
HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SCHOOLS TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Health and Safety in Schools Task and Finish Review Group.

Information and Analysis

2. Members will recall that the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 30th October, 2006, established a Task and Finish Review Group to consider Health and Safety issues in Schools. Councillors Hughes, Richmond and A.J. Scott, and Mr. R. Bennett agreed to be on this Group.
3. At the initial meeting of the Review Group on the 14th November 2006, the Group held a preliminary discussions with Colin Morrison, Health and Safety Manager, to identify the areas of consideration required under the remit of this Task and Finish Review, with the main areas being identified as:
 - (a) the process of holding Schools to account for the adherence to Health and Safety guidance and compliance with required legislation;
 - (b) the evidence required to demonstrate that Schools are adhering to Health and Safety guidance and complying with required legislation;
 - (c) the action that can be taken to encourage Schools to adhere to Health and Safety guidance and comply with required legislation.
4. The Task and Finish Group have met on several occasions since this initial meeting to analyse the progress made by the Health and Safety Unit in relation to the 'School Health Check', and interview Officers involved in the provision of Health and Safety guidance and services to schools.
5. Since the last meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on the 18th June 2007, the Group have met again on Monday, 9th July 2007 with Colin Morrison, Health and Safety Manager, Ken Poole, Assistant Director, Technical Services, Michael Gamble, Technical Assistant, John Bell, Capital Programme Manager, George Cornforth, Risk and Insurance Manager and Brian James, Chief Internal Auditor.
6. It was reported that the Health and Safety Team had now visited twenty-six schools in total, tailoring the approach to the individual school and dealing with any specific issues that arose. The Health and Safety Manager highlighted that the number of Accident Forms

submitted by schools had risen due to the increased awareness generated by the Health and Safety visits.

7. Members received information on the services provided by the Council in relation to the maintenance systems offered to schools, the level of competition from alternative providers, the monitoring processes in place should a school decide not to buy in to the Council's services and the benefits of the Council's package. Members of the Task and Finish Group enquired about the cost of services provided and how these costs were passed on to schools. Members were also provided with information relating to the Corporate Risk Plan and how health and safety in schools is incorporated therein.
8. The Health and Safety in Schools Task and Finish Group will meet again at 2pm on Monday, 24th September 2007 to analyse the information obtained during the course of this review.

Legal Implications

9. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Recommendations

11. That the progress made by the Health and Safety in Schools Task and Finish Review Group be noted.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Service

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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