

**18 October 2022**

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Corporate and Improvement Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Hayley McGrath</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Health and Safety Report 2022</b>		<b>☎ 506579</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	N/A		

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides members with an overview of the Council's Health and Safety activity during the year from 01 October 2021 to 30 September 2022.
- 1.2 The Health and Safety policy and processes are reviewed annually to ensure that they are still appropriate to the Council's needs and continue to be effective in managing the health and safety of staff and members of the public.
- 1.3 The Coronavirus pandemic continued to be a Health & Safety priority, especially for the initial part of the year but it was possible to undertake more project work this year including Fire Risk Assessments and Water Safety audits.
- 1.4 Whilst there has been an increase in the number of incidents being reported, no serious incidents occurred during the year.

## **2. Recommended Decisions**

- 2.1 Review the Health and Safety work undertaken between October 2021 and September 2022.
- 2.2 Approve the Health and Safety Policy for 2022/23.

## **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

- 3.1 The Leader of the Council has the ultimate responsibility for the management and monitoring of health and safety provision across all the Council's undertakings. Cabinet are jointly and severally the primary duty holders for health and safety across the Council's undertakings.
- 3.2 The Health and Safety Policy is an integral part of the risk management process, which forms part of the policy framework. As such it is appropriate to provide an annual report on Health and Safety to the Governance and Audit Committee, to assist with the Committee's responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management.

## **4. Background Information**

- 4.1 Colchester Borough Council has general duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and specific duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to ensure that employees, and others who may be affected, can work safely without risk to their safety or health.

- 4.2 Overall responsibility for Health and Safety rests with Cabinet but is overseen by the Chief Operating Officer and managed by the Corporate Health and Safety Officer and Designated Officers within services, who form the Health and Safety Committee.

## **5. Summary of Work Undertaken – October 2021 to September 2022.**

- 5.1 The Coronavirus pandemic continued to impact Health and Safety priorities, especially at the beginning of the year, and Covid-19 focused health and safety support and guidance to the Council included:
- Providing updates on key changes and requirements from latest guidance to services, managers, and staff and to ensure offices and customer sites remained Covid-secure
  - Reviewing CBC H&S arrangements to ensure suitable for the new and continued ways of alternative working across the Council
  - Ensuring adequate supply and resupply of personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitiser to services/teams and CBC corporate sites
- 5.2 There is a rolling programme of Fire Risk Assessments for all corporate buildings (primarily used as CBC staff workplaces) which are undertaken by an external Fire Safety Consultant. Seven properties were inspected during the period, the reports and any recommendations are collated into an action plan for site managers, which is overseen by the Corporate Health & Safety Officer. No significant issues have been identified, with recommendations primarily relating to record keeping, training and fire drills. All have been accepted and are being implemented.
- 5.3 The Rowan House refurbishment includes fire safety improvements including new alarm detectors/sounders and emergency lighting.
- 5.4 Additional short course training for staff was organised, including a recognised qualification for the Executive Management Team, to support their role as health and safety ambassadors, and Health and Safety training for managers, to provide them with the knowledge and practical actions they need to comply with their H&S responsibilities.
- 5.5 A central objective of the UK Drowning Prevention Strategy, which aims to reduce accidental drowning fatalities in the UK by 50 per cent by 2026, is to ensure that areas of open water are risk assessed to identify safety provisions needed. A water safety consultant has reviewed over thirty water ways and open water areas for which the council has responsibility. This ranges from the boating lake in Castle Park through to the coastline at West Mersea. Fifty-nine recommendations have been made, the majority relate to improving signs and providing on-line information. None of the recommendations required emergency actions.
- 5.6 The Corporate Health and Safety Officer and Corporate Governance Manager conducted an unannounced visit to the Shrub End depot to test the response of the Waste & Recycling team to a hypothetical incident involving a waste collection vehicle and a pedestrian. The exercise highlighted some improvements required to the review of driver paperwork by team leaders and accessibility of records, such as evidencing training provided.
- 5.7 The health and safety committee meetings continued every quarter, virtually using Teams. The agendas included updates on corporate items such as findings from incident reports/investigations, training and guidance updates. Specific areas of concern were also reviewed including covid safety measures and mental health support for staff.

- 5.8 Two lone working monitoring solutions – a GPS connected device or smartphone app – continue to be offered to staff. They link to a monitoring centre staffed by the supplier, who can provide assistance as necessary. These products are reactive and therefore an addition to proactive safety measures already in place such as training, following best safety practices and working in pairs. The smartphone app continues to be popular with 32 users (compared to 26 lone worker devices). Having availability to choose between the app and device from the supplier, allows teams to choose the best option for them.
- 5.9 880 health & safety incidents and near misses, involving both staff and members of the public, were reported across the Council during the period, compared to 490 last year.
- 5.10 The majority of these have come from the leisure centres, and include all reports of members of the public sustaining an injury playing sport, such as twisted ankles. The service with the second highest level of reports was Neighbourhoods, primarily due to the physical nature of the work that is undertaken. The Corporate Health & Safety Officer has been working closely with the Neighbourhoods teams to monitor Health & Safety issues, identifying trends and training needs, to improve resilience and ensure healthy working environments.
- 5.11 There were no serious incidents reported this year. Serious incidents are notifiable to the Health and Safety Executive and are often referred to as “RIDDOR incidents”. Last year (20/21) there was 1 RIDDOR incident (staff fractured wrist on moving bin lift), and previously 2, 4 and 6 in 2019/20, 2018/19 and 2017/18 respectively.
- 5.12 Near miss reporting continues to be encouraged and promoted, and actively reported by staff and managers, helping resolve any concerns or issues before they become a potential incident and/or injury. The increase in the number of near misses being reported has contributed to the overall increase in reported incidents.

## **6. Health & Safety Policy 2022/23**

- 6.1 The Health and Safety policy sets out the Council’s commitment to managing health and safety risks, organisation structure and the individual responsibilities, at all levels of the organisation.
- 6.2 The policy (appendix A) is supported by a set of arrangements that detail what the Council will do in practice to achieve the aims set out in the health and safety policy and successfully manage health and safety. Services supplement these arrangements with their own additional health and safety procedures where necessary for example due to the specific or higher risks involved in their work.
- 6.3 The policy is still considered suitable and sufficient and has been updated to include the new Leader and Chief Executive on the H&S statement and to reflect the latest organisation structure.

## **7. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 7.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) [link](#)

## **8. Strategic Plan References**

- 8.1 The failure to adequately identify and manage health and safety issues will affect the ability of the Council to achieve its strategic objectives.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 Details of consultation is included in Document Information section of the policy.

## **10. Health and Safety Implications**

- 10.1 The failure to adequately identify and manage health and safety issues may have an impact on the ability of the Council to deliver effective services.

## **11. Risk Management Implications**

- 11.1 The failure to adequately identify and manage health and safety issues may have an impact on the ability of the Council to deliver effective services.

## **12. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 12.1 There are no environmental or sustainability implications as a result of this report.

## **13. Standard References**

- 13.1 There are no particular references to publicity considerations or financial, wellbeing and community safety implications.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Health and Safety Policy 2022/23