



Governance and Audit Committee

Item

8

17 October 2023

Report of	Corporate Governance Manager	Author	Hayley McGrath ☎ 508605
Title	Health and Safety Report 2023		
Wards affected	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 2022 to 30 September 2023.
- 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 main focus for this year has been on returning to a normal working environment following the Covid pandemic and ensuring that regular reviews and audits are now back on schedule. Following the resignation of the previous post holder the Council appointed an interim Health and Safety Manager, until the post could be permanently filled. The Interim Health and Safety Manager was an experienced Health and Safety expert and has created a bespoke management system, that is a comprehensive tool for managers to provide them with assistance in managing Health and Safety risks.
- 1.4 A permanent experienced Corporate Health and Safety Manager joined the Council in May this year. Since joining they have ensured that they have visited all service areas and have provided a high level of support to Managers to deal with issues such as the Moot Hall ceiling and reviews of working practices.
- 1.5 Whilst there has been an increase in the number of incidents being reported, serious incidents are low.

2. Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 Review the Health and Safety work undertaken between October 2022 and September 2023.
- 2.2 Approve the Health and Safety Policy for 2023/24.

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 City 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 Manager and Designated Officers within services, who form the Health and Safety Committee.

5. Summary of Work Undertaken – October 2022 to September 2023.

- 5.1 A focus for this year has been on implementing the new Health and Safety management system, starting with the high-risk sites such as Leisure World and Neighbourhoods Services. The management system is a comprehensive tool to not only store site records but allows access to toolbox talks and Health and Safety templates. There is also a self-audit that can be completed by managers to ensure that the health and safety risks of their service are appropriately managed, this can be updated monthly. This system will continue to be rolled out across the City Council during 2023/24
- 5.2 There is a rolling programme of Fire Risk Assessments for all corporate buildings (primarily used as City Council staff workplaces) which are undertaken by an external Fire Safety Consultant. Work has been undertaken during the year to identify other sites and functions to review including the Secret Chapel at the Castle and Charter Hall. 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 was completed in June 2023 and a phased approach was organised for the return of staff. Fire marshal and First Aid training was given to the nominated staff to carry out these roles. A practice of a full evacuation of Rowan House was also completed in August. A new Fire risk assessment and Fire Strategy was completed, and actions addressed. We have one PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan) at Rowan House on the City Council floor.
- 5.4 A new Ofqual Fire Marshal training course was introduced in 2023 and 2 courses were delivered. Several e-learning courses have been created and are due to go live later in 2023, e.g., Manual Handling, Display Screen Equipment Assessment, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, Lone Working, Personal Safety, Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, Fire Safety, Working at Height, Driving Safety and Introduction to First Aid.
- 5.5 A new Power App system has been developed for reporting Health and Safety incidents and near misses, this is being trialled by Leisure World and will be rolled out to the rest of the City Council during 2023/24. The new system will allow for better monitoring of trends and identification of where the accident hot spots are.
- 5.6 The Corporate Health and Safety Manager continues to support all services and visit sites on a regular Basis and completed spot checks of various services.
- 5.7 The Corporate Health and Safety Manager continues to work with a supplier who provides specialised chairs and desk for those staff that have medical issues. The feedback has been very positive and ensures we are looking after staff on site and for those working from home.

5.8 During the period 1020 health and safety incidents including near misses were reported across the Council compared to 880 last year. 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 Neighbourhood Services, primarily due to the physical nature of the work that is undertaken. The Corporate Health and Safety Manager has been working closely with the Neighbourhoods teams to monitor Health and Safety issues, identifying trends and training needs, to improve resilience and ensure healthy working environments. The table below provides a breakdown of the figures:

Service/Department	2022-2023	2021-2022
Leisure World Colchester	556	554
Sports park and Dual use facilities	150	95
Neighbourhood Services	130	119
Others	184	112
Total	1020	880

5.9 There were 2 serious incidents reported this year. Serious incidents are notifiable to the Health and Safety Executive and are often referred to as “RIDDOR incidents”. The 2 RIDDOR incidents were reported to the Health and Safety Executive. A staff member was struck by a moving vehicle which resulted in a bone fracture to the foot. The Health and Safety Executive took no further action. The second incident was a spinal injury to a customer in the Leisure Pool at Leisure World, which was a result of a pre-existing condition. The Health and Safety Executive took no further action.

6. Health & Safety Policy 2023/24

6.1 The Health and Safety policy sets out the City 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 at Appendix A is supported by a set of arrangements that detail what the City 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 fit or purpose and has been updated 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 2023/24