

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Policy and Corporate</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Carl Free</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Health and Safety Report 2019/20</b>		<b>☎ 506579</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	N/A		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note the 2018/19 annual report and the Health and Safety Policy for 2019/20.

## 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.
- 3.3 Therefore, this report was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee on 29 October 2019 and the Committee recommended that the report was also submitted to Cabinet, to fulfil the Leader of the Council's and Portfolio Holders responsibilities for Health & Safety.

## 4. Background Information

- 4.1 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. The only changes to the policy in 2019 are minor (moving responsibilities from Strategic Director to Chief Operating Officer now responsible for health and safety and removing Commercial department (now CCHL/Amphora) from the Organisation Structure).

- 4.2 The policy 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.

## 5. **Summary of Policy outcomes during 2019**

- 5.1 Audits of services and arrangements have been continued by the Corporate Health & Safety Officer during 2018/19. At the time of writing, audits and reviews are in progress for Ill Health (focusing on Musculoskeletal Disorders and Stress), Driving at Work and Security (to prevent work-related violence towards staff). As these are broad and complex subjects, longer term action plans have been produced, however if serious risk or breaches are identified these are actioned without delay, and where possible 'easy win' immediate actions.
- 5.2 The Skyguard MySOS personal monitoring device remains in place as the corporate approach to supporting lone workers, with 50 devices and approximately 90 CBC lone workers. Skyguard devices are received well by lone workers and a review will be completed in 2020 to ensure the system remains suitable and is being used appropriately, and lone worker requirements are met in all services.
- 5.3 The internal audit of health and safety at Colchester Borough Council provided an opinion of "Substantial Assurance" in 2018 and is on a biennial cycle so therefore is to next be completed in 2020.
- 5.4 Fire Risk Assessments for all corporate buildings (primarily used as CBC staff workplaces) were re-inspected in 2019 and no findings or recommendations were identified at a high-risk rating.
- 5.5 Near miss reporting continues to be encouraged as this helps management resolve concerns or issues before they become a potential incident and/or injury. The near miss report card has been successful for obtaining reports at Shrub End.
- 5.6 Corporate Health and Safety training continues to be well attended with approximately 240 staff trained this year so far and the courses delivered include:
- IOSH Managing Safely
  - Managing Safely
  - Manual Handling
  - Conflict Management
  - Emergency First Aid at Work
  - Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders Training
  - Health and Safety Induction
- 5.7 At least 6 days' worth of Practical Manual Handling training has been organised for the Neighbourhood Services Waste & Recycling collection teams as this was identified as a need for refresher training as part of the ill health review and higher manual handling risks involved in bag collection instead of wheeled bins. Train the trainer will also be arranged to ensure new staff can be trained without delay and regular refreshers and toolbox talks delivered.
- 5.8 There has been a positive downward trend in incidents involving serious injuries to staff or members of public taken to hospital for treatment, which are notifiable to the Health and Safety Executive often referred as "RIDDOR reports". These have reduced so far this year to 2, from 4 in 2018 and 7 in 2017.

- 5.9 CBC recognises the importance of creating a healthy and positive work environment. The Wellbeing Strategy has recently been refreshed with the overall theme “*Thriving at Work*”. Underpinning this are 3 high level priorities; Healthy Mind - Healthy Body - Healthy Workplace
- 5.10 People & Performance and Corporate Health and Safety, with the Live Well / Work Well (Wellbeing) Group, are working together on Stress Management and Mental Health, anticipated to be included as priorities in the corporate vision and wellbeing strategy and delivering mental health awareness training for staff. A stress indicator survey will also be sent to all staff to help us identify the sources of work-related stress within the organisation, so resources can be focused to help eliminate or reduce the main factors of stress, reduce sickness absence and improve staff wellbeing.
- 5.11 Other recent staff and wellbeing initiatives have been rolled out including:
- Roll out of a programme of Resilience and Positive Psychology workshops to support managers and staff through change
  - Trained 22 Mental Health First Aiders to be the first point of contact for staff experiencing mental health issues or emotional distress
  - Promoted Stress Lite workshops
  - Mental Health Awareness Training for managers delivered by Rethink via VineHR
  - Extended our network of service Wellbeing Champions
  - Promotion of wellbeing initiatives and healthy activities across CBC
  - Promotion of the Employee Assistance Programme
  - Health checks for staff provided by ACE
  - Have trained two in-house Smoking Cessation officers
  - Introduced a Crisis Support Policy
- 5.12 The £50k allocated for staff health and wellbeing will support and fund some new health and wellbeing initiatives. Staff have been consulted on where the funding should be allocated via a staff questionnaire. £10k out of the £50k has been ring fenced to Neighbourhood services where sickness absence is higher than other services because of the physical nature of the work.
- 5.13 Spending proposals are yet to be signed off by Senior Management Team. The areas under consideration are:
- Purchasing new office chairs to address musculoskeletal issues
  - Providing outside space for staff across our office accommodation estate to enable staff to take a break away from their work for quiet contemplation and fresh air.
  - To provide air conditioning in staff areas in Colchester Castle and Leisure World where it is particularly hot and humid.
  - Water filters in every office so staff can hydrate themselves through the day and reducing the use of plastic disposable bottles.

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

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

## **7. Standard References**

- 7.1 There are no particular references to publicity considerations or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

## **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. Publicity Considerations**

- 10.1 None

## **11. Financial implications**

- 11.1 None

## **12. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 12.1 Add comments regarding the £50k for staff wellbeing

## **13. Health and Safety Implications**

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

## **14. Risk Management Implications**

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

## **15. Appendices**

- 15.1 Appendix A: Health and Safety Policy 2019-20
- 15.2 Appendix B: Health and Safety Arrangements