

**HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT – CHANGING THE SAFETY CULTURE IN
STREETSCENE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

1.0 Why has this report come to the Committee?

1.1 A summary health and safety report was produced in June 2011 for Committee. Members requested a further report detailing the work that has been undertaken and is still progressing relating to improving the health and safety performance within Streetscene.

2.0 Background

2.1 A number of serious incidents occurred in 2008, which resulted in injuries to employees, damage to equipment and enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). These represented serious failings in the health and safety management systems operating in certain parts of what was then Environmental Services.

2.2 As a consequence a full health and safety review of the service was undertaken between October 2008 and March 2009.

2.3 A Health and Safety Improvement Board was established and a clear action plan developed to drive improvements in health and safety performance, based on the findings of the review.

2.4 In October 2010 the Deputy Executive Director of City Services commissioned a follow up review to be undertaken to establish the health and safety performance within the re-organised Streetscene, and to determine if the improvements specified in the plan were being implemented on the ground.

2.5 The 2010 review identified clear improvements in the overall management of health and safety across the Service. Specifically:

- Employees, Managers and Operational Managers interviewed all demonstrated a far greater awareness and ownership of health and safety;
- The Trade Unions described “a sea change in the culture”, and;
- All the elements of safety management were found to be in place, including management monitoring. This was not the case in 2008/9.

2.7 The ongoing challenges identified for the Service were to:

- To further develop systems so that they are robust and operate effectively, particularly those designed to measure performance, and;
- To review and challenge the high accident incident rate. Targeted initiatives, particularly around musculoskeletal injuries should be developed and implemented.

2.8 The outcomes of the 2010 review have been used to revise the improvement action plan, and the membership of the improvement board has been refreshed to reflect the re-structure of Streetscene.

3.0 Work undertaken by the Improvement Board to improve the Safety Culture

3.1 Health and Safety Improvement Board

3.1.1 The Improvement Board has been instrumental in changing the safety performance of the service. It is chaired by the Head of Streetscene and made up of Assistant Heads of Services and Operational Managers. The Council's Health and Safety Manager and lead health and safety adviser for City Services also attend the board.

3.1.2 The primary function of the Board has been to oversee improvements in health and safety performance across the service, the senior management representation on the Board has ensured leadership and accountability for delivering said improvements.

3.1.3 The Board continues to meet on a monthly basis, the agenda includes the improvement action plan; significant health and safety incidents, and incidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

3.2 Review of risk assessments, including safe systems of work

3.2.1 A key action undertaken has been review of risk assessments and safe systems of work in the service.

3.2.2 Risk assessment review groups were established with managers, employees and where available trade union members. The groups were supported by a safety adviser to ensure all changes to working practices were suitable to reduce the risk of accidents and ill health as far as was reasonable and ensure a consistent approach across service areas.

3.3 Training of Senior Managers, Managers and Employees

3.3.1 An extensive refresher training programme was rolled out, which included senior managers being trained in their legal responsibilities and leadership actions. Training was cascaded through to managers, and employees.

3.3.2 Clear training matrix is in place, which includes regular tool box talks for operatives.

3.4 Health and safety monitoring and supervision

- 3.4.1 Pro-active line management monitoring is now in place in all high risk areas across Streetscene. This is a key element in organisations that have a positive health and safety culture .
- 3.4.2 An ongoing challenge is to develop a more robust monitoring system across the service to enable the identification of trends, and analysis of findings. The recently revised Improvement Board Action plan includes a through review of and development of a cross cutting monitoring system for Street Scene.
- 3.4.3 Over the last 18 months the Service has instigated disciplinary action following the identification of unsafe working practice.
- 3.4.4 A sanctions matrix been developed and agreed with the Trade Unions. It was formally introduced with the launch of Streetscene. This identifies health and safety failings and the consequence, which for serious breaches is ultimately dismissal . In discussion with the trade unions they stated that they fully supported this approach, and noted the positive influence that this approach is having on front line behaviour. This has been a significant change in approach as previously sanctions were found to be no more than a telling off.

3.5 Health and Safety Auditing

- 3.5.1 Reactive and pro-active auditing has been undertaken in Street scene by the Corporate Health and Safety Team.
- 3.5.2 Audit reports are issued to operational managers and the Improvement Board monitors the close out of audit actions within allotted timescales. This ensures that management action is taken following competent advice.
- 3.5.3 Cross service reviews were undertaken in 2008/9 and 2010/11. This ensures a holistic view of health and safety management is provided.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

- 4.1 "HSE quotes at least a 5 year timescale to improve and embed health and safety management systems in a poor performing area. The health and safety improvement programme was launched in 2008 under the former Environmental Services Division. The programme has gathered pace and direction since the formation of the City Services directorate and the improvements noted to date should be recognised and celebrated."
- 4.2 To maintain progress, the Service must continue to drive forward performance, to protect employees, and minimise losses associated with accidents and incidents, particularly given the current financial constraints.
- 4.2 Members are asked to note the content of the report.