Glasgow City Council Internal Audit Section
Committee Summary
Financial Services - School Crossing Patrols

Item 3(d)

20th March 2024

1 Introduction

1.1 As part of the agreed Internal Audit plan we have carried out a review of the School Crossing Patrols (referred to as SXPs) within school settings. Catering and Facilities Management (C&FM), within Financial Services are responsible for managing the provision of SXPs throughout the city.

1.2 SXPs play an essential road safety service by assisting children to cross specified roads on their way to and from school while adhering to road safety regulations.

1.3 There are currently over 300 school crossings in place across the City. It is therefore crucial that SXPs are stationed at the correct areas and in situ at the expected times and location, and that there are appropriate means for managing this process when staff are absent and unable to attend their designated crossing.

1.4 The purpose of the audit was to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the processes in place for ensuring that school crossing patrols are suitably resourced, as well as C&FMs ability to respond when staffing issues occur. The scope of the audit included:

- School crossing procedures and guides, ensuring that these are sufficiently detailed, kept up to date and communicated to staff.
- The school crossings currently listed to verify that this is up to date.
- The arrangements for allocating patrollers to crossings, ensuring that a prioritised, risk-based approach is adopted.
- Absence reporting arrangements, ensuring that these are suitably recorded and the impact on school crossings is assessed.
- The processes for responding to short notice changes, ensuing that schools and parents are notified as soon as possible and that, where feasible, suitable alternative arrangements are put in place.

1.5 Whilst C&FM provide staff for the resourcing of SXPs, they are not responsible for determining where crossings are required. This is determined by Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS) through a process of risk assessment and public consultation and did not form part of the audit scope.

2 Audit Opinion

2.1 Based on the audit work carried out a reasonable level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment. The audit has identified some scope for improvement in the existing arrangements and four recommendations which management should address.

3 Main Findings

3.1 We are pleased to report that the key controls are in place and generally operating effectively. There are sufficient and up to date documented procedures that have been developed in line with Road Safety GB and Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA). A process has been put in place to review the procedures on an annual basis.

3.2 The procedures adequately cover the arrangements and responsibilities of the SXP role, including hours of duty, incident reporting, managing the crossing sign and site, road safety for SXP and other road users and uniforms etc. Staff are aware of the corporate procedures in relation to absence management and we confirmed that absence reporting requirements are clearly documented in the SXP procedures.

3.3 An up-to-date list of all crossings is maintained in a spreadsheet. It documents the associated school for each crossing, the crossing times, as well as the status in terms of whether each is a priority or normal crossing and the SXP responsible for each point.

3.4 NRS hold the SXP budget while C&FM are tasked with ensuring that all relevant schools are resourced. Generic risk assessments are conducted by C&FM at least every two years based on the SXP roles to incorporate any legislative or internal changes. Requests for new crossing sites are received by the team and fed back to NRS who conduct a risk assessment of the crossing point and approve sites that meet the criteria, and communicate any subsequent changes back to C&FM.

3.5 Contingency plans are in place to ensure that priority crossings are staffed during absences by moving SXP employees across various sites, while janitorial and C&FM staff also provide cover when required.

3.6 Patrollers are required to undertake induction training and are kept informed of any changes to arrangements through regular text message updates. C&FM are also in the process of drafting a revised induction training course that will be rolled out in 2024.

3.7 There is a process for alerting schools when an SXP is absent and each area manager within C&FM maintains a contact list for the schools within their remit.

3.8 However, our audit testing identified some opportunities for improvement. Although we were advised that the procedures were developed following engagement with relevant Council services including NRS and Education Services (EDU), we were unable to verify the latter's input to the process.

3.9 As part of induction training, SXPs are presented with a training manual, however the induction checklist does not include confirmation that the procedures are issued as part of the induction tasks. Furthermore, the procedures are not stored in a shared location.

3.10 We reviewed the training records for a sample of 15 staff and found that the training was not up to date. 5 of the 15 staff had recently completed training, however, 9 of the remaining 10 had not received refresher training in the past few years and in one instance we were unable to confirm that training had been undertaken. We also found that the training records were held inconsistently, with some held on SAP while other records were held locally.

3.11 Although the team's contingency plan can involve making changes to SXP locations, no log is currently maintained to record the short notice absences or the decisions taken.

3.12 Due to the verbal nature of communications (i.e. via telephone) we found that no records are held by the team to record what action they take when absences are reported by SXPs. As such, we could not verify that they are subsequently communicating timeously to Education establishments upon the SXP notifying them of an absence.

3.13 An action plan is provided at section four outlining our observations, risks and recommendations. We have made four recommendations for improvement. The priority of each recommendation is:

Priority	Definition	Total
High	Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	0
Medium	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	4
Low	Lower level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	0
Service Improvement	Opportunities for business improvement and/or efficiencies have been identified.	0

3.14 The audit has been undertaken in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

3.15 We would like to thank officers involved in this audit for their cooperation and assistance.

3.16 It is recommended that the Head of Audit and Inspection submits a further report to Committee on the implementation of the actions contained in the attached Action Plan.

4 Action Plan

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: Development and review of procedures involves key parties and storage arrangements are adequate.				
1	Although the annual process for reviewing the procedures involved C&FM engaging with key stakeholders (NRS & EDU), we observed that meetings scheduled with EDU were not attended and we could therefore not verify that the Service had offered their input or understood the approach being proposed by C&FM. Furthermore, although we were advised that procedures are provided as part of the induction process, this is not noted in the induction checklist, nor have the procedures been centrally stored. There is increased risk that staff do not follow appropriate and up to date procedures.	EDU management should ensure that all relevant staff endeavour to provide input to the procedure review process. C&FM management should ensure that that procedures issued are included as part of the induction tasks and ensure that they are made available for all relevant staff.	**Medium**	**Response:** EDU – Following the retiral of the previous postholder we will ensure that CFM are notified of the new Education contact. We will thereafter ensure that that they work in partnership with CFM. CFM – CFM will ensure that procedures are issued at the induction stage for new starts and at refresher training for existing staff. **Officer Responsible for Implementation:** EDU – Head of Resources CFM – Senior Operations Manager **Timescales for Implementation:** EDU – 30 September 2024 CFM – 30 September 2024

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: Staff are adequately trained and training is refreshed on a periodic basis.				
2	We were advised that refresher training was provided to those already in post, on an annual basis, pre Covid. However annual refresher training of SXP staff has not been provided since the Covid-19 pandemic. For a sample of 15 SXP staff, we found that: - 5 of the 15 had completed training in the last 12 months. - 9 of the 15 had completed training outwith the last 12 months. - 1 of the 15 had no record of completing the training. Training records were held in an inconsistent manner, with some training records held locally while others were recorded in SAP. Without appropriate training arrangements in place, there is an increased risk that staff do not fulfil their duties in the correct manner.	C&FM management should roll out refresher training to staff once the revised training programme has been rolled out. Management should also liaise with Customer Business Services (CBS) to ensure that training records are updated on SAP once the training has been completed.	**Medium**	**Response:** CFM will schedule refresher training for existing staff. CFM will liaise with CBS to ensure all training is recorded on employee record on SAP. **Officer Responsible for Implementation:** Senior Operations Manager **Timescales for Implementation:** 30 September 2024

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: A list of short notice school crossing changes is maintained which is subject to risk assessment and management approval.				
3	The management team is responsible for making alternative arrangements when responding to staff absences and, although decisions are made to relocate SXPs to alternative sites (where possible), no log is maintained to record such changes. Furthermore, relocation decisions are made informally by managers and are currently not supported by a risk assessment. Without an actions log, there is increased risk that decisions relating to short notice alterations cannot be justified or attributed to an accountable officer.	C&FM management should consider implementing a process, supported by a log, to record short notice changes resulting from staff absences. In doing so Management should also consider whether it is feasible to incorporate a risk assessment into the decision making process, so that actions can be justified.	**Medium**	**Response:** CFM will introduce an absence process which will include a template to ensure an action log is documented for decision making. **Officer Responsible for Implementation:** Senior Operations Manager **Timescales for Implementation:** 30 June 2024

No.	Observation and Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management Response
Key Control: Schools are notified of SXP absences in a timely manner.				
4	Per the SXP procedures, the C&FM team are required to communicate all absences to schools so that they can take appropriate action in notifying parents and guardians. However, we could not obtain assurance that C&FM are taking appropriate and timely action, when absences occur, as they keep no record of these communications as generally, they are done through a telephone call. There is therefore an increased risk that schools are not being notified in a timely manner and parents/guardians are unaware of the change of circumstances.	C&FM management should implement a process for logging the actions taken to communicate to the schools once an absence has been notified by the SXP.	**Medium**	**Response:** CFM will introduce a template for communicating to each School once absences are known. **Officer Responsible for Implementation:** Senior Operations Manager **Timescales for Implementation:** 30 June 2024