

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 22 December 2016

Management Actions - Stand By, On Call and Disturbance Payments

Item number	7.6
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All Wards

Executive Summary

The Internal Audit Quarterly Update Report: 1 April 2016 – 30 June 2016 was presented to GRBV Committee on 26 September 2016. This report provides an update on the recommendations and agreed Management Actions under the 'Continuous Testing – Stand By, On Call & Disturbance Payments' section of that report.

Links

Coalition Pledges	P44
Council Priorities	CP9
Single Outcome Agreement	S04

Management Actions - Stand By, On Call and Disturbance Payments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that committee notes the management actions taken to address the Internal Audit recommendations arising from the Quarterly Update Report: 1 April 2016 – 30 June 2016, Continuous Testing – Stand By, On Call and Disturbance Payments.

2. Background

- 2.1 Internal Audit carried out a routine programme of testing of continuous controls over key financial systems. As part of the 2015/16 audit plan a review was conducted of Out of Hours (OOH) services including Stand By/ On-call arrangements.
- 2.2 Standby describes the arrangement where members of staff have agreed to be available to attend work in response to unplanned or emergency situations out with normal working hours.
- 2.3 Internal Audit analysed all claims across the Council highlighting anomalies for further testing. A number of claims from Services for Communities, now Place, were highlighted.

3. Main report

- 3.1 There are occasions when staff are contacted outwith their normal working hours to provide advice or guidance but are not required to report to a designated workplace. This may involve an employee being contacted and dealing with an issue from home (or another location) over the phone or by email. Employees cannot receive disturbance and call-out payment for the same time period. For staff on standby, an allowance of £13.36 is payable once within each period of two hours, irrespective of the number of contacts within the period. For staff not on standby, the allowance is £18.37. Staff at grade 8 and above will only be paid in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.2 The Analysis of Standby and Call-out claims in sampled time periods for 2015 identified a number of cases where disturbance and call out overtime have been claimed for the same period.

- 3.3 There were four members of staff from Housing Property (formerly Edinburgh Building Services (EBS) who were audited through this process. Further investigations identified that there were also instances of underclaims which were greater than the incorrect disturbance allowance claims and in overall terms were not detrimental to the Council, in terms of payments.
- 3.4 In Cemeteries and Burials there is a weekend standby to provide a service for Muslim burials. Staff only claim overtime if they are on the rota to be on standby and they are called out. All claims are checked against the rota and approved by the appropriate line manager. Staff do not claim Disturbance payments.
- 3.5 Internal Audit identified six high claimants within Edinburgh Roads Services; three of which were due to the high number of disturbance claims. These were independently investigated and the majority of disturbance claims were winter weather related and in particular, salting treatment decisions and updates. The frequency of checking, and subsequent disturbance claims, correlates with the Winter Maintenance Plan. While Grade 8 staff have previously acted as the Winter Weather Duty Manager, checking weather forecasts four times a day, this is now carried out by Grade 7 staff. There was no pattern of over-claiming overtime or disturbance.
- 3.6 The recommendations and agreed Management Actions have all been put in place and further briefings have been carried out with team leaders and line managers. They will scrutinise claims on a weekly basis to ensure they are compliant.
- 3.7 Line managers have briefed their teams and made clear their expectations regarding compliance with procedures when claims are submitted.
- 3.8 Managers have been reminded of roles and responsibilities when signing off requests for allowances or overtime.
- 3.9 Budget Holding Managers will carry out ad-hoc analysis of claims, on a quarterly basis, to monitor compliance with procedures.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The Action Plan actions and continuous monitoring carried out by officers will ensure robust management practices for claims.
- 4.2 Standby claims are in accordance with City of Edinburgh Council policies and guidelines.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The issues identified relate to management procedures and the financial impact is insignificant.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Due diligence checks are not carried out by line managers for claims which are excessive, inappropriate, or erroneous.
- 6.2 Non-adherence to Council Policies.
- 6.3 Checks are not carried out on compliance with Working Time Directive.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The content of this report has no impact on the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 None.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 None.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Internal Audit Quarterly Update - 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016](#)

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P44 – Prioritise keeping our streets clean and attractive
Council Priorities	CP9 – An attractive city
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 – Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.
Appendices	None