

Annual Health and Safety Report 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

Contents

- 1 Introduction2
- 2 Executive Summary2
- 3 Organising for Health and Safety3
- 4 Consultation and Communication3
- 5 Liaison with Regulatory Bodies.....4
- 6 Accidents and Incidents4
- 7 Training.....7
- 8 Risk Assessment.....8
- 9 Sefton Schools8
- 10 Objectives, KPIs and Priorities 2020/219

1 Introduction

- 1.1 For legal and moral purposes, Sefton Council is required to actively manage and monitor health and safety. The primary legal constraints arise out of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. This report provides an overview of the Council's health and safety performance from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Attention is drawn to key issues that have arisen during this period and highlights ongoing priorities to be addressed.
- 1.2 The priorities for the forthcoming year 2019/2020 include:
- embedding risk assessment across Council departments
 - clarifying and strengthening governance arrangements for services and schools
 - improving health and safety risk management by targeting effective training.
- 1.3 Throughout the report the term 'Health and Safety' is used and should be read within the context of occupational health and safety issues for which Sefton Council (the Council) has responsibility under both statute and common law.
- 1.4 The Council's Health and Safety Policy was revised during the 2018/2019 financial year and was presented to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee and Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) for consultation before being approved by Cabinet in April 2019.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council continues to focus on improving the health and safety management system and support by reviewing existing arrangements and improving governance.
- 2.2 The Health and Safety team consists of two health and safety professionals supporting 7379 staff (including 4045 school staff), plus agency staff, contractors and volunteers. During the 19/20 financial year one key member of staff retired and a temporary resource was employed to provide support whilst a re-structure was completed. A recruitment exercise to employ a Health and Safety Co-ordinator was completed following the end of the financial year.
- 2.3 The team deliver a range of services across all Council departments including schools. These services can be divided into three main areas: Policy and communication, operational reactive response, and active monitoring.
- 2.4 Information, guidance and support regarding the risk of the transmission of COVID-19 and impacts on staff has been significant, as services ceased or were re-designed, buildings closed and as schools prepared to remain open for keyworker and at-risk children.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The health and safety position within Sefton Council demonstrated encouraging progress. 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.
- 2.7 The schools service level agreement has been reviewed and the inspection process revitalised. Several inspections were undertaken, and reports issued until 20 March 20, when onsite service delivery ceased due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 2.8 Health and safety objectives and key performance indicators are continually reviewed. It is acknowledged that outputs will be affected by the 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.
- 2.9 Progress has been made on providing risk assessment training to all managers who have responsibility for completing risk assessments and on the school's inspection programme.
- 2.10 The growth of the 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.

3 Organising for Health and Safety

- 3.1 The Council has a Health and Safety Team within Corporate Resources who provide health and safety advice to Members, officers, school governors, headteachers, partner organisations and contractors.
- 3.2 Following the retirement of one of the two Health and Safety Advisers, a temporary Health and Safety Adviser was recruited in July 2019 to provide support on developing a revised risk assessment approach for a six-month period whilst a re-structure of the team was undertaken. The temporary Health and Safety Adviser left Sefton in January 2020.
- 3.3 A new post of Health and Safety Coordinator was created in the re-structure with line management responsibilities for the Health and Safety Adviser. A recruitment exercise was completed following the end of the financial year with a candidate being appointed in May 2020.
- 3.4 The Health and Safety Team liaise with other services and teams within the Council regarding Occupational Health, Insurance, Emergency Planning, Human Resources and Public Health. The Team has potential additional assistance from Health and Safety Coordinators within departments. The additional assistance has enabled the Health and Safety Team to assess how risk assessments are embedded throughout the Council.

4 Consultation and Communication

- 4.1 Employers have a duty to consult with their employees and representatives on health and safety matters. The process for consultation with Trade Unions and staff in Sefton is direct and through the Health and Safety Committee structure, as outlined in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.
- 4.2 Guidance was issued in May 2019 on the consultation structure within Sefton, with an overarching Corporate Health and Safety Committee which should meet quarterly and is chaired by the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services. Sub-Committees meeting at least bi-annually. The table below shows the Health and Safety Committee and its sub-committee meetings held during the 2019/2020 financial year.

Corporate Health and Safety Committee	Sub-committees:				
	Corporate Resources / Strategic Support / Public Health	Adults / Children Social Care	Locality Services / Highway / Public Protection	Economic Growth / Housing	Communities
10.5.19	25.06.19	10.04.19	16.04.19	09.01.20	Meeting held last Friday of every month
26.9.19		02.10.19			

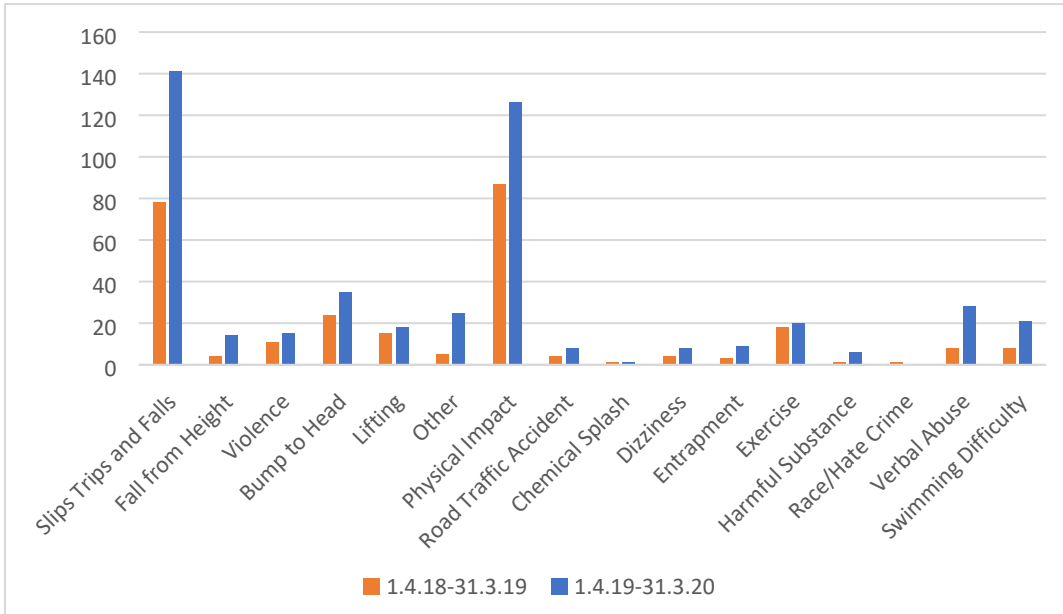
- 4.3 The Economic Growth and Housing Departmental Committee had its first meeting in January 2020. Further dates have been agreed.
- 4.4 A standard core agenda in May 2019 for the various health and safety sub-committees was devised and issued to Heads of Service. The standard core agenda ensures that there is a consistent health and safety approach across the Council to address common issues and drive up performance on health and safety issues.
- 4.5 Planned committee meetings were cancelled or rescheduled for later in 2020 for February and March 2020 due to the increase in transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19), which led to increased working from home, suspension of many work activities and a nationwide lockdown.

5 Liaison with Regulatory Bodies

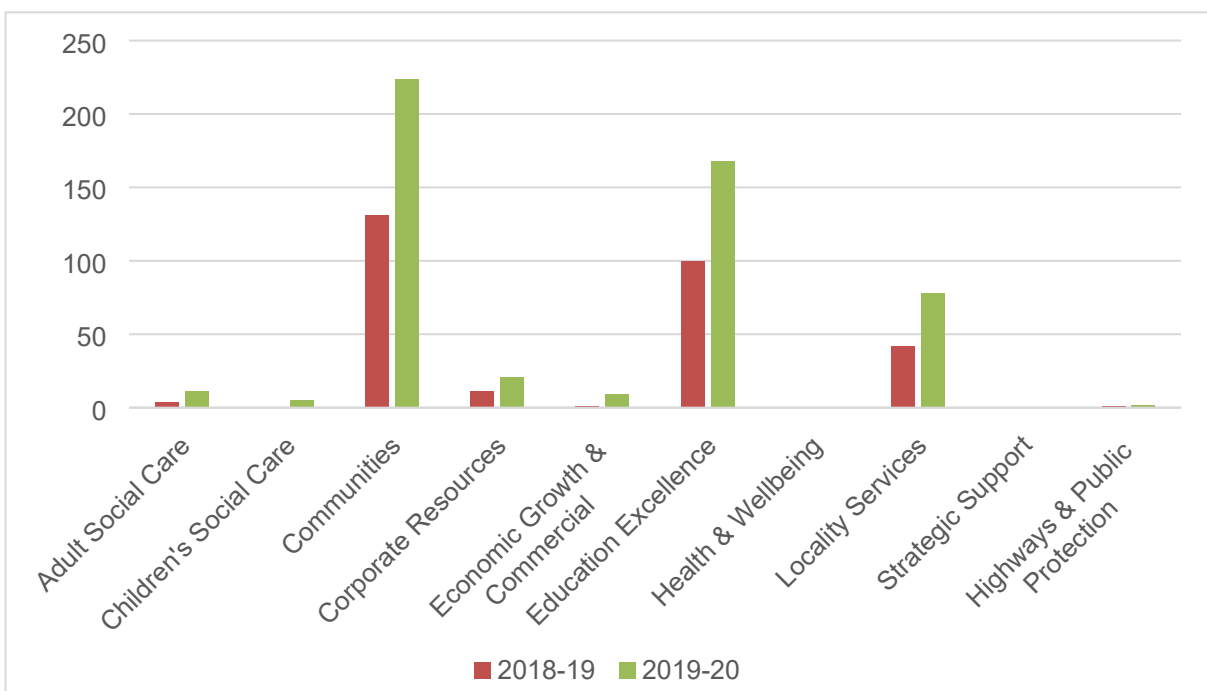
- 5.1 The Council has liaised with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) during the financial year on the routine reporting of ten RIDDOR related incidents. The following incident which was reported in the 2018/2019 Annual Health and Safety report has led to further action being taken by the HSE.
- 5.2 In October 2018 two members of staff were inspecting the flat roof of a council property where they were planning a programme of repair work. One staff member fell from the flat roof and were taken to hospital by ambulance where they were treated for a fracture injury. The accident was investigated by the HSE who have informed staff involved of the intention to prosecute. Criminal court proceedings commenced in September 2020.

6 Accidents and Incidents

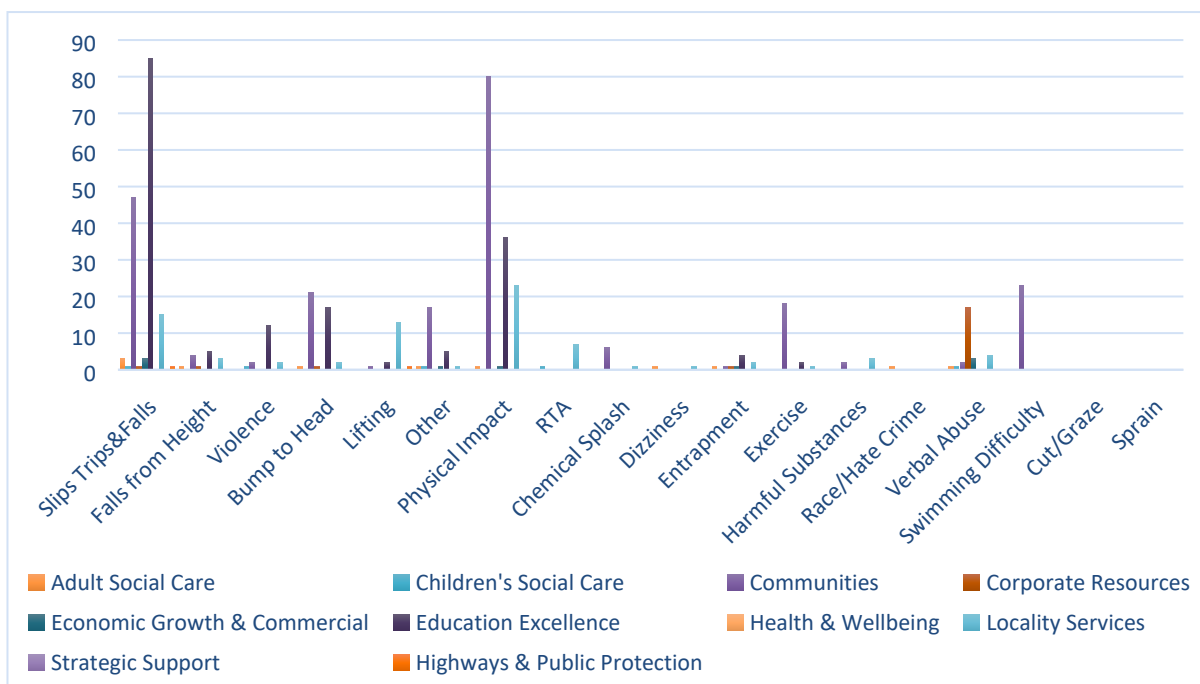
- 6.1 The Health and Safety Team continue to manage the Council's on-line incident reporting system which is used by all service areas.
- 6.2 The aim of reporting is to ensure suitable proportionate investigation leading to the implementation of effective controls and monitoring to prevent re-occurrence. High levels of reporting could demonstrate a positive reporting culture or a high risk.
- 6.3 A downward trend in accident reporting was noted especially during March 2020. This is partly due to an increase in staff working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.
- 6.4 The graph below shows the **accidents and incidents reported between 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020**. It also shows the accidents and incidents from the previous financial year (**1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019**).



- 6.5 The two most common accident causes during this period have been due to slips, trips, falls and physical impact. This was unchanged from the previous year and reflects the nature of risk associated with schools and pupil activities.
- 6.6 Many accidents are recorded as “other” where reporting managers have not specified the injury. An increase in health and safety support it is anticipated will facilitate clearer reporting and recording.
- 6.7 Staff and pupils who test positive for COVID-19 are being included on the reporting system, from the 2020/21 financial year facilitating the review of risk assessments, control measures as government guidance changes and reporting under RIDDOR where required.
- 6.8 The chart below shows the **accidents and incidents by service areas** for the period from **1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020**.



6.9 The chart below shows the **accidents and incidents causes for each of the service areas** for the period from **1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020**.



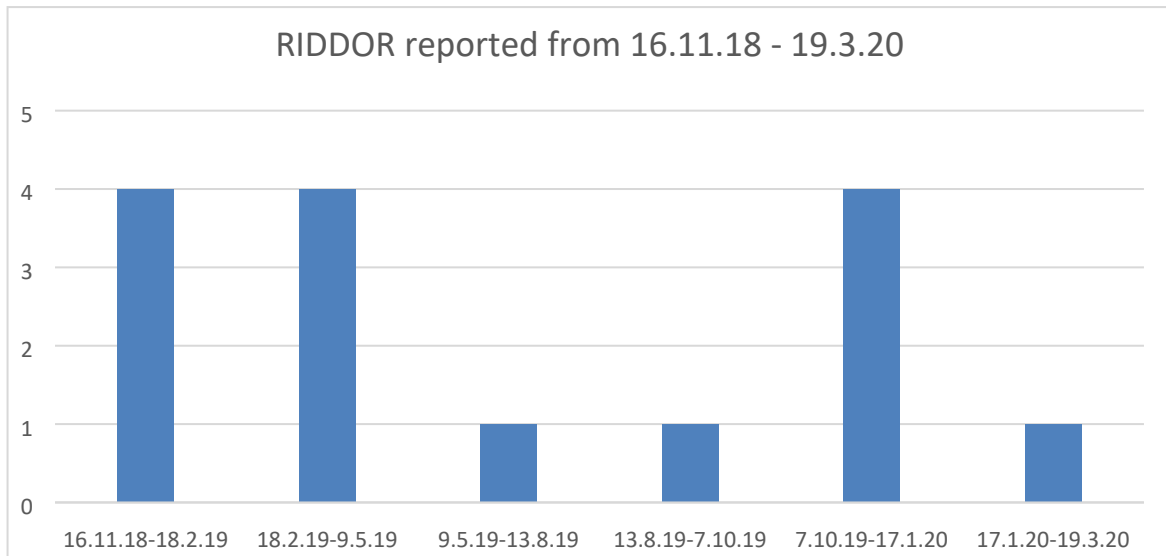
6.10 Adults and Children’s Social Care see the fewest number of incident reports submitted. Due to the size of the service areas, the activities they undertake and ongoing communications with the service staff have implied incidents of for example verbal abuse have not been reported on the system. The under reporting could be as the result of a poor reporting culture. The Health and Safety team are exploring opportunities to improve the culture during 2020/21 and as a consequence the numbers of incidents that are reported.

6.11 Education Excellence and Communities service areas record the highest number of accident and incident reports. This could be due to the number of staff and interactions with children and the public. Data shows that the slips, trips, falls and physical impact accidents commonly arise from pupils during playtime sessions rather than Council employees.

6.12 During March 2020, data is suggesting a downward trend in accident reporting, as staff moved to homeworking due to the Council’s response to Covid-19.

6.13 The health and safety advisers continue to raise awareness of the benefits of reporting via the Departmental Health and Safety Committees. Further analysis will be undertaken during the next financial year, with support from the Health and Safety Coordinator.

6.14 The chart below details the number of **accidents and incidents reported under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)** for the period from **November 2018 to 31st March 2020**. This highlights the current positive downward trend in RIDDOR accidents, incidents and ill health being raised with the enforcement authorities. An increase may occur in 2020 due to the requirement to report certain cases of workplace transmission of coronavirus.



- 6.15 The Health and Safety Team continue to monitor the RIDDOR accidents reported by Managers to ensure they are correctly reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and investigated with appropriate interventions implemented to prevent re-occurrence where possible.
- 6.16 A new addition to the reporting requirement under RIDDOR is to report certain instances of COVID-19 which are reported initially through the normal incident reporting procedures. The reporting requirements relating to cases of, or deaths from, COVID-19 under RIDDOR apply only to occupational exposure, that is, as a result of a person's work.
- an accident or incident at work has, or could have, led to the release or escape of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence
 - a person at work (a worker) has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 attributed to an occupational exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a case of disease
 - a worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a work-related death due to exposure to a biological agent.

7 Training

- 7.1 The Corporate Learning Centre continue to offer a programme of classroom based and e-learning health and safety training. A new e-learning induction course is under development.
- 7.2 The Health and Safety Team delivered risk assessment training to 268 managers during October and November 2019. Participants were identified as managers who are required to complete, amend, or review risk assessments as part of their role as detailed in the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy. Additional courses were provided in January 2020 for managers who were unavailable during October and November. Further dates are to be arranged for later in the year.
- 7.3 The Council's liability insurance claims handler, Gallagher Bassett, delivered a free Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Managing Safely Course for Council Health and Safety Co-ordinators during September 2019.
- 7.4 Council staff attended a Risk Management for Highways Professionals course on 2 October 2019, following the introduction of the Highways Infrastructure Code of Practice in October

2018.

- 7.5 A member of the Health and Safety Team undertook a Radiation Protection Officer course to enable them to act as the Council Co-ordinator between the Radiation Protection Supervisor at the Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of School Science (CLEAPSS) and schools who buy into the scheme. This aims to ensure the safe storage and use of radioactive sources which are held and used in schools as part of the practical science to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. This will involve the Health and Safety Adviser contacting the schools who purchase a Service Level Agreement and have Radioactive sources, to ensure they are being stored correctly or disposed of in an appropriate manner.
- 7.6 The Health and Safety Adviser attended training on the EVOLVE on-line system which was facilitated by the developers, Edufocus. The system is used by schools via a Council service level agreement for planning, approving and managing educational visits and extra-curricular activities.
- 7.7 The one-day Educational Visits Coordinator course which was planned for the 29th April 2020 and due to take place at the Corporate Learning Centre will be organised again as soon as possible. This course has had to be cancelled as a result of the closure of schools and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The course covers aspects of the law related to educational visits, risk assessments of visits and the administrative requirements associated with off-site educational activities. The course is aimed at new and existing EVCs in schools and will enable them to plan and manage their school's educational visits and off-site activities in line with National Guidance, this in turn will help them fulfil their health and safety responsibilities.
- 7.8 During the 2019/20 there was a focus on improving the implementation of risk assessments across the Council's activities. As a result, a refresh of the existing risk assessment guidance was undertaken, and 286 managers were trained on a Sefton specific risk assessment course during the Autumn of 2019/20.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 A refresh of the Council's risk assessment guidance and templates was relaunched in September 2019 across the Council. To support the relaunch 286 managers were trained during the Autumn of 2019 on a Sefton specific risk assessment course similar to the IOSH Managing Safety Course. An outcome of the course was that managers would undertake a risk assessment for their area of responsibility.
- 8.2 Risk assessment development and reviews have been carried out by managers who have completed the recent IOSH Managing Safely training. Currently, 205 out of 268 Managers have been working with the Health and Safety Advisers to ensure suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place for their activities. The Assurance Team have been instrumental in coordinating and providing the administration for this complex exercise.
- 8.3 Considerable support is being provided to Council service departments and schools remaining open during the height of the pandemic and are planning the re-opening of their buildings and services. The Health and Safety Team have provided advice and guidance to facilitate the creation and ongoing review by managers and Head Teachers of their building and operational risk assessments to ensure they are COVID-Secure workplaces.

9 Sefton Schools

- 9.1 A total of 74 Schools signed up to a Health and Safety Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2019 -2020. During this financial year, the SLA and the inspection regime, which forms part of the service, was reviewed. A revised methodology was introduced to provide a risk-based inspection regime that aims to provide assurance to the School's governing bodies as well as the Council that the Schools had an effective health and safety system in place.
- 9.2 At the 31st March 2020, a total of 25 schools had been inspected. The awarded grades are identified in the table below. The inspection programme ceased due the pandemic, however support has been ongoing for schools who are remaining open for children of key workers and at-risk children.

School Inspection Results (April 2019 - March 2020)		
Scoring Band		% of results issued
Excellent	90-100%	9
Good	80-90%	11
Satisfactory	70-80%	2
Fair	60-70%	3
Unsatisfactory	50-40%	Nil
Poor	40-30%	Nil
Very poor	30-0%	Nil

- 9.3 The team are currently considering how to re-start the inspection regime with a remote paper-based inspection and assurance process.

10 Objectives, KPIs and Priorities 2020/21

- 10.1 There are three Health and Safety objectives included in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy which was approved by Cabinet in April 2019:
- Embedding risk assessments across the Council's functions and service areas
 - Clarify and strengthen the governance arrangement for health and safety
 - Improve competence of all staff to improve risk management by targeting effective health and safety training.
- 10.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed to reflect the key current risks within the health and safety framework, the current operating environment in the Council and the delivery of key objectives.
- 10.3 There has been steady progress during the year on achieving the health and safety objectives including activity around the embedding of risk assessments across the organization and improving governance arrangements.
- 10.4 The Council Health and Safety priorities for 2020/21 are:
- Complete the delivery of risk assessment training for the outstanding line managers with responsibility for undertaking risk assessments.

- The team will consider how to re-start school and council inspections, audits and health and safety support as they move to increased remote working.
- A continued focus on improving the accuracy of incident reporting across the Council.
- Training plans to be developed for the Heads of Services and Directors. In addition, it is proposed to make further progress on developing a training needs assessment which will lead to a Council wide health and safety training plan.
- A review of the Health and Safety Standards and Policies will be undertaken to ensure the documents are up to date.