



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee

Date	15 April 2019
Report title	Health and Safety Audit Update
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Report to be/has been considered by	Not Applicable

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note the further update on progress made against recommendations identified during the Internal Audit of Health and Safety Arrangements conducted by City of Wolverhampton Council Audit Services.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee with a further update on progress against recommendations identified within the Internal Audit Report in relation to the Health and Safety Arrangements for the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) issued on 8 October 2018 and last updated in January 2019.

2.0 Background

2.1 An audit of the Health and Safety Arrangements in operation for the WMCA was undertaken by the City of Wolverhampton Council Audit Services as part of the approved internal audit plan for 2018-2019 following a request by the Director of Integrated Network Services. The audit sought assurance that a robust health and safety management system is in operation for the WMCA to effectively manage health and safety risks.

2.2 The audit identified that suitable operational health and safety management arrangements were evident, supported by regular reporting and an effective management system. It was also noted that revised governance and reporting arrangements were being consulted upon prior to approval with supporting mechanisms being developed by the Health and Safety Team in the meantime.

2.3 Recommendations were made to further support and build upon the current and proposed arrangements going forward, as well as developing greater visibility across the WMCA regarding the role of the Health and Safety Team as an organisational wide function. Further to the agreed actions within the audit report, the Director of Integrated Network Services and Health and Safety Manager have advised that **two** additional actions would also be taken in relation to (i) governance arrangements for West Midlands Fire Service and (ii) stress and long-term sickness absence.

2.4 An update of the action log detailing the issues arising, recommendations, current progress and action status is contained within **Appendix 1** attached to this report.

2.5 At the last meeting it was acknowledged that the original target completion dates for many of the actions were overly ambitious given the wider challenges faced by the organisation and revised targets were provided where applicable. The attached appendix reports on the actions as at 31st March 2019.

2.6 Whilst the actions committed to ARAC at the November 2018 meeting were intended to be completed in the main by the end of December 2018, it was clear that many of the target dates were overly ambitious given some of the wider challenges which were raised at the previous meeting in January 2019. Whilst a significant amount of work has been undertaken to review, update and evolve the Health and Safety Policy and Safety Management System, it has been critical to work through those processes and procedures for various areas of the WMCA. In transport this has been traditionally a relatively straight forward process of revision and updates but in some areas of the WMCA's new activities such as Housing and Regeneration there has been a need to establish processes and procedures which have not previously existed. This work continues and it is anticipated that the 25% of actions in progress, which remain to be completed will all be able to be closed down by the target dates identified in **Appendix 1**.

3.0 Wider WMCA Implications

- 3.1 Since the last update the WMCA Health and Safety Policy has been updated and signed by the Chief Executive and the policy incorporated within the Safety Management System (SMS), which has also been signed off by the chief executive. A process of reviewing all accountable actions and responsibilities within the SMS has begun by the Director of Integrated Network Services and the Health and Safety Manager to ensure that the SMS processes are embedded across the WMCA.
- 3.2 The Health and Safety Strategic Committee has also met since the last update was provided to the Committee in January which brought together directors and senior managers from across the WMCA to consider the strategic requirements for Health and Safety, particularly in the more recently expanding areas of the WMCA such as land and housing, Public Service Reform, and some of the more established areas of transport which have evolved such as Metro through the Midland Metro Alliance.
- 3.3 The Chief Executive of the WMCA, who holds overall accountability for health and safety has agreed to support the Health and Safety Strategic Committee. In addition to supporting the committee additional meetings have been established between the Director responsible for Health and Safety and the Chief Executive on a monthly basis.
- 3.4 Most recently, approval for the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) to come into the WMCA structure will now give clarity to the conversations between WMFS and WMCA on the future health and safety structure. These discussions have already commenced but had been interrupted when the proposal was delayed. Now that this has been approved further meetings on the most effective structure for Health and Safety will commence as soon as practical to ensure a robust and effective structure is proposed to the WMCA. These discussions will result in a proposed H&S Policy returning to the WMCA Board for full approval once discussions are concluded between the WMCA and WMFS. This will allow the WMCA Board to consider the Health and Safety structure and accountabilities in light of this significant change.
- 3.5 Furthermore, an additional post within the Health and Safety team has been confirmed and funded with a recruitment process now underway. This will help to ensure that the team has the resources required to continue to support the Health and Safety agenda moving forward.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report, however as the remit and responsibilities of the WMCA evolve, additional resources and budgetary allocation may be required (above those set out in 3.5) to ensure effective delivery of the aims and objective set out within the Health and Safety Policy and associated Strategy.

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 Although there are no current legal implications, cognisance should be given to all applicable Health and Safety legislation that places duties upon the organisation.

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Other Implications

- 7.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

8.0 Schedule of background papers

8.1 Final Internal Audit Report Health and Safety Arrangements 2018-2019
(8 October 2018) – Delivered by City of Wolverhampton Council Audit Services

9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 Health and Safety Internal Audit Action Log