

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment & Appeals Committee

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CONTACT OFFICER: Kevin Gordon Assistant Director Professional Services
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875213

WARD(S): All

REPORT TITLE : **NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH & SAFETY
MANAGEMENT**

PART 1 **FOR INFORMATION/COMMENT**

1 Purpose of Report

To propose a new arrangement for the delivery of Health & Safety support by entering into shared arrangements for a Health & Safety Manager, Policy, Systems and Process with Reading Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

That the Employment and Appeal Committee notes and considers the proposals.

Community Strategy Priorities

A safe workforce and working environment is key to ensuring that staff are equipped to deliver on all the councils community safety priorities

- Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion
- Adding years to Life and Life to years
- Being Safe, Feeling Safe
- A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play
- Prosperity for All

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

Slough Borough Council will pay Reading Borough Council £22,000 per annum for the provision of the service, . This sum is to include salary and on-costs of the Health and Safety Manager, access to policy , procedures and shared training courses . The salary including on costs for a Health & Safety manager post that this service replaces is between £45– 55k.

(b) Risk Management

This policy framework from Reading places Health & Safety as an integral component of 'Risk Management' which is an underdeveloped area in the council. Some of the savings from the shared services arrangement will be used to train staff, drive further change and help embed the broader framework of risk management within the organisations psyche.

The key operational risk to within the arrangements will be the capacity of the H&S manager and the time spent travelling between three sites. To mitigate this risk an attendance schedule will be developed with the two partner boroughs to ensure travel is kept to a minimum. In addition the H&S manager will have access to Slough IT systems and email remotely.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The mechanism that will be used to access the shared services from Reading will be a section 113 Agreement. The Local Government Act 1972 (s.113) allows a local authority to enter into such an agreement with another local authority to place its officers at the disposal of the other local authority, subject to consultation. The "shared" officer will act to discharge the functions of each local authority, while avoiding the issues associated with TUPE transfers

(d) *Equalities Impact Assessment*

An Initial Screening Assessment has been carried out. The proposal has been determined as having a neutral impact.

(e) Workforce

Following the approval of this approach the Health & Safety team will work to ensure that the new policies and frameworks for Health & Safety are communicated to staff

5 **Supporting Information**

Following the resignation of the council's Health & Safety Manager an opportunity was provided to consider the most cost effective arrangements for how this Health & Safety is managed in the future. The options available were;

- Recruit to the vacant management post
- Consider utilising existing in-house H&S expertise in Environment Services
- Develop shared services arrangements with other local authorities
- External tender, private or public sector provider

An appraisal of these four options considered the potential for savings in financial year 11/12, savings beyond that period and the potential risk of service failure.

Analysis has indicated that shared services arrangements will be the most advantageous to the council. The table in the appendix outlines how this decision has been considered. Explorations have taken place with Reading Council who have provided H&S shared management arrangements in the Royal

Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead for the last twelve months. Feedback from RB Windsor and Maidenhead shows a high level of satisfaction with the new arrangements. They were particularly pleased with policy framework, accompanying guidance and codes of practice that they have adopted from Reading which have a greater emphasis on personal responsibility as well as being practical and accessible.

In RBWM the H&S advisors have been able to spend more time in the field actively assisting managers to make better use of the tools and practical templates. The key to the success in RBWM has been the time invested by the Reading H&S manager in the initial six months of the arrangements. This had included wide dissemination of the new tools and frameworks and briefings and communication with staff and managers. Reading Borough Council's Corporate Health and Safety Manager will manage the day-to-day activities of Slough Borough Council's health and safety service and team.

Reading Borough Council's Corporate Health & Safety Manager will remain an employee of Reading Borough Council and continue to be subject to the Borough Council's terms and conditions of employment.

Slough Borough Council's Health and Safety Advisors will remain as employees of Slough Borough Council and continue to be subject to the Council's terms and conditions of employment.

To revive, simplify and ensure relevancy, the proposed health & safety management system will include a new Health & Safety Policy. The Policy establishes 5 levels of health and safety responsibility. Designed to mirror the normal management arrangements of a Local Authority, it has inbuilt flexibility to cater for local reporting structures.

The new documented systems will assist managers to identify and manage their services health and safety risks. Each Directorate will have its own committee that through an action plan, identifies key risks, sets targets and monitors the performance of service areas. Each Committee will report into the Combined Consultative Forum which will monitor the overall health and safety performance of the Council.

The Borough's Health & Safety Advisors will in effect become part of a larger team that covers half of the County. They will be able share knowledge and best practice with their colleagues in the other partner organisations to improve efficiency and reduce duplication. This will lead to an improved risk management approach in their work by supporting managers to demystify health and safety. By reducing anxiety, managers will be more willing to discuss and resolve local issues, reducing the overall risks to the organisation.

Health and Safety training will also be transformed. A flexible approach where training events can be more easily tailored to delegates needs will be implemented. The tools to support this approach are already being utilised in the other partner organisations and therefore will add to the efficiencies within the proposal.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7 **Conclusion**

In addition to the cost savings, it is felt that by sharing management arrangements there will be cross-fertilisation of ideas and best practice across the three Boroughs to the benefit of all parties.

8 **Appendices Attached**

Analysis of Options

Option	How it would work	Potential to save 20% of costs in 11- 12	Potential for further savings in later years	Risks/Potential of service failure	Comments
Recruit to vacant management post	Reconfigure team roles and appoint a manager , potentially reduce number of H&S advisor from 2 to 1	Achievable	Unlikely - as team would be at minimum capacity and fee earning potential from schools would be placed at risk	Low - Service levels to council could be maintained with just two members of staff if efficiencies were introduced	
Consider utilising existing in-house H&S expertise in Environmental Services	Number of models could be considered. Responsibility for H&S could move to Environmental Services minus the 20% savings - the post could then be incorporated into the EH team structure. Alternatively SLA for either management of the function or overall delivery could be arranged with Professional Services.	Not Achievable Team Leader role would still be required	Not known – need to determine if synergy between external regulatory role of EH and in-house H&S advisory and operational services exists and the potential efficiencies created by joining them together.	Medium Some time required for EH to get up to speed Concern going forward would be that internal H&S support may be marginalised as costs pressures on the primary regulatory function of EH occur in Financial years 12- 13	Initial feasibility discussion has taken place with Ginny De Haan
Develop shared services arrangements with other LA's	Arrangements already exist between Reading and RBWM who share a single H&S manager both currently achieve savings of circa £25k – 30k pa. Section s	Achievable	High Mirror processes , policies and working practices will exist in LA's Potential for full shared services unit shared between Reading, RBWM , saving achievable by	Low Management of service would continue with existing H&S advisors with shared manager	

			reduction in H&S advisors		
External tender , private or public sector provider	Private or Public provider is contracted to provide the full H&S service offer to the council. Provider selected through competitive tendering exercise	Achievable	Low Difficult to identify further efficiencies that could be achieved by private provider given the relatively small overall contract value approx 80k pa although public provider may be able to reduce costs through integration with their existing unit	High Time taken for private sector provider to get up to speed Potential efficiencies in future years may be at the cost of reduced service levels.	Investigation into this approach with other authorities has not provided any examples of where this has been successful