

**MEETING: 29<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2010**

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**SUBJECT: EPU QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARD RENEWALS: ISO 9001/2000 AND INVESTORS IN PEOPLE (IIP)**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In 2007, the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) commenced a programme of activity in relation to quality management. This report provides an update on recent external assessments of the activity for both ISO 9001:2000 and Investors in People standards.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Investors in People Standard is a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance through its people. Developed in 1990 by a partnership of leading businesses and national organisations, the Standard helps organisations to improve performance and realise objectives through the management and development of their people. Since it was developed, the Standard has been reviewed every three years.
- 2.2 Investor in People status brings public recognition for real achievements measured against a rigorous National Standard. Being an Investor in People helps to attract the best quality job applicants as well as giving the organisation the opportunity to review current policies and practices against a recognised benchmark. The Standard also provides a framework for planning future strategy and action and gives a structured way to improve the effectiveness of training and development activities.
- 2.3 ISO 9001:2000 (previously known as the quality assurance standard 'BS 5750') is an internationally recognised quality standard which requires the organisation to manage the quality of the products they produce through stringent controls on documents, processes and systems used.
- 2.4 Achieving ISO 9001/2000 is beneficial as it helps to reduce the risk to this Authority as well as to Tyne and Wear councils, providing resilience managers and elected members with an added degree of insulation against the failure of plans, procedures and the other key activities of the Emergency Planning Unit undertaken on behalf of the Authority and

councils. This is particularly important in relation to any Public Inquiry, which could arise following a major emergency.

### 3 ASSESSMENTS AND RENEWALS

- 3.1 In February 2010, an assessment was conducted by Assessment North East Limited to see if the EPU was continuing to meet the Investors in People (IiP) Standard.
- 3.2 The assessment involved 9 members of staff being interviewed by the assessor and asked various questions in line with the requirements of the standard.
- 3.3 In addition to the standard core criteria, the EPU has also been scrutinised with regard to people's perceptions of the effectiveness of the consultation and communications processes. This was an additional request as part of the EPU going for assessment as part of the new 'Beyond the Standard' criteria.
- 3.4 Members will be aware of the changes which have taken place in the EPU over the last two years as part of the restructure of the service and the ongoing Tyne and Wear Resilience Review. This, understandably, has generated some concern amongst staff. The positive feedback from staff about how they have been consulted and involved is, therefore, extremely pleasing to note, as are the assessors comments regarding the high levels of moral and motivation evident during the audit. This demonstrates the continued commitment of EPU staff.
- 3.5 Some good practice areas were identified, and quotes from the assessor are below:
- *"Throughout this review visit it was clear that staff are committed to demonstrating the success of the Unit to external partners and funding authorities and all of those interviewed were positive and enthusiastic about the achievements of the Unit and are keen to have these recognised"*
  - *"Despite the changes and difficulties the Unit has faced over the last couple of years the commitment to training and development of staff has not been affected and as evidenced at this review visit morale and motivation of staff is very high"*
  - *"Communications and consultation within the Unit are considered to be extremely effective and understanding of the issues facing the Unit is well understood".*
  - *"There is an excellent team ethos and people are committed to doing their best to ensure the future survival of the Unit as a separate entity".*

- 3.6 The overall result indicated that the level of performance in the EPU is very high against the standard.
- 3.7 As reported to the Civil Contingencies Committee in January 2010, an assessment was carried out by SGS Limited in August 2009 to see if the EPU was continuing to meet the ISO 9001:2000 standard.
- 3.8 The audit team conducted a process-based audit, focusing on significant aspects/risks/objectives required by the standard. The audit methods used were interviews, observation of activities and review of documentation and records.
- 3.9 The audit covered the processes documented in the EPU's Quality Management System.
- 3.10 These processes were identified as being those which are critical to EPU business in supporting the work of the five councils in Tyne and Wear. These include:
- Emergency Plan writing
  - Training and Exercising
  - Supplementary processes, such as admin and procurement
  - Plan Maintenance procedures
  - Compliments and complaints
- 3.11 A number of good practices were highlighted in the report, including the following which have been taken directly from the audit report:
- *"A significant number of complimentary e-mails/ correspondence were noted to have been received by the organisation and are kept in the above mentioned file"*
  - *"Evidence of good internal communication was demonstrated"*
  - *"The Quality Policy is an integral part of the QMS and was noted to have last been updated as recently as May 2008."*
  - *"A log of improvements is maintained – a number of projects were noted to have already been completed and a number are still in progress"*
  - *"Training records have improved and now also include attendee lists from the 'pre-screening' as seen in the Mass Fatalities core module."*
  - *"There has been one complaint noted this year which was well investigated with the appropriate evidence available for review."*

3.12 There were two minor non conformances which are detailed in the table below

<b>Minor Non Conformance</b>	<b>Suggested action by audit team</b>
The Quality Objectives laid down in the manual are more strategic objectives and as such are not measurable per se.	Consider reviewing the objectives to make them measurable perhaps by using cross references to the Business and Strategic Resilience plans
The internal audit reporting appears inconsistent and in some reports, the NCR report sheet has not been completed as per the procedure and some audits show no evidence.	The audit schedule needs to be more detailed and tie in with the audit record log (results)

3.13 Members should however note that these non-conformances are designed to enhance the current system, and are not significant findings.

#### **4 RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1 Renewal of both of these standards helps to minimise the risk to this Authority.

#### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

#### **6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

#### **7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

#### **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the renewal of both quality standards;
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report and can be made available to Members on request:

- EPU Quality Management System
- ISO 9001:2000 Assessment report
- Investors in People Assessment Report

