

AUDIT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 July 2022

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 1 APRIL 2021 - 31 MARCH 2022

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Audit and Resources Committee:

1. Notes of the corporate responsibilities for the management of health and safety, familiarising themselves with the corporate health and safety resources and priorities;
 2. Supports the ongoing change and continual improvement of the safety culture of the organisation through the implementation of a Staff Safety Forum and appropriate safety training;
 3. Notes the incident data (appendix 1);
 4. Notes the Action Plan (appendix 2) for the next 12 months.
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Summary

- To update Audit and Resources Committee on the progress of the Corporate Health and Safety function for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.
- To advise Audit and Resources Committee of the current position in relation to the management of health and safety and highlight the key priorities and risks.

Statutory Powers

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

Strategic Implications

1. The focus of this report is to update Audit and Resources Committee in accordance with the Council's duty to monitor compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, other associated Legislation and Codes of Practice imposed on all employers in respect of Health and Safety at Work.

Introduction

2. During this reporting period it has been necessary to keep abreast of emerging and ongoing change resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. The Health and Safety Team have been supporting the various service areas in relation to the return to business as usual whilst also reviewing and implementing additional safety documentation.
4. A review of the current corporate safety resource has been undertaken and provision within existing budgets made for the creation of a Health and Safety Co-ordinator role to support the Health and Safety Officer.

Corporate Health and Safety Officer Role

5. The primary objectives continue to focus on:
 - The health and safety management plan and policies, including through process of audit review of service area operational safety documentation;
 - Reporting lone worker monitoring usage;
 - Supporting all areas with regards to events management;
 - Incident reporting, monitoring, and management;
 - Monitoring safety training with a view to forming a training matrix;
 - Collaboration with internal/external partners, network and provide support and guidance as appropriate.
6. The day-to-day operational responsibility for safety management remains with the Executive Team.

Health and Safety Management Information

7. Policies continue to be reviewed in line with the health and safety management plan. It is acknowledged that there are policies and documentation which need to be implemented. This work will be addressed through discussions with each of the Executive Team at regular safety meetings and safety audits.

8. Manual systems continue to be used for managing safety across the diverse range of service areas. This continues to be identified as a significant risk and consequently corporate management, monitoring, recording, and reporting across all areas is at risk of errors being made due to its inefficient and labour-intensive approach. Further consideration has been given to the development of systems in Salesforce or through joint working with other local authorities in terms of sharing use of safety software. The main risk areas are:
 - Maintenance of policies, procedures, risk assessments, safe systems of work, toolbox talks, etc;
 - Personal protective equipment (PPE);
 - Procurement of workplace equipment and maintenance thereof;
 - Training – initial, refresher and role specific training in line with risk assessment to support experience and ensure competency;
 - Incident, accident, and injury reporting including those that fall under the remit of Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) of which we historically have 8 – 9 reports per annum.
9. Responsibility for the management of these areas is devolved to managers and as such there is inconsistency. It is anticipated that with quarterly meetings with Executive Heads, additional training and the implementation of a health and safety Forum the documentation will be enhanced in quality and appropriate control measures put in place.
10. Equipment procurement and routine maintenance regimes are lacking in some areas together with staff skills and training unmatched to risk assessments. Once again training will support improved skills and consideration to further governance or centralisation of procurement and maintenance can be considered at an outcome of Executive area meetings and safety audits.
11. Corporate incident management is completed by the Corporate Health and Safety Officer. Incident reporting has generally improved, however, Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) incidents are invariably reported to the Health and Safety Executive beyond the recognised timeline. Late reporting is often due to failure to follow through the reason for absence with staff whilst off work by some managers. This failure is currently being addressed with respective Executive Heads with the intention of improved reporting going forward.
12. Organisations have a legal duty to put in place suitable arrangements to manage health and safety. Incident management is undertaken using numerous spreadsheets and emails which is time consuming and resource intensive. Consideration continues to be given to use of suitable safety software.

13. The current methods for recording are not integrated and with the limited corporate resource available to oversee safety this results in potential risks across all identified areas.
14. There continues to be no central storage of safety documentation (risk assessment (RA), safe systems of work (SSOW), etc). Each service area holds and maintains their own documents, these documents are not shared. The sharing of documentation, knowledge and experience through an appropriate means would improve the safety culture and reduce the workload across service areas. A safety Forum is currently being set up to address this shortfall.
15. There are inconsistencies with data management and improvements have been identified with consideration being given to the use of Staff Hub and Sharepoint as a means of improving the accessibility to safety documentation.

Health and Safety Culture/Training

15. Management of safety and a positive safety culture is key to identifying risks and reducing incidents. Health and safety training will be enhanced and embedded within the culture and as such the following training has been identified to meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This training is to be funded through the corporate training budget and will be delivered during 2022/23:
 - Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH) Safety for Executives and Directors – for all Directors, Executive Heads and LAMs to attend (3 yearly refresher)
 - IOSH Managing Safely – for all operational managers (3 yearly refresher)
 - IOSH Working Safely – for all operational team leaders (3 yearly refresher)
 - IOSH Fire Safety for Managers – for all managers who are responsible for buildings (3 yearly refresher)
 - Fire Marshall Training – for all staff responsible and who have direct involvement for effective evacuation of a building/site (annual refresher required in line with the Fire Reform Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021)

Corporate Health and Safety Priorities for next 2 years 2022 - 2024

16. The priorities for the next two years are:
 - (a) Continue to improve a culture of safety awareness and compliance through leadership;

- (b) Further review safety documentation whilst enhancing knowledge and training;
- (c) Review and improve planning for events management;
- (d) Continue to review all safety documentation through safety audits;
- (e) Engagement with all service areas to ensure timely incident reporting, investigation, and monitoring;.
- (f) Resolving the management of data storage.

Covid-19 Pandemic

- 17. 2020 and 2021 saw significant focus attributed to supporting all service areas of the Council during the pandemic. Work in this area is now limited to ensuring the learning is evident through safety documentation whilst also implementation and continuing to review hybrid working and the relationship with homeworking, office working in accordance with Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992.

Events Policy

- 18. The Events Policy was reviewed in 2019, at which time events management, excluding Safety Advisory Group (SAG) events was transferred from the Safety and Resilience Manager to Facilities Management.
- 19. During 2020/21, several events were held, many of which did not meet our application timeline criteria and therefore put significant pressure on corporate health and safety to ensure event management plans were safe to operate.
- 20. Due to the impact of resourcing the events process a further review took place in January 2022, with recommendations made to Corporate Leadership Board which include a dedicated and increased administrative resource requirement for the event application process and changes to the web-based application.
- 21. The application and approval process needs to be enhanced with daily monitoring and liaison with various service areas and event organisers. Additional resource in this area together with Councillors and staff committed to a robust timeline for event application and approval process will ensure suitable time is available for the application safety review and approval to be completed.
- 22. It is also recognised that event management has a significant impact on various service areas in addition to health and safety. Approaches have been made to other local authorities, and it is apparent that those approached have set fees to ensure staff time is recoverable for the purpose of reviewing event management documentation, providing support, guidance, and inspection where appropriate. Further understanding of the structure of fee setting is being explored to further consider the implementation of fees.

Lone Working Monitoring

23. The provider of the Lone Working Monitoring application has recently updated its systems and because of this change, data is not available for the period prior to March 2022.
24. There are currently 41 staff and Councillors who are registered users of the system. Of the 41 users the actual use during March and April 2022 is:
 - March 2022 – 11 active users (23.83%)
 - April 2022 – 10 active users (25%)
25. Regular users of the system are the Local Response and Environment teams.
26. The monitoring system currently costs £3,500 per annum for 41 users. It is intended that through the monthly monitoring with service area leads, users may be identified as no longer requiring formal monitoring and can be removed from the system for less formal buddy arrangements to be put in place. The review may also identify new areas where monitoring is currently not in place but may be necessary.

Statutory Compliance – Operational/Commercial Property Portfolio

27. Facilities Management is responsible for 17 operational/commercial properties and 5 void properties. Across the portfolio statutory compliance by way of planned preventative maintenance operates within the parameters of the appropriate legislation or guidance models.

Management of Council Land

28. Land management is the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Services Executive Area, who following a further review has advised that the current land management strategy identifies and mitigates any known risks on council land. This is an area which can be further developed for reporting purposes following the implementation of quarterly Executive Head meetings.

Fire Safety Management

29. The Facilities Manager is the responsible officer for fire safety management across the operational/commercial portfolio. It has been identified that a fire safety policy is necessary and that fire safety competence across buildings/sites needs to be improved. It is intended that a fire safety policy will be draft for consultation during August 2022 with additional fire safety training scheduled to commence in autumn 2022.
30. Additional fire safety training is planned for 2022 for those staff who have responsibilities which fall within site evacuation plans. This formal training is necessary to achieve compliance with legislation and enhance knowledge and competence in each location. This training will also improve understanding of

fire safety risks and the management of safe evacuation by ensuring suitable and sufficient staff are available at all sites at all appropriate times.

Incident Statistics 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022

31. During the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, a total of 181 incidents have been reported. Incident levels are unchanged when compared to the previous annual reporting period.
32. Appendix 1 provides more information, broken down into the areas below:
 - Total incidents per team for this time
 - Broken down by month
 - Count of incident type by team
 - Count of injury type by team
33. The responsibility to investigate and satisfactorily close out incidents rests with the reporting manager. There continues to be areas where there is a lack of investigation of incidents, no 'learning from experience' and no 'continual improvement'. This is currently being addressed through discussions with the respective Executive Heads and further guidance will be addressed through additional training at the health and safety Forum.
34. As mentioned, paragraph 11, the lateness of reporting and the non-closure of reports impacts the Council's ability to report in a timely manner to the regulator, HSE and impacts on the accuracy of data provided to this and other committees.
36. The health and safety management plan aspiration to measure incidents, lost time, and insurance claims, therefore, reporting the true cost in both human, compliance and financial terms. Collaborative working with other service areas continues to work towards this.

Financial Implications

37. The corporate training budget will fund the identified health, safety, and fire safety training, estimated at a cost of £15,000 and detailed at paragraph 15 during 2022/23.
38. A safety software system would improve our ability to comprehensively manage safety across all service areas. The Corporate Health and Safety Officer will continue to monitor through spreadsheets pending suitable alternative(s).

Risk Assessment

39. The risk assessment across the safety function remains a high risk given the lack of a robust health and safety management plan. Corporate Health and

Safety will review safety in each Executive Area commencing with quarterly meetings and safety audits. Service areas will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their compliance and governance to safety with any improvement areas being appropriately identified. Following these reviews, it is expected that the overall risk rating will reduce to medium risk.

Equality and Diversity Implications

40. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report because:
- It is a report dealing with internal or procedural matters only.

Therefore, it is considered that for this decision the Equality Duty does not need to be addressed and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been carried out.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

41. There are no direct climate change or environmental impacts arising from this report, however, whilst working with service areas reviewing methods and products attention will be given to the environmental implications and whether suitable alternatives can be adopted.

Conclusion

42. A culture of 'safety first' is the approach which such a diverse organisation as a Council must have in place. Adherence to a robust safety management plan 'Plan, Do, Check Act' Health and Safety Executive guidance (HSG65) at strategic and devolved levels throughout the Council will ensure that a 'safety first' culture is embraced. Appendix 2 Action Plan sets out the plan for the next 12 months and remains in alignment with the Corporate Health and Safety priorities for the next 2 years, paragraph 16.

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FACILITIES MANAGER

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Appendices Attached: Appendix 1 – Incident Data 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022
Appendix 2 – Action Plan

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.