report of August 2008. The table in Appendix 1 below lists the significant concerns contained in the audit report and summarises the actions taken to meet those concerns as well as identifying the evidence to support these statements.

**5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.**

5.1 There is no effect upon the Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

**6. Legal Implications.**

6.1 There are no legal implications

**7. Financial Implications.**

7.1 There are no financial implications regarding this report.

**8. Recommendation.**

8.1 That the committee notes the content of the report.

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**27 May 2009**

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Item no:	Recommendations	Agree	Response	Evidence
1a	The Health & Safety Business Plan should be formulated as part of the current business planning cycle, setting objectives supporting the Resources Directorate BP objective of 'driving improvements in Occupational Health & Safety'.	Yes	<p>CHSU Business plan was drawn up in May 2008 which detailed the significant areas of work to be followed. It was recognised as being ambitious and some actions are to be carried over to next year.</p> <p>The plan for 08/09 has been developed with input from the service areas and the Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CHSU Plan 08/09</li> <li>▪ CHSU Plan 09/10</li> <li>▪ Examples of detailed plans</li> </ul>
1 b	In conjunction with senior management the Health & Safety Manager should confirm the current status of the strategy document and update it where necessary.	Yes	<p>Occupational H&amp;S strategy 2005-10 does not seem to be followed, plan is to develop CH&amp;S improvement plan</p> <p>Strategy document has been reviewed and progress against the items evaluated. The majority of issues identified within the strategy have been addressed.</p> <p>A new H&amp;S improvement document is being developed through the H&amp;S steering group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Occupational health and safety strategy with synopsis</li> </ul>
1c	The Corporate Health & Safety Policy should be updated to reflect the structural changes and then communicated to all staff.	Yes	<p>Policy has been reviewed and communicated. Organisational changes in BCBC mean that not all committee structures are in place. Communication of the policy has been done through Bridgenders, meetings with service area DMT and introduced through H&amp;S for senior manager training Poster to communicate the main points developed and ready for printing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate H&amp;S policy</li> <li>▪ Summary posters</li> </ul>
	Periodic reviews of all policies should be undertaken in the future to ensure they are kept up to date at all times.	Yes	<p>Protocols Reviewed &amp; accepted by SG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lone working</li> <li>▪ Incident/Accident reporting</li> <li>▪ Manual Handling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New protocols developed</li> <li>▪ Policy review timetable</li> </ul>

			<p>Protocols under review currently in consultation at H&amp;S Steering Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First aid</li> </ul> <p>Protocols in draft/development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fire</li> <li>▪ Noise</li> </ul> <p>Protocols planned in coming year to review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Display screen equipment</li> <li>▪ CDM</li> <li>▪ Alcohol and Drug misuse</li> <li>▪ Work at height</li> </ul>	
1d	A formal process of consultation and agreement of all Health & Safety policy and procedures should be established.	Yes	Steering group has been set up and met on 3 occasions. Directorate H&S champions identified in the policy to communicate/consult on protocols & arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Steering Group TOR</li> <li>▪ List of Champions</li> </ul>
2a	Management should make every effort to fill the remaining vacancies as soon as possible.	Yes	The H&S structure has been fully populated. In addition to the original structure we have created an additional temporary (2 year) post for Fire Safety Officer to assist with compliance with the our duties under fire safety legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CHSU structure</li> </ul>
2b	While some posts remain vacant, care should be taken that directorates are not neglected.	Partly	Over the period of reorganisation and recruitment, resource was directed to Directorates on a risk basis i.e. those with most significant risk and highest number of reported incidents have been prioritised. I feel this was a reasonable approach. Inevitably some areas will have less input but I can not accept that we have not engaged with services where significant risks have	None

			needed to be addressed.	
2c	The roles and responsibilities of each member of the Health & Safety Unit should be clearly defined, including the update of job descriptions and person specifications.	Yes	<p>Areas/services of responsibility have been identified within the team.</p> <p>Internal processes have been process mapped this is ongoing but further clarifies roles with relation to specific activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Business plan</li> <li>▪ Chart with areas</li> <li>▪ Process maps</li> </ul>
2d	The Health & Safety Manager should resolve with directorates the roles and responsibilities of each party in respect of Health & Safety.	Partly	<p>The initial audit took place shortly after centralisation of the H&amp;S function. This inevitably led to a change in arrangements for the delivery of Health and Safety support. The Corporate Health and Safety policy clarifies H&amp;S responsibilities and the role CHSU has in supporting managers in meeting their responsibilities.</p> <p>Each protocol that is developed will similarly clearly set out the roles and responsibilities for management of each subject area. It is natural that the function of CHSU will evolve as new working arrangements are developed.</p> <p>During H&amp;S for senior managers training managers were asked what they thought were the relative roles of CHSU and all were clear on the advisory/supportive function of the unit. A significant response was from this questionnaire was the desire for Risk assessment training to be delivered. CHSU has subsequently developed this course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corporate H&amp;S policy summary page</li> <li>▪ Responses from training questions</li> </ul>

3	<p>The Health &amp; Safety Manager should consider further development of the Intranet site to ensure ease of access to a comprehensive range of Health &amp; Safety information for all managers and employees. Information published on the intranet should be controlled and regularly reviewed by the Health &amp; Safety Unit to ensure that up to date information is displayed at all times and should be easily understood by non Health &amp; Safety professionals.</p>	Yes	<p>Development of the intranet pages had just begun at the onset of the audit. This process is continuing but has been hampered by the inability to source training in Stellant and the recent problems experienced with the internet and intranet systems.</p> <p>This includes the development of topic guides that have straight forward guidance for staff and managers.</p> <p>CHSU have also looked at other mechanisms for communicating health and safety messages, including a regular H&amp;S column within Bridgenders.</p> <p>CHSU has established a targeted mailing list for Senior Managers to update on new protocols/procedures and hazard notices etc.</p> <p>A further mailing list has been established on a “sign up” basis to inform all staff of changes to intranet site, new guidance, training availability etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List of intranet documents</li> <li>▪ Examples</li> </ul>
4a	<p>The Health &amp; Safety Unit should use the results of directorate risk assessments to aid the Unit in establishing a formal regime of inspection/audit work and future follow up visits.</p>		<p>An audit template has been designed and trialled within two business units (Catering and Building Cleaning).</p> <p>The Sports and leisure centres will be audited this year to align with their business planning and pursuit of QUEST accreditation.</p> <p>The audit process has been designed to measure compliance with British Standard OSHAS 18001”Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audit template</li> <li>▪ Audit timetable 3 yrs</li> </ul>

			A timetable for audits has been drawn up with the frequency of audit being dependent on risk arising from the service.	
4b	Managers/Supervisors should be requested to submit details of Health & Safety work undertaken. I.e., progress on the completion of risk assessments, assessment of the training requirements of staff. Thus enabling the Health & Safety Manager to assure management that the Health & Safety function is operating as per the Health & Safety policy.		<p>Recommendations in Investigation reports by H&amp;S team are collated onto a database so that progress against these recommendations can be monitored.</p> <p>Similarly areas of non compliance identified within the audit process will be monitored on a database.</p> <p>Software solutions are being explored to make this process more efficient and to provide greater oversight of outstanding tasks to managers. These however have cost implications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ XI spreadsheet for recommendations from investigations</li> </ul>
5	To complete the training needs analysis for the authority and develop a set of learning initiatives that specifically support the current business needs, and their goals, priority and resource requirements.		This work is underway. The analysis is now complete for Resources and this item is included in the CHSU plan of work. It should be borne in mind that there are a number of initiatives being undertaken within the authority at present and therefore some prudence needs to be shown over scheduling.	
6a	Verification of qualifications should be carried out prior to appointment and copies of certificates retained.		Recruitment/interview procedures are being amended to address this issue.	
6b	Existing staff qualification checks should be undertaken and copies retained on training records/personal files.		Qualifications of staff have been collected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copies of certificates/IOSH membership numbers</li> </ul>
7	Formal procedure for incident reporting should be completed with standardised forms and guidance		The protocol for incident/accident reporting and investigation has been developed and agreed by H&S Steering group. This is to be published along with the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protocol</li> <li>▪ Guidance</li> <li>▪ Letters to managers re</li> </ul>



	provided to all concerned including line managers.		supporting guidance by end of April  Standardised forms are in place and forms with insufficient information are now returned to managers for completion.	incomplete forms
8	To ensure a consistent approach to recording training information, the Health & Safety Manager should utilise the Trent HR/Payroll system to record all Health & Safety training requirements, provision and attendance.		This work has begun. Administration of all person handling courses is now being done through Trent. All remaining courses will be placed on Trent. The majority of historical data for Manual Handling training has been imported into Trent although some remains to be completed.  In addition the H&S module in Trent has been developed to record incidents and accidents. This has allowed detailed statistical and descriptive reports to be produced. This information is provided to manager routinely including to support H&S committees. Good quality incident data is valuable in identifying areas for improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List of course on Trent</li> <li>▪ Report on numbers/persons trained per course?</li> <li>▪ Statistical report</li> </ul>