

# REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

## HEALTH AND SAFETY SUPPORT



**Report Reference** A-25-13  
**Meeting Date** 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
**Agenda Item** 6  
**Prepared by** Town Clerk

### 1.0 BACKGROUND

The 2024 Corporate Peer Challenge identified an action to enhance the council's health and safety compliance. In 2025, the council had a free 'safe check' review from Peninsula (the council's HR advisors) which identified a number of areas where improvements needed to be made including the development of a more robust health and safety policy, procedures guidance and routine documenting of compliance checks.

The Town Clerk has explored the procurement of an external health and safety support contract. There are a number of companies offering similar services, which broadly entail:

- a) Provision of a robust tailored health and safety policy and management practices
- b) Advisory service for general queries
- c) Support for developing and reviewing risk assessments, including models and specific guidance
- d) Representation in any health and safety proceedings
- e) Online training platform for staff compliance
- f) Provision of software to support compliance

Provision of £2,500 was made in the 2026/27 budget for this service.

### 2.0 OPTIONS

The Town Clerk sought proposals from six companies which provide these services and met with each to discuss the scope of their service. Feedback on the companies was also sought from other Town Councils. Each company provided a cost for a 1/3/5 year service.

Company	1 year	3 year	5 year
Croner	£3,704	£2,947	£2,578
Peninsula	£5,855	£2,724	£2,256
WorkNest	£2,650	£2,175	£1,850
Wirehouse	n/a	£1,980	£1,728
Spectre	n/a	£2,988	£2,664

The council currently contracts with Peninsula for its HR support and the service has been consistently good. Feedback from other councils highlighted that Croner is good but does not always 'understand' town councils and WorkNest is overly cautious. There was limited feedback on Wirehouse, but it was positive. Feedback on Peninsula was the most positive. There was no feedback on Spectre, which is a smaller local company with less experience working with town and parish councils (though it has some

principal authority customers).

The Wirehouse and WorkNest training platforms are the same (Wirehouse has recently been acquired by WorkNest); a more limited range of courses is included. The Croner and Peninsula training platform is the same (Croner having been acquired by Peninsula) and have a broad range of training. The council already has access to the Peninsula training platform as a HR services customer.

Wirehouse and Spectre provided a more limited proposal in terms of detail of their services. WorkNest, Croner and Peninsula provided a robust proposal.

On balance, it is considered that Peninsula offers the best service. The council already uses BrightHR and it makes sense to use its sister platform BrightSafety (single user log in, consistent UI). The feedback from other councils has been positive for Peninsula's H&S services and their HR support to date has been good. It makes some sense to use the same supplier for both services as there may be instances where it overlaps.

### **3.0 BENEFITS OF RETAINED H&S SUPPORT**

It is evident (from the corporate peer challenge, safe check review and findings of a 2025 grievance) that the council needs to improve its health and safety systems. This starts with developing a robust new health and safety policy and management systems, which will be the first work undertaken by the company and deliver immediate benefits.

There have been occasions in the past where guidance has been required on health and safety matters; in the absence of retained support this has predominantly had to be obtained through research of relevant regulations, policy or publications. It will be useful to be able to directly contact an advisor for this service which will also provide the opportunity to discuss and probe advice to enhance understanding.

Risk assessments are routinely undertaken for activity, but there are identified gaps which need to be addressed. The providers have a library of model risk assessments which can be adapted; the software will enable virtual access to risk assessments to relevant staff more easily than current systems and advisors will provide support developing/reviewing risk assessments for new and novel activity which will be particularly useful if/when the council takes on any additional services from Cheshire East Council.

The online safety platform will streamline routine tasks, enable easy hazard reporting and provide good management oversight of systems and completion of tasks. It being linked with the council's advisors will enable them to input actions following their annual review.

The company will provide an annual safety visit to review compliance and provide additional guidance. This will support ensuring there is an improved focus on health and safety and that it does not get relegated in the pursuance of the council's day-to-day activity. It will provide an annual external review of the council's health and safety performance and help prevent issues in the future.

### **4.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the committee approves entering into a contract with Peninsula to provide retained health and safety support, on either a three or five year contract.