

## **QUARTERLY HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (Q2)**

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 HR Committee is asked to consider the contents of this quarterly update and be aware of ongoing actions.

### **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Quarter 2 has been a busy period with the ongoing response to Covid-19 and other reactive projects requiring corporate health and safety team support. Accidents, incidents and near misses reported have stayed within the normal parameters. Seven incidents were reported under RIDDOR. All three safety panels met, and a formal review of the health and safety consultation processes was undertaken.

### **3. INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 This report highlights the health, safety and welfare work across the Council from July to September 2021. Feedback from the three Safety Panels is covered, and the accident, incident and near miss statistics are detailed in the graphical report in the appendix.
- 3.2 On 19<sup>th</sup> July England moved to step 4 of the Governments Covid-19 recovery roadmap. The legislation requiring people to work from home where possible and the wearing of face coverings was removed, which was partly as a result of the successful vaccination programme. This resulted in the Council staff guidance to change, the bubbles are no longer in place but staff are primarily expected to stay in their work areas and to continue to sign in at entrances and continue to use the desk booking system.
- 3.3 On 14<sup>th</sup> September the Government issued the Covid-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan, which includes a Plan B scenario for tighter measures to be re-introduced should there be a risk of the NHS becoming overwhelmed. The National situation on Covid-19 infections and how it affects the Council will continue to be monitored.
- 3.4 A report was taken to EMT (14<sup>th</sup> September) reviewing the processes for internal health and safety consultation via the Safety Panel process, to ensure duties under relevant Regulations is being met. This report detailed the need to ensure that agenda's, minutes, action plans, and other documents from the Safety Panel meetings are uploaded to a signposted page on ForestNet in order to keep employees up to date on the health, safety and welfare matters covered, which provides greater transparency. This intranet page has been created and documentation is already being held on it, although some functionality is not yet in place which ICT have responsibility for enabling.
- 3.5 The Corporate Health and Safety Team annual work programme was reviewed at Executive Heads and project priorities agreed as the following: Contractor Management and Construction Design Management Policy support and implementation; Drug and Alcohol Policy review; Lone Working Policy review; Recovery Group support (Covid-19 procedures and WorkSmart); EDRM transfer, from Meridio to Sharepoint. The new Asbestos Management Policy is also considered a priority.

- 3.6 Following a recent round of communal area asbestos surveys, undertaken by framework contractor Allium Environmental Ltd, damaged Asbestos Containing Material (ACMs) fire breaks were found above the false ceiling at both Compton and Sarum House. Analytical work has been undertaken and remediation measures are due to start shortly, with project management consultants Ramboll Ltd leading on the CDM elements. The removal works will require a licensed (framework) contractor and an ASB5 notification to the HSE, and support for this work will be provided by the corporate health and safety team.
- 3.7 The update of the Control of Contractors Policy and Asbestos Management Policy was taken to EMT on 31<sup>st</sup> August, and subsequently to Council being ratified in October. The Housing Service are leading on these two Policies following an internal audit of asbestos management procedures in 2020 which made a number of recommendations. Planning for the roll out of staff training and the implementation of quarterly management groups has started.
- 3.8 Housing Service support: two significant projects started in quarter 2 with the framework contractor Allium Environmental Ltd undertaking the next cyclical round of communal area asbestos surveys; and a review was undertaken of the Fire Risk Assessments and priority remedial actions for the sheltered stock in the Housing, which included a review of evacuation strategies. This has required a 6-month secondment of a Health and Safety Advisor to assist with the review of these survey reports, evaluate the risk assessment processes to confirm priority works, and appraise the solutions put forward.
- 3.9 Policies and Procedures: First-aid at Work Policy updated; Update of the ATC Safe Working Covid-19 guide and Depot Covid-19 guide; Draft of SLA Contract with NPA (now on hold); Near Miss Reporting highlighted with email sent out by Communications. Documents which are in the process of being updated include: Drugs and Alcohol Policy; Accident and incident reporting, and investigations Policy. The review of the corporate Lone Working Policy will start shortly, which will also require a review of the Warning Marker Register.

#### **4. SAFETY PANEL FEEDBACK**

- 4.1 Operations Panel: Waste transfer site risk assessment discussed following Veolia having recently provided more detailed site rules. Accidents, incidents and near misses in line with previous reporting and expectations. Refuse Vehicle fire discussed following an insurance investigation into the event (which was a near miss, no injuries sustained), and the lessons which could be learnt. Near Miss postcards and vehicle bump cards have been circulated to assist with accurate recording of incidents by operational staff. Shortage of Safety Representatives in some teams raised, although no obvious solution identified. Concern raised about the ability to record and monitor essential health and safety training in a sustainable way, current system is labour intensive. Solution to be sought for all the Operation Teams.
- 4.2 Office Based Panel: the annual Safety Reps office inspections has been delayed due to the implications of Covid-19, it is now expected that these will start in December 2021. Despite a shortage of Safety Reps all areas of Appletree Court should be covered.
- 4.3 Housing Panel: PCN7 lone working system to be phased out, alternative systems will need to be identified over the next 6 months. Highlighted that the concerns with the Warning Marker Register are still outstanding, part of this is inconsistent staff training, there is also a need to ensure all relevant individuals are on the list and have suitable information recorded about safety concerns and the actions staff should take, e.g. visits in pairs. Solutions to resolve the areas of weakness identified in a previous audit

are outstanding, the need to record information from 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations e.g. Probation Service warnings on individuals.

- 4.4 Corporate Health and Safety Team will continue to support and monitor the number of Safety Representatives across the Council, identifying staff to take on this role continues to be a challenge in some teams. If numbers drop there may be the need to have solutions to communicate the benefits to individuals and the wider workforce.
- 4.5 In the next quarterly health and safety report a detailed update will be provided on the Safety Panel actions table once these have been reviewed.

## **5. ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES**

- 5.1 The graphical report in the Appendix details the accidents, incidents, near misses and vehicle incidents occurring quarter 2. There was a total of 50 accidents/ incidents reported across the Council which included 16 near miss events. This is a slight rise compared to 2020/2021.
- 5.2 Reportable incidents: there were 7 incidents which were reported under RIDDOR to the Health and Safety Executive, which included reports for Compton and Sarum Houses where historic asbestos insulation board damage was identified by an asbestos surveyor working for Allium Environmental Ltd.
- 5.3 Other accidents/ incidents reported under RIDDOR included: gas engineer where part of the boiler fell onto his hand resulting in a fracture and time off work; deep cut to leg of waste operative because of broken pane of glass being put into waste sack (time off work); bulky waste collection operative injury to back when lifting white goods (time off work); grounds maintenance operative using silky saw which resulted in injury (time off work).
- 5.4 There were 34 vehicle incidents during the quarter, ranging from minor stationary incidents through to the refuse vehicle fire which resulted in the truck being written off and insurance monies paid. Significant issues are reviewed by Insurance Officer, Transport Manager and Health and Safety Advisor.
- 5.5 The Corporate Health and Safety Team opened investigations into serious incidents, especially those where it is believed there could be a reoccurrence or lessons to learn.
- 5.6 The Corporate Health and Safety Team will continue to communicate with managers and staff about the benefits of reporting near miss events, as one of the ways to review safe working procedures which will improve risk reduction and have the potential to stop accidents.

## **6. EMT COMMENTS**

- 6.1 EMT considered the contents of this quarterly update.
- 6.2 EMT supported the planning and implementation of the Asbestos Management Policy to ensure that Officers have the resource and support to enable the duty to manage to be complied with in full.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None. No significant changes to the current practices being considered.

## **8. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are none.

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none.

**10. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 No new requirements or issues identified.

**11. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

11. 1 No new requirements or issues identified.

**12. EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS**

12.1 Employee side noted the content of the report

**13. Appendix 1.**

*Table of accident, incident and near miss reporting for quarter 2 (2021/2022).*

**For further information contact:**

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**Background Papers:**

“None”.