



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 24 OCTOBER 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

PROPERTY AND OCCUPANTS RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP – ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. One of the key functions of the Corporate Governance Committee is to ensure that the Council has effective risk management arrangements in place. This report assists the Committee in fulfilling that role by providing the first annual report of the work undertaken by the Property and Occupants Risk Management Group.

Background

2. Shortly after the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower fire in West London on 14 June 2017, the Director of Finance (now the Director of Corporate Resources) convened a group of key representatives from the Corporate Resources Department to begin a comprehensive review of the Council's approach to fire safety. The initial tasks were to give assurances to Members and other key stakeholders and to begin to plan ahead for likely increased Government scrutiny, inspection and regulation.
3. In the two months prior to the Grenfell fire, there had also been terrorist attacks in both Manchester and London, and so a decision was taken to widen both the scope of work required and the representation of services. A Property and Occupants Risk Management Group (P&ORMG) was formed.
4. The Terms of Reference for the P&ORMG are contained in the appendix attached to this report. These were updated on 1 October 2018 to reflect changes in personnel and new additions to the group. Part 4 of the Terms of Reference states that the P&ORMG will report to Corporate Governance Committee annually. This is the first annual report to the Committee and it covers the period from the end of June 2017 to the end of September 2018.
5. The Committee has previously received information and a short presentation on the work of the P&ORMG at its meetings on 22 September and 17 November 2017 respectively. Significant work has continued during 2018 and this is detailed below.

Work completed

6. The following is a brief list of the work already undertaken by members of the P&ORMG since its inception at the end of June 2017 (note some of the outputs overlap): -
7. Safety improvements
 - a. Reviewed and revised the Council's policy on fitting sprinklers in current and to be constructed buildings including retro-fitting where appropriate. The policy must be applied to all Local Authority maintained schools and Leicestershire Academy schools where the County Council owns the freehold of the building or land. This reflects the County Councils responsibility to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of Leicestershire pupils. Other schools will be encouraged to adopt this policy.
 - b. Devised and implemented a sprinkler risk assessment tool and brought it to the attention of all schools.
 - c. Revised processes for ensuring that all new builds have effective fire safety measures.
 - d. Completed a number of recommended improvements following the Council's insurers risk assessment of fire and associated perils at County Hall.
 - e. A specialist from the Council's insurers assessed the County Hall site, looking at potential threats to the safety of both the building and its occupants. As a result, an action plan proposed a range of improvements which will be funded from insurance and property maintenance funds. The survey also highlighted that more work could be done to promote a culture of security awareness. Members, Chief Officers and staff have been advised on the changes.
8. Compliance
 - a. Undertook full fire risk assessments at Council 'higher risk' sites that have an accommodation function. Additional fire precautionary works have been fully implemented.
 - b. Contacted all (97 at the time) maintained schools to validate they were compliant with Type 1 (governors responsibility) fire risk assessment obligations. Children and Family Services (C&FS) and Health, Safety and Wellbeing staff followed up the minor issues identified with school management teams.
 - c. Contacted all Leicestershire academies and requested they shared their individual responses to the Department for Education (DfE) about their fire risk position and whether they had undertaken any building

adaptations. Academy schools were also asked to forward fire risk assessment documentation to the County Council, which has now been reviewed. Appropriate follow up action continues to be taken.

- d. Identified over 960 properties across 11 different work strands where services are commissioned by Children and Family Services and the Adults and Communities Department including residential accommodation and non-residential education services for vulnerable client groups. Have begun to evaluate fire risk management arrangements on a priority basis.
- e. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) conducted a full fire risk assessment of County Hall, carried out by an approved fire risk consultant.
- f. Wrote to fire door suppliers to confirm their products used in County buildings were compliant with revised DCLG guidance.
- g. Ongoing oversight of DCLG bulletins and advisories by a designated compliance officer.

9. Work with partners and suppliers

- a. Contacted major roofing and construction contractors to identify the materials specified and installation methods in Council buildings and confirmed no specific concerns on aluminum cladding systems.
- b. Representatives from LFRS and the Council's insurer and brokers are regular attenders at P&ORMG meetings.
- c. LFRS has provided training to contract managers and officers working in adults' residential care. Information on fire safety in residential care homes is shared with LFRS who continue to work in close partnership.
- d. LFRS organised a joint workshop with the County and Leicester City Councils.
- e. Leicestershire Police has provided training in dealing with suspicious packages for appropriate staff and they will review security improvements at County Hall once complete.
- f. The Council's insurer and brokers have agreed protocols with relevant Council officers for utilising 'Guardians' at appropriate vacant properties which is less costly than 'boarding up' which attracts vandalism and creates health and safety risks.
- g. The Council's insurer inputted to 'Information & guidance on Bomb Threat, Suspicious Packages Firearm Threat and Lockdown'.

10. Communication, training and guidance

- a. Issued a reminder to Chief Officers and all Leicestershire Head Teachers about their specific health and safety responsibilities.
- b. The Fire Safety policy and guidance was updated following consultation with the Council's insurers.
- c. Issued reminders about smoking only in designated areas following a small fire caused by a discarded cigarette and the increased risk of fire due to the tinder like conditions during the heatwave.
- d. A full communication plan has been developed.

Work ongoing and planned

11. Evaluation of fire risk management in other properties within and beyond Leicestershire, where the Council procures services on behalf of vulnerable client groups continues as detailed below: -

- a. Although departments maintain their own records, additional work is underway to standardise approaches and to hold information in a central depository to ensure that the data is being monitored.
- b. A systematic approach has been adopted to break down the task into priority areas. A close collaboration has been established between Council officers and LFRS to discuss current and future priority areas and how information can be better shared. A phased implementation plan has been developed to target available resources to concentrate on the priority risk areas.
- c. Significant progress has been made with contract officer inspection procedures and staff training. In order to introduce a more consistent approach, Council officers continue to work with LFRS on the development of a corporate fire safety questionnaire template for departments to incorporate within their existing contract monitoring procedures.
- d. Evaluation of fire risk documentation already provided continues and some follow up is required. Funding has been allocated for additional resources to support the completion of this work and to provide additional assurance.
- e. Contract management will continue to reside within the respective department service areas and will represent the 'first line of defence' in ensuring statutory compliance. A "second line of defence" is being developed to bolster the existing departmental arrangement, whereby a centralised resource will oversee and support the broader activities, as well as providing some audit and assurance at a corporate level. Moreover, a centralised database of providers will enable the

classification and categorisation of types of property, to better understand where the highest risk resides.

- f. A more corporate approach to compliance monitoring will influence how services are initially procured, contract performance is monitored and any non-compliance is dealt with. By doing so, further resilience can be provided to ensure the continuing safety of Council service users within third party managed buildings.
12. Work also continues to complete the action plan from the County Hall site survey conducted by the Council's insurer. Recommendations from a recently concluded Internal Audit Service report on 'card access' control at County Hall will be aligned with proposals from the site survey. Once all works are completed Leicestershire Police will review the improvements.
 13. In addition, DCLG bulletins and advisories will continue to be monitored and acted upon and work undertaken to respond appropriately to any changes in legislation.
 14. The importance of site and personal security to all persons on Council owned or occupied sites will continue to be communicated and guidance developed in line with any new threats identified. It is also proposed that information be provided to the Council's insurer to enable them to firstly model then prioritise other sites that would benefit from a site and occupants security risk assessment.
 15. Plans to formalise and develop a working relationship with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Resilience Forum will also be progressed to ensure emergency planning measures are appropriately joined up should an emergency at any Council owned or occupied property arise.

Resources Implications

16. None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

17. None.

Recommendation

18. That the Committee notes the work completed, ongoing and planned by the Property and Occupants Risk Management Group during the period from the end of June 2017 to the end of September 2018.

Background Papers

Reports of the Director of Corporate Resources – 'Risk Management Update' – Corporate Governance Committee, 22 September and 17 November 2017.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None

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Appendix

Property & Occupants Risk Management Group – Terms of Reference (updated 1 October 2018)