

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 11 th October, 2022
Report Subject	Outcome of Statutory Training Audit
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Regional Transport Strategy
Report Author	Chief Officer, Streetscene and Transportation
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Streetscene & Transportation portfolio is committed to ensuring that all employees in the staffing structure are competent in their roles, and have the education to know what they need to know to do their jobs safely and have been trained to be able to do their jobs properly.

The portfolio employs in excess of 500 employees across a diverse range of activities with approximately two thirds being frontline operational workforce. The roles fulfilled within the portfolio span a range of functions covering office based administrative support staff, transport planners, civil engineers, traffic management and highway workers on Flintshire's high speed road network and recycling and refuse collectors. All work activities are subject to a level of risk and employees are therefore required to undertake a diverse range of statutory and mandatory training for their roles.

As part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan for 2021/2022, an internal audit of the training provision was undertaken in November 2021. The purpose of the audit was to assess whether statutory and mandatory training was in place and to provide assurance that workers were not undertaking work without such training in place. The audit provided some level of assurance, in that the audit did not identify any instances of any workers undertaking work without the necessary training; however, key controls to mitigate the strategic risks were found to be not effective or applied consistently and a number of areas for further improvement were recommended.

This report provides the Committee with an overview of the Compliance and Training service along with assurances regarding the recommended action taken and controls put in place following the audit.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes and supports the work of the Streetscene and Transportation Compliance and Training team.
2	That the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes and supports the action taken and controls put in place in response to the internal audit recommendations.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLAINE AND TRAINING TEAM AND EXPLAINING THE OUTCOME OF THE STATUTORY TRAINING AUDIT
1.01	The Streetscene & Transportation portfolio employs a Compliance and Training team, which consist of one Compliance and Training Manager, two Operational Trainers and two Compliance and Training Officers. The team is responsible for designing, implementing and managing an effective training and compliance monitoring programme across all Streetscene & Transportation operations, in order to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and ensure that the training provision meets the complex needs of a flexible, multi-skilled workforce across a diverse range of services.
1.02	<p>In 2020, all face-to-face non-statutory training for the portfolio was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to this, the longstanding operational trainer retired from his post, which led to the role being vacant for the duration of the pandemic. This brought about an opportunity for the training service provision to be reconsidered and, in 2021, the portfolio invested in the development of the training service by carrying out a review of the operational trainer role, which resulted in a stronger emphasis on compliance assessments post-training. This has been supplemented with the addition of a second training officer post, which enable the portfolio to increase the number of in-house training sessions to be delivered.</p> <p>Subsequently, an upgraded training facility was designed and built during 2021 to enable training to be undertaken in a covid-safe environment. The new facility is intended to enhance the training offer by providing a modern, fit for purpose environment and it allows multiple training sessions to be carried out at any one time, as well as a comprehensive, undercover area for practical exercises or assessments. To supplement this, a digital training management system is currently being explored to improve the back office support in respect of data management for training records, session scheduling and documentation storage.</p>
1.03	The portfolio continues to successfully maintain two training accreditations from the Road Transport Industry Training Board (RTITB) and is a registered MIDAS training provider with the Community Transport Association (CTA). This allows us to develop and deliver task specific practical training, which meets statutory

	<p>and service delivery requirements and provide training to other council departments when required.</p> <p>Maintaining industry recognised training accreditations in-house allows us to provide staff with access to quality training and provides assurance that training delivery meets high standards of training provision. The training team is required to be externally audited on a regular basis to ensure that best practice standards are continually maintained.</p>
1.04	<p>To supplement the current training provision, the portfolio has been successful in obtaining WULF funding via the Unite trade union and corporate training to provide additional HGV driving and plant and equipment training. We will be looking to develop this successful partnership working into 2022-2023 and we are currently considering what other non-statutory training may be provided through the funding, which could be offered to staff and workforce.</p>
1.05	<p>Pre-pandemic, in excess of 2,400 training events per annum were completed by managers, supervisors and front line workforce. Approximately ninety different course titles can be delivered across a diverse range of disciplines, which are required to address specific legislative requirements and the risks associated with work activities.</p> <p>All agency workers are provided with the same level of induction and training as substantive members of the workforce to ensure their safety, health and wellbeing. This investment in agency staff is of benefit when full time positions become available as they already have the necessary experience and training to undertake the role.</p>
1.06	<p>As part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan for 2021/2022, an internal audit of the training provision within the portfolio was undertaken in November 2021. The internal audit was requested by the Chief Officer in response to concerns raised by trade union representatives that there was the potential that employees could be required to undertake a work task that they were not trained to do. The concerns that were raised predominantly came about due to the fact that all face-to-face non-statutory training had to be suspended as a result of the social distancing requirements during the COVID pandemic.</p>
1.07	<p>The audit focussed on the following areas of possible risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities are not clear and risks and mitigations have not been identified via the risk registers; • Managers are unaware / have incorrectly defined the mandatory training for each job role (internal / contractors); • The system in place does not accurately record and evidence the level of training / certification including where due for renewal or expired; • Operatives are assigned to work in areas for which they do not have the requisite training, thereby failing to comply with statutory regulations. This could result in injury, legal proceedings, financial loss and reputational damage to the Council; • The policy and system in place does not deliver a dynamic and responsive workforce, risking an increased use of external contractors and a higher financial cost to the Council;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impacts of COVID-19 have not been adequately mitigated/managed.
1.08	<p>The audit testing did not identify any instances of the operational workforce having to undertake a work task for which they were not trained to carry out.</p> <p>The audit reported that areas managed well included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Training Team are diligent with updating and managing training for the workforce. • Training schedules developed using the master rotors [<i>sic</i>] are sent to managers and supervisors on a weekly basis. • Non-attendance at training is reported to Managers and Supervisors and analysis of causes for non-attendance carried out to help with continuous improvement of training. • The Training Team obtain management information from their systems and report numbers of trained/untrained to SMT. • This data is used in an annual [<i>*report sic</i>] by the Corporate H&S group. • Testing did not identify any instances of any operatives who had been asked to do work for which they were not trained. <p>However, the audit was assessed as Amber/Red due to a failure in addressing strategic risks and it identified that there were limited key controls in place to mitigate those risks.</p>
1.09	<p>The audit identified several areas for further improvement, which were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of mandatory and non-mandatory training requirement : the service needs to be able to demonstrate that all operatives have the requisite mandatory training to discharge their responsibilities safely. • Reliance on Manager awareness of Training Requirements for Roles and Jobs: there are documents which state which training and skills are needed for each role, however these are rarely referenced by the Managers and Supervisors. • Risk management – operational risk not acknowledged: the Council has a risk management framework which defines how risks are identified, recorded, managed and reported. Whilst there are two risks relating to statutory training on the S&T portfolio register (ST16 and ST30) they are both in regard to the difficulties posed by the Pandemic. • Lack of S&T Training Strategy or Policy: currently Streetscene and Transportation does not have a specific training strategy or policy, rather it relies on the Council's corporate policy. • Lack of Training Recovery Plan: currently sixty percent of training logged on the system is overdue or due in the next six months. • Use of spreadsheet and quality of data held: the details of operatives, training received and training expiry dates is held in an internal spreadsheet. This document is extensive (in-excess of 6000 lines) and if corrupt would result in the loss of all training data. • Job Description - personal responsibility for continuous improvement: There are job descriptions for all level of operatives in Streetscene, they are comprehensive in listing the principal accountabilities and knowledge and skills required for each post. Whilst they state all work must be completed in compliance with Health & Safety regulations and to an expected standard,

	<p>there is no requirement stated for continuous improvement and maintenance of skills and knowledge.</p>
<p>1.10</p>	<p>Since the audit has been finalised and key actions agreed, there are a number of measures that the portfolio has put in place, which are detailed as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of mandatory and non-mandatory training requirement and Reliance on Manager awareness of Training Requirements for Roles and Jobs: Operational managers within the Service Delivery team have identified all training requirements for the operational workforce. Each training requirement has been categorised as either statutory (required under legislation), mandatory (deemed necessary to deliver work compliantly and safely) or non-mandatory (required as best practice and for career development). <p>This information has been collated into an annual training matrix which can then be cross referenced to existing employees to ensure that they are trained and qualified to carry out work tasks. This matrix will also be used to identify gaps in training for specific work areas with will assist with planning training for the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management – operational risk not acknowledged Four additional service specific risks were included on the portfolio risk register: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ST51 - Inability to deliver training session due to vacancy of the training officer position - ST52 - Inability to deliver service due to untrained workforce - ST53 - Loss of training data due to inadequate recording process - ST54 - Increased expenditure on procuring training database systems • Lack of S&T Training Strategy or Policy A training policy specific to Streetscene and Transportation has been drafted and is due to be finalised, published and adopted by the portfolio in October 2022. • Lack of Training Recovery Plan Training was included within the Streetscene and Transportation plan for post-COVID recovery to ensure that the service reinstated training sessions in a controlled and compliant manner as the social distancing guidelines and restrictions eased. This ensured that training sessions could be reintroduced to ensure that any expired or near to expiry training requirements took place. • Use of spreadsheet and quality of data held The spreadsheet for holding training records has been revised allowing easier access to records by operational managers and supervisors. The database is now stable with regard to the number of records held and a backup copy is retained. <p>The Training and Compliance manager is exploring a digital training database system that was developed in-house by the IT Service, which can be utilised to further improve data storage and training planning. Currently, Social Services use the database system, which is well-established and can be extended to accommodate the requirements of the Streetscene & Transportation portfolio.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Description - personal responsibility for continuous improvement It has been made a contractual requirement for an employee to undertake the required mandatory training required of the role.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	IT support is required to develop the internal training management database system.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The actions undertaken by the portfolio intend to minimise the risk of an employee undertaking work tasks which they are not trained to do.
3.02	All risks identified within the portfolio risk register are currently assessed as being yellow or green risks as their current risk rating.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	With the three Trade Unions (Unison, GMB and Unite)
4.02	With HR and corporate training.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Report

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Ruth Tulley, Regulatory Services Manager Telephone: 01352 704796 E-mail: ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None