

## TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER 2005**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISOR**

### Health and Safety Management System (HSM System) Briefing Note

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The last twelve months has seen the creation of a firm base for the introduction of the Council's Health and Safety Management System, with managers accessing H&S support on a daily basis.

The next step will be a rapid consolidation of the HSM System across the Council due in part to the programme of team workshops to support the Health and Safety Executive project and the use of the IT 'Sharepoint' programme.

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To outline progress on the development and introduction of a Health and safety management System.

#### 2. Background

The Health and Safety Management System (HSM System) is a vital dynamic support framework for the whole Council. It provides clarity, direction and understanding on the safety roles and responsibilities of all employees.

It is designed to ensure legal compliance and safe delivery of services.

The HSM System (when fully implemented) provides visible coherence and integration throughout. It combines the 'Hard' (information and systems) with the 'Soft' (cultural and leadership) issues. It is integrated with the stringent Corporate Governance requirements as defined by the Audit Commission and makes a strong contribution to the operating culture and well-being of the Council.

A new H&SM System cannot be 'imposed' it has to be introduced in a careful and systematic way. It must be developed with the co-operation and participation of the employees. Implementation must recognise the limitations, pressures and priorities of the continuing service delivery. This is reflected in the content of section 3. Progress Report, below.

#### 3. Health and Safety (H&S) Support

In response to an identified need, as required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Council appointed a 'Corporate' H&S Advisor in August 2004.

As Health and Safety is a management responsibility, the advisor has a key support role in:-

- Providing H&S advice across all aspects of the Councils activities.
- Auditing and reviewing H&S performance across all service units.
- Promoting opportunities to develop a positive safety culture.
- Developing effective H&S Management System, policies and procedures.
- Evaluating risk and advising on impending legislation.

- Promoting consultation and H&S partnerships.
- Supporting the drive for continuous improvement.

### 3. Progress Report – Overview

A period of design time was required to ensure that the Health and Safety Management System was relevant and effective for the Council's operations.

Rapid introduction of a 'system' would be difficult due to competition with other corporate priorities. Crucial to the system's success and acceptance by its users was an IT program which was due in 2005. (In place October 2005.)

Therefore the decision was made to phase in the HSM System over a period of three years, linking into other opportunities to maintain steady progress and an increased awareness of H&S within the Council's operations.

#### 3.1 Progress Report – Key Milestones

- 14.12.04 - Corporate Management Team (CMT) agreed in principle to the creation of an H&S Management System.
- 05.01.05 - HSM System Outline Briefing to senior management team.
- 17.01.05 - Revised Health and Safety Consultation Arrangements agreed.
- 21.01.05 - H&S Policy Documentation Approval - Tracking Process agreed.
- 27.01.05 - Health and Well-being at Work Policy (Work related stress) agreed.
- 01.02.05 - Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training and Assessment package, designed and implemented for all 'users'. (Completed 13.04.05.)
- 01.04.05 - Revised General Health and Safety Policy Statement, signed and issued by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.
- 10.05.05 - Briefing to PLG-Executive+CMT on Members H&S Roles and Responsibilities as set out in the HSM System.
- 10.05.05 - The Executive after discussion on the option of identifying an elected Council member with specific responsibility for safety (Portfolio Holder). Decided to promote H&S as a shared responsibility across the Executive.
- 06.06.05 - Accepted into the National HSE project; 'The Willing 100' and the introduction of the Management Standards on Work related Stress.
- 22.09.05 - Health and Safety Committee and Risk management panel met.

### 4. The Future

There is good H&S practice existing within the Council, however there are gaps and areas where significant improvements need to be made.

The H&S policy statement clearly identifies the holistic approach and cross-function links that need to be established, if we are to make a step change improvement in the culture and future operation of the Council.

Two vitally important tools are now available to speed up and influence the successful introduction of the HSM System: -

1. The programme of team workshops to support the HSE project and the introduction of the Management Standards on Work related Stress.
2. The IT 'Sharepoint' programme.

April 2006 should see a rapid completion of the system, within the context of a workforce better equipped to accept and manage their H&S responsibilities, even during a period of profound change.

Developing the role of the Council's Executive and informing members will form the final part of the implementation process.

The author acknowledges the strong support provided by the Chief Executive, the Corporate Management Team and a number of colleagues, whose co-operation has been essential to the work delivered by the Corporate H&S Advisor.

## 5. Recommendations

The Corporate Governance Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the actions and progress outlined in this report; and
- b) Request the Executive to note the actions planned and continue to support this initiative.

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