

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	9 March 2023
Subject:	Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The report provides Cabinet with assurance on the progress made to implement the Council's Health and Safety policy during 2021/22.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet to note the progress on implementing the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy during 2021/22.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The annual report provides assurance to the Cabinet, which has strategic responsibility for employee health and safety, that there is continued progress to implement and enhance an effective health and safety system across the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs - There are no revenue costs arising from this report outside the existing approved budget.

(B) Capital Costs- There are no capital costs arising from the report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

There are no resource implications associated with the report.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications associated with the report.

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y

The report has a neutral impact as it provides a summary of health and safety activity across the Council that has already taken place. There have been no incidents that have been reported that could have detrimentally affected the climate.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Positive
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Positive
Commission, broker and provide core services: Positive
Place – leadership and influencer: Positive
Drivers of change and reform: Positive
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Positive
Greater income for social investment: Positive
Cleaner Greener; Positive

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7110/23.) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5310/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

None

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Annual Health and Safety report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council in accordance with its responsibilities to manage health and safety, approved a Council-wide Corporate Health and Safety Policy in April 2019. The policy sets out the Council's approach to health and safety, the responsibilities for key staff for managing the system and the arrangements within the Council for monitoring health and safety.
- 1.2 A key objective from the Policy is to clarify and strengthen governance arrangements for health and safety across the Council.
- 1.3 The Policy outlines that the Cabinet has strategic responsibility for employee related health and safety in the Council and that the Audit and Governance committee's responsibilities are to consider the Council's arrangements for health and safety, receive regular assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 1.4 The Policy also states that the Corporate Health and Safety Team is responsible for providing an annual report on Health and Safety to Cabinet on behalf of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services. This report is designed to meet this requirement.
- 1.5 Currently the Audit and Governance Committee receives an update on health and safety performance on a quarterly basis which includes the following information:
 - Progress on health and safety actions due to be undertaken during the quarter.
 - Updates on health and safety performance including accidents and incidents.
 - Any emerging legal or health safety related issues.
 - Proposed activity in the next quarter.

2. Annual Report

- 2.1 The Annual Report for Health and Safety is designed to provide assurance to Cabinet of the continued progress to implement health and safety effectively across the Council. The progress update will assist Cabinet meet its strategic responsibility for employee health and safety.
- 2.2 Providing an annual report to Cabinet on health and safety will assist in the achievement of the health and safety objective, including in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, of improving governance.
- 2.3 The Annual Health and Safety Report is attached at Appendix 1 and includes updates on:
- Covid-19
 - The organisational arrangements for Health and Safety
 - Consultation and communication
 - Liaison during the year with regulatory authorities
 - Details of the reported accidents and incidents during the financial year
 - Training
 - Risk Assessments
 - Sefton Schools
 - Objectives, KPIs and Priorities for 2021/2022
 - Priorities and challenges 2022/23
- 2.4 The key highlights from the report include:
- 2.5 The Council continues to focus on improving the health and safety management system and support by reviewing existing arrangements and improving governance.
- 2.6 The Corporate Health and Safety Team consisted of two health and safety advisers, with an additional temporary adviser on a six-month fixed term contract joining late August 2021. The team support nearly 8000 staff across schools and service areas, plus agency workers, contractors, and volunteers. Additional support is provided to commercial clients from educational settings.
- 2.7 The team deliver a range of services across all Council and school premises, land, and activities. These services can be divided into three main areas: policy and communication, operational reactive response, and active monitoring.
- 2.8 Information, guidance, and support regarding the risk of the transmission of COVID-19 and impacts on staff has been significant, as services adjust to varying national restrictions.
- 2.9 Consultation arrangements are working well, with the Corporate Health and Safety Committee playing a key role in conjunction with the Departmental Health and Safety Committees.
- 2.10 The health and safety position within Sefton Council has demonstrated encouraging progress during the financial year. The Council's accident reporting

culture is improving and showing signs of increased proportionate investigation and implementation of suitable controls. The on-line incident reporting system continues to be well utilised.

- 2.11 The Schools Service Level Agreement has been reviewed as well as the inspection and audit processes revitalised. Desktop audits remained in place due to uncertainty of Covid-19 rates, however, there has been an increase in site visits and inspections.
- 2.12 Health and safety objectives and key performance indicators are continually reviewed. Progress against the objectives has been impacted by the requirement to respond to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. This will be managed by the continual review and reshaping of the service delivery to assist the Council to meet its obligations and to provide managers and staff with the relevant support.
- 2.13 Progress has been made on providing risk assessment training to all managers who have responsibility for completing risk assessments.
- 2.14 The Corporate Health and Safety team are continuing to develop the training needs analysis. This will assist managers in the identification and status of statutory and mandatory training requirements.
- 2.15 The growth of the Corporate Health and Safety Team will increase the advice, guidance, monitoring, and support available for managers and staff across the Council, improving the appropriateness and effectiveness of the health and safety management system.
- 2.16 The impact of Covid-19 on the work of the Health and Safety Team was significant at the outset of the year and has steadily declined during the current year.

3. Progress Since April 2022 on Health and Safety

- 3.1 The focus for 2022/2023 has been on:
 - Supporting service areas to commit to the objectives and develop and improvement plan to highlight progress, lessons learnt and health, safety, and wellbeing achievements.
 - A programme of training and campaigns to support leadership and management, and influence safety culture change.
 - The review and updating of the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy and testing of the emergency arrangements across Council settings.
- 3.2 Resource continues to be a challenge to ensure that there is appropriate and effective support across the Council, Sefton schools (where the Council are the employer) and for schools who have paid for the Council to act as the 'competent person under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. A Single Point of Contact i.e., Health, Safety and Wellbeing Coordinator is being appointed across each service area. They are not advisers who are competent but will assist with communication and support.
- 3.3 Standards, template forms and table-top talks are being created and uploaded to the intranet to ensure there is a robust consistent management system available

for implementation by Directors and Service Managers, with ongoing support from the Corporate Health and Safety team.

- 3.4 Progress on the completion and review of risk assessments has continued throughout the year, for both general workplace hazards and the transmission of COVID-19. The team are working with Assistant Directors and Service Managers to develop a culture of hazard identification at the earliest opportunity rather than following any change, implementation of planned, suitable internal risk control measures with supporting procedures, consultation, management and staff and training, and effective monitoring of workplaces, activities, and behaviours.
- 3.5 Training forms a key element for rolling out requirements, influencing behaviours and maintaining management and staff competencies. Work continues on the completion of the training needs analysis to highlight the legal i.e., statutory as well as mandatory training requirements. This includes induction and subjects relating to workplace hazards. The Corporate Health and Safety Team are working with the Workforce Learning and Development Team to review existing health and safety training provision, identify gaps and propose or provide solutions.
- 3.6 Service areas and Sefton Schools are actively supported to report, undertake proportionate investigations, close out agreed actions and monitor incidents. It is recognised that incident data currently includes pupils and members of the public which can influence the outcome of the analysis. The current reporting systems are under review to provide greater clarity between staff, pupils and members of the public in the statistics that are produced to aid more effective analysis.
- 3.7 Types of incidents such as near misses and hazardous events, and effects including poor mental health, muscular skeletal disorders, and injury from acts of violence are increasingly included in reports. Audits ensuring workstation equipment and security arrangements are planned and recommendations will be shared via the Health and Safety Committees and Departmental Management Team Meetings.