

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## REPORT TO: Staffing Committee

---

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	22 October 2009
<b>Report of:</b>	Paul Bradshaw, Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	HR Update

---

### **1.0 Report Summary**

1.1 To update the Committee on progress with Human Resource issues.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 To note the report.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 To ensure Members are kept up to date with HR developments.

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

4.1 No specific wards affected.

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

5.1 Not applicable.

### **6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health**

6.1 No significant implications.

### **7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

7.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

### **8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

8.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

### **9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

9.1 No direct implications arising from this report.

## **10.0 Risk Management**

10.1 No significant risks identified.

## **11.0 Background and Options**

### **11.1 HEALTH & SAFETY**

Fourteen Policy and Guidance documents are available on CEntranet. These are:

• Accident / Incident Reporting & Investigating Procedure	• Drug, Alcohol & Misuse of Substances Policy
• Fire Safety Assessment Guidance	• New & Expectant Mothers at Work Policy
• Fire Safety Guidance	• Fire Safety Policy
• Members Safety Guidance	• Consultation Process
• Safety Inspection Checklist	• Working At Height Policy
• Risk Assessment Policy	• Stress Management Policy
• Personal Protective Equipment Policy	• Corporate Health & Safety Policy

These policies have been prepared by referencing legislation (where available) and using best practice examples from across the four former Authorities. Tier 3 Managers have been informed of each new policy and requested to disseminate as appropriate to their teams. Newly agreed policies will be publicised in forthcoming Health & Safety Newsletters.

Further documents are undergoing development and consultation. Managers, Trade Unions and Elected Members will have an opportunity to comment upon drafts. These include:

• Display Screen Equipment Policy	• Driving At Work Policy
• Hand Arm Vibration Policy	• Working with Young Persons
• Manual Handling Policy	• Events Safety Guidance
• First Aid At Work Policy	• Blood Borne Viruses Guidance
• Noise At Work Policy	• Lone Working Policy
• Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Policy	

#### 11.1.2 ENGAGING WITH THE HEALTH & SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Inspector will be undertaking quarterly planned visits to discuss strategic issues and follow up with inspections. The first of these, focusing on the management of Hand Arm Vibration implementation (particularly within the Grounds Maintenance service), was cancelled by the Inspector on the morning of the visit (due to a diesel spillage on the M6.) The meeting will be re-scheduled as soon as possible.

#### 11.1.3 SCHOOLS BUSINESS SUPPORT AGREEMENT (SBSA)

89% of schools have 'bought' into the Schools Business Support Agreement for health and safety services until March 2010. This comprises 118 Primary Schools; 17 High Schools and 4 Special Schools. Those who declined to purchase the service from the Council are 5 Primary Schools and 2 High Schools (no reasons given).

The health and safety service to schools will be delivered via consultants and Corporate Health & Safety staff. Extra staff (1 Safety Adviser and 0.5 Admin Officer) will be appointed on a rolling contract (renewable annually on the confirmation of adequate buy-back funds). Consultants will commence school inspections in November 2009.

#### 11.1.4 ELECTED MEMBERS DROP IN SESSIONS

Two informal drop-in sessions were organised, with purpose of affording Elected Members an opportunity to discuss how the Council manages health & safety, proposals for health & safety training for Members and to provide an opportunity for them to raise any concerns or questions. Nine Elected Members attended.

#### 11.1.5 COMMUNICATIONS

Health & Safety Update Newsletters have been introduced and are developed in-house. They are circulated regularly to Tier 3 Managers, cover topical issues and guidance for both Managers and staff and are available on the CEntranet. Managers are asked to disseminate copies to staff who do not have access to a computer. The initial aim was to publish quarterly, however it is likely that this frequently will increase to bi-monthly.

Currently under development, Newsletter 4 will be an experimental edition, produced in conjunction with Trade Union Officers.

#### 11.1.6 FIRST AID & EMERGENCY EVACUATION PERSONNEL

In order to ensure that first aid provision remains adequate during ongoing accommodation changes, the Corporate Health & Safety

Team are locating all existing first aiders and recording their re-qualification details. Managers will be advised if first aid provision is inadequate within their service area or building (if multi-service occupied). This is particularly important for the four main administrative buildings.

An electronic questionnaire has been circulated to all Managers in an attempt to capture these details. Useful data can be found via Payroll (which records the monthly retainer fee paid to qualified first aiders) – although this does not show a complete picture, as some contracts require that employees provide first aid services as an integral part of their duties (where no retainer is paid) - for example: Life Guards.

As a matter of urgency, the CH&S Team will be working in conjunction with Facilities Management Officers and with Managers in all four main administrative buildings (Westfields, Emperor Court, Delamere House and Macclesfield Town Hall), to prepare and harmonise evacuation arrangements based on best practice (and this will include accounting for building occupants).

This will include site specific training for Officers who have key responsibilities during an evacuation and in conjunction with the Facilities Manager, a programme of planned evacuation exercises will be arranged for Westfields, Emperor Court, Delamere House and Macclesfield Town Hall.

#### 11.1.7 THE MANAGEMENT OF HAND ARM VIBRATION AT CEC

The Control of Vibration At Work Regulations 2005 require employers to assess, measure, monitor and manage the exposure to vibration of their employees which is caused by work activities – and this is a major area of focus and concern for the HSE.

Within CEC the main focus has been directed at Grounds Maintenance staff as Operatives within this service experience the majority of exposure from vibrating equipment (chain saws, blowers, hedge trimmers, strimmers, etc).

Current arrangements in place for the management of hand arm vibration utilise best practice from the former Authorities and significant harmonization of policies and procedures has been undertaken. The HSE Inspector was satisfied with progress during her visit in June 2009. Work is being undertaken to assess the extent of vibrating equipment in use across the remainder of the Authority's activities.

A new CE policy for the management of Hand Arm Vibration has been drafted and shared with the Trade Unions, where it has met positive feedback. It is hoped that this will be agreed formally at the next Corporate Health & Safety Forum on the 26.10.09.

### 11.1.8 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT DATA

In the first quarter (01.04.09 – 30.06.09), **362** accident / incident reports were registered, of which **53 were RIDDOR\*** reportable to the Health & Safety Executive. (\*Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995). See Appendix 1 for specific details.

When comparing RIDDOR figures over Quarter 1 time frame, it is apparent that there has been a significant increase in reporting at CEC in two categories (major injury and public taken to hospital). It is anticipated that this is due to the following reasons:

- Previously a minimum of 4 Officers (from the former Authorities) would have reviewed accidents and determined their RIDDOR status. Each may have had a slightly different interpretation of the RIDDOR reporting requirements thus under-reporting may have occurred. Currently in CEC one person determines the RIDDOR status of all incidents and this may have subsequently impacted upon the number of reports made in Quarter 1.
- In early 2009 the HSE changed its guidance on the types of incidents involving school children which need reporting. This resulted in an increase of applicable reportable criteria – therefore some school incidents which have been reported since 01.04.09 may not have been included in last year's Quarter 1 figures.

Total accident totals are not available from the former authorities due to the information not being centrally held and discrepancies in their recording.

## 11.2 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### 11.2.1 Supervisory Skills Training Programme for First Line Managers

A programme which has been specifically designed around Cheshire East priorities and will enable participants to achieve the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 3 certificate is scheduled to commence in November.

### 11.2.2 IT training programme

RareIT have been selected to deliver IT training for staff which will be organised based on priorities for development and the demand from employees.

### 11.2.3 Performance Development Framework

The new Performance Development Framework has been launched in September. Workshops designed to introduce the new scheme to staff

and enable them to raise questions about how to get the best from the scheme are currently being rolled out. Although we are continuing to deliver them, to date over 240 managers have already attended.

#### 11.2.4 Investors in People(IiP)

As part of our IiP strategy, and to ensure that we are able to reduce assessment costs while at the same time developing our internal 'expertise', we began training a set of Internal IiP Reviewers in October. A full Council, assessment will take place by the end of May next year. This assessment will enable Cheshire East to retain the IiP standard and focus on improvements identified within our assessment action plan.

#### 11.2.5 Employee Opinion Survey

The Employee Opinion Survey was launched in September. Results from the survey are currently being analysed by Ipsos MORI who were commissioned to conduct the survey and sessions for Members and Officers are being organised to enable the survey findings to be reviewed.

### 11.3 ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

#### 11.3.1 Strategy development.

A number of away-days have been held with business change leads from across Cheshire East to develop a common vision for the organisation and define our key objectives. The purpose of these sessions is to ensure the organisation develops common goals linked to the corporate plan and community strategy. To develop a Council wide 'whole systems' approach rather than direct change in silo's.

#### 11.3.2 Transformation Programme

A number of priority projects have been agreed by Cabinet/CMT to deliver large-scale step change. The so-called '**Big 6**'

- Closer to customers
- Partnerships and Shared Services
- Children and Adults
- Health and Wellbeing
- Total Transport
- Enabler and Assets

These projects have been initiated by Directorates and will be supported by the Organisational Change Team.

## 11.4 HR POLICY & REWARD

11.4.1 A significant amount of job evaluation work continues to be undertaken to support organisational reviews in Services and HR Officers are working closely with trade union colleagues to grade jobs quickly and in accordance with the Council's job evaluation schemes.

11.4.2 In partnership with Cyclescheme, the Council has introduced a cycle lease scheme. This enables the Council to lease cycles and associated safety equipment to employees through salary sacrifice. Employees receive VAT, income tax and National Insurance savings that can be equivalent to around 50% of the retail price of the chosen bike and safety equipment package.

11.4.3 As the first office moves begin, HR Officers continue to support the relocation of employees currently located in Cheshire West and Chester to Cheshire East.

## 11.5 HR DELIVERY

11.5.1 The HR Delivery Team continues to assist managers in populating the new Cheshire East structure with much progress being made albeit on different timescales according to the needs of each business area. In summary:-

- All employees in the Places Directorate have received letters advising them of their position. A small amount of competitive slotting will be completed this month and any remaining vacancies will be advertised in mid-November.
- Departments within Corporate Services have also moved on a pace with the structure within ICT Strategy now complete, HR & OD due for completion by the end of October and structures within Legal & Democratic Services also mainly populated. Some competitive slotting is due to take place in Legal & Democratic during October and November. Within Finance, 35 expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy have been received and a small number of these are expected to be approved to take place during November.
- The position within the People Directorate is somewhat more complicated, as Members will be aware, with transformation of services already having been on the agenda, irrespective of LGR:-
  - A Cabinet report on the 3 – 5 year strategy for Adults Provider Service will shortly be going to Cabinet. The service is currently working on Tier 7 however, it is expected that redundancies will be required and consultation has begun on this issue. A planned roll out of geographical teams working on Individual Commissioning will continue up to March 2010 and while the Joint Commissioning Service will continue as it is for the rest of

this year, changes will be required beyond that to ensure an appropriate merge of functions supporting Childrens' Services and Health & wellbeing.

- Shaping of the Childrens Services structure is underway in advance of a key transformation project to redesign services to children and families to enable more targeted and preventative work to be undertaken which will reduce the number of children/families requiring specialist support from statutory services.. Establishing an interim structure is unavoidable in advance of the completion of this work. And there will be a rationalisation of staffing structures and an efficiency drive to seek further savings. Generally, the structure is in place up to Tier 5/6 with 2 posts going to external advert this month.
- In Health & Wellbeing, two service areas are complete (Libraries & Reading Services, and Arts, Heritage & Museums). The remaining services are working on sixth tier.

#### 11.5.2 Voluntary Redundancy/ Vountary Early Retirement Programme

In line with Cheshire East's approach to offering VR/VER, the following services have been targeted – Places, HR & Organisational Design and Finance, and within Shared Services – ICT and HR & Finance. Discussions are ongoing in relation to other Shared Services to ensure that any targeted VR includes Cheshire East seconded employees and that the Joint Officer Board is confident of the cost benefit analysis. Further targeting will take place within the People Directorate as structures are finalized and required cost savings are more clearly identified.

#### 11.5.3 Redeployment

A process has now been agreed to manage the redeployment of employees displaced by the restructure in order to mitigate any future need for compulsory redundancies. While reductions in headcount have so far been achieved through voluntary processes, it is important that we also support employees during organisational change through the effective redeployment arrangements, in order to retain the valuable skills, knowledge and experience of our employees. It needs to be recognised however that this needs to be managed within the Council's financial constraints and subject to suitable redeployment opportunities being available. Whilst, the Council will take every reasonable step to avoid compulsory redundancy, in this way redundancies can not be ruled out.

#### 11.5.4 Swine Flu Preparations

A corporate exercise "Operation Domino" was held on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October to test the Council's preparedness should the swine flu



pandemic suddenly escalate. This resulted in a further review of the Priority Activity service categorisations. It was also recommended that services use the materials produced for Operation Domino to test their own Business Continuity Plans since only Adult Social Care have already done so. Within Cheshire East, 48 employees were absent with suspected Swine Flu symptoms at the second week in October compared to 20 in September 2009 and 59 at the peak of the first wave in August.

## **12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues**

- 12.1 HR support, (including that outlined above), will help the Council through it's Services to meet it's aims and objectives.

## **13.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Amanda Rudham

Designation: Senior HR Officer

Email: [Amanda.Rudham@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.Rudham@cheshireeast.gov.uk)