

## QUARTERLY HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT (Q4 2022/23)

### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 HR Committee is asked to consider the contents of this quarterly report and be aware of the accidents and incidents recorded in Q4, and the merged action plan from the safety panels (**Appendix 2**).
- 1.2 HR Committee are to note the progress and actions completed by the health and safety team projects which have been a focus of resources across the Council for this financial year.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report highlights the significant health, safety, and welfare work across the Council from January to March 2023, Q4. Feedback from the three Safety Panels is covered in section 5, and the accident, incident and near miss statistics are detailed in section 6 with further information in the appendix.
- 2.2 Q4 accidents, incidents and near misses reported were within normal parameters, but up on the last quarter at 57, and slightly higher than Q4 last year due to more near miss reports. There were four RIDDOR incidents and these and other significant incidents are summarised in section 6. Table 1 provides an opportunity to review all the reported incidents over the last year, and to draw comparisons and patterns with the previous year.
- 2.3 The Corporate Health and Safety Team are based in the Human Resource Service and provide a central resource to all the other services and teams of the Council, with the focus on the higher risk areas - for example housing maintenance and operational teams working from the depots.

### 3. HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS

#### 3.1 COVID-19 Risk:

There is no longer a legal requirement to have Covid-19 risk assessments in place and these have now been included within Respiratory Infections risk assessments. When staff return a positive LF test they are expected to spend 5 days away from work while they are at their most infectious in line with Government guidance. It is no longer a corporate requirement for staff to book their desk when they are in the offices. Absences due to Covid-19 are still occurring and can be reported on by HR Services through the iTrent sickness management system.

#### 3.2 Health and Safety Team Work Programme:

This year progress has been made on the COSHH reviews, HAVs monitoring (report issued to Grounds Maintenance Manager), Risk Assessment reviews across housing and operational services. Health and Safety audits were completed for: Building Control; Planning Enforcement; & Waste Services (across the three depots).

### 3.3 Lone Working and Conflict Management Working Group:

The Lone Working & Conflict Management Working Group met in January when an update was received on the corporate PNC7 system and when it is expected to no longer be available. It was agreed that conflict management training was a priority for staff. The focus on training needs to be for a wide range of staff and teams to cover the lone worker procedures in place, and also the conflict management skills visiting officers and those dealing with members of the public require. The Council training provider previously used in 2019 provided a bespoke three hour on-line course delivered over MS Teams on 25<sup>th</sup> January. There was mixed feedback to the course with regard to the training provider and a new training consultancy has been procured to provide the next round of training June.

### 3.4 Health and Safety Audits:

The health and safety auditing of the Waste Service started at the end of Q3 and was completed in Q4. In addition the audits of medium risk teams Planning Enforcement and Building Control have been completed in Q4. The Coastal Service audit is on-going.

**Planning Enforcement:** 5 items were recorded in the Action Plan for management actions to be taken on which focused on: risk assessments to be recorded for significant risks and emergency procedures to be included; all staff to be provided access to the internal Warning Marker Register; lone working arrangements to be formalised; provision of PPE supplied to staff and the types/ standard required to be recorded.

**Building Control:** 8 items were recorded in the Action Plan for management actions to be taken on which focused on: risk assessments to be captured on corporate format and updated for 2023; health and safety training to be recorded; staff knowledge on internal H&S processes to be improved, e.g. *Safety Panels*; provision of PPE supplied to staff and the types/ standard required to be recorded; lone working arrangements to be formalised.

**Waste Service:** the audit was undertaken over the three depots and included interviews with multiple managers & supervisors. Feedback from Waste Service management awaited.

Housing Development and the Environmental and Regulation Service audits have slipped to the 2023/24.

#### **Health and Safety Projects from the Work Programme 2023/24**

Detailed below is a selection of some of the projects in the health and safety team Work Programme:

### 3.5 Keyhaven Health and Safety arrangements:

Work to be undertaken following on from the “Review of Water Safety on NFDC Coastline” presented to EMT in August 2022, and the further works which were undertaken. Need to review the health and safety arrangements onsite. Keyhaven has over 400 moorings which is managed by the NFDC River Wardens working out of the local office. There are many other physical assets onsite some of which are used/accessed by members of the public. In order to raise standards it is proposed to have a Keyhaven River Marine Safety Management System (MSMS), which would meet the Port Marine Safety Code – nationally recommended but not a

mandatory standard. Work to be planned over the year. Where necessary additional health and safety controls will be introduced.

### 3.6 **Depot Traffic Management Plans:**

Identified in the recent Waste Service audit there is a need to have a written and up to date *traffic management plan* for each of the three council depot sites. This is an item highlighted in the audit action plan and a provisional target of 3 months has been set to update what is currently in place, to ensure the written plans are suitable and sufficient and the local workforce and other stakeholders (landlord & partners) are consulted on the plans.

### 3.7 **Review of Display Screen Equipment/ Workstation assessments:**

With the increase of hybrid working through the Worksmart scheme there is a need to review the processes for ensuring that DSE assessments are appropriate. The DSE e-learning and the assessment e-forms have been delivered through the seminar system (to be replaced by the new Learning Management System), which has limited functionality and does not allow accurate management reporting. The focus is to be on enhancing the current guidance and accessibility to health and safety intranet pages through the use of QR codes on all office workstations. New e-training and e-form to be delivered to staff which will allow management reports for service managers to use for monitoring compliance.

### 3.8 **Other Health and Safety Policies:**

Other Policies currently in draft and likely to be circulated for consultation at the next round of Safety Panels include:

- Lone Working Policy;
- Occupational Road Risk (Grey-fleet) Policy;
- Risk Management Policy.

## 4. **TASK AND FINISH GROUPS: CDM, & ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 The **Construction Design Management working group** had their quarterly meeting on 24th April where the focus was the imbedding of the Housing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which had been recapped on the Housing Maintenance Service Day, for both managers/ supervisors and the trades. Training on the Housing SOPs via toolbox took place in March. An Actions Table is in place for the group which has been updated and circulated.
- 4.2 The Estates and Valuations Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been circulated and the consultation on them have been completed. The Work Authorisation Form is to be used for all qualifying works on the civic building estate. Getting the property maintenance works authorisation form in an electronic format is still outstanding – a meeting is arranged with ICT to assist with the e-form.
- 4.3 IOSH online CDM training for identified property, housing and trade staff was started in February, 85% of Housing Maintenance staff have completed the course.
- 4.4 The **Asbestos Management working group** are due to meet on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. A Draft table of KPI's will be presented to the group which includes a target of 25% of the domestic (Housing) stock to have had an asbestos management survey completed by end of year 2023/24. Asbestos training was delivered by Allium Ltd in February for

trades and property professionals. Some employees were not able to attend the training so a mop up session will be required.

## **5. SAFETY PANEL FEEDBACK**

5.1 Detailed below are the significant issues discussed at the April Safety Panels. All Action Tables were reviewed prior to the April 2023 meetings for the year ahead and the target dates for some of the projects/actions were reviewed. See (**Appendix 2**) for the merged Action Table for the three Safety Panels.

### **5.2 Operations Safety Panel:**

Group met on 25<sup>th</sup> April, the minutes of the meeting have yet to be circulated.

Discussion about ensuring staff having a corporate H&S induction as well as the local induction, agreement that Health and Safety Advisor can have a regular session with the new starters so that staff get informed of the internal consultation process.

The Grounds Maintenance Hand Arm Vibration review report was presented to the group. Recommendations included: to reduce the number of different makes and models of equipment; Implement a purchasing policy that takes into account vibration exposure; ensuring that toolbox talks which cover HAVs are recorded for all relevant staff; consider a tool replacement schedule for older pieces of equipment; introduce a tag system which identifies equipment which have the higher vibration rating, e.g. red label; active monitoring of operatives to review how they handle equipment, to ensure there are no bad habits.

Lack of internal Elected Safety Reps within the services highlighted, discussion about how to gain best feedback from the workforce so there is improved buy in from staff, one suggestion is a monthly health and safety forum at the depots.

Service Health and Safety Plans being reviewed.

### **5.3 Office Based Panel:**

The group met on 24<sup>th</sup> April, the minutes have not yet been circulated. A total of 5 incidents reported in Q4 for office staff/ visitors to the offices, none of them significant.

Annual workplace inspections: completed for all bar one area of the offices, minor items noted only.

Request for new starters who undertake lone visits are made aware of the Warning Marker Register and the process for getting login access.

### **5.4 Housing Panel:**

Accidents and incidents reviewed: total of 23 incidents reported in Q4 including 10 near misses, and 51 lost days during the quarter. Leading issue for incidents was slips, trip and falls. H&S Monitoring: RIDDORS incidents are down on the previous year, and there has been a reduction in manual handling injuries (following training provided at the start of the year).

CDM IOSH training invite to surveying staff was sent out in February, part of the CDM Policy and guidance that this training is completed.

Discussion about staff being exposed to smoking at work when they are working in tenants properties, need to review the guidance which can be issued to staff and how this will be communicated to tenants.

Following on from the January Safety Panel a meeting took place between staff safety reps and management to discuss issues around requests for 2-man jobs, which are often related to manual handling needs. Further meeting to take place.

Housing Hazard identification checklist for void properties requiring a clearance was presented to the group.

Discussion about the timeframes set for works undertaken by the trades, there is feedback that time-limits communicated to the trades are difficult to achieve which can create some rushing for jobs to be completed. Need to ensure there is improved communication between planners and trades so that completion targets are clearer and concerns acted upon.

The Housing Maintenance Employee Health and Safety Handbook was circulated to the group, all trades to receive a copy of this document.

## 6. ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS AND NEAR MISSES (INCLUDING RIDDOR)

6.1 The accidents, Incidents and near misses reported in quarter 4 are detailed in Table 1 below, the numbers in brackets are the 2021/22 quarterly figures.

Table 1. All reported Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

<u>Table 1.</u>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Total Reports	79 (57)	47 (47)	38 (43)	<b>57(53)</b>	221(200)
Non-reportable Accidents	24 (26)	21 (25)	22 (25)	<b>29(40)</b>	96(116)
RIDDOR	2 (4)	1 (5)	3 (7)	<b>*4(5)</b>	10(21)
Near Miss	*53 (27)	25 (17)	13 (11)	<b>24(8)</b>	115(63)

6.2 The graphical report in (**Appendix 1**) details the accidents, incidents, near misses in more detail. There was a total of 57 accidents/ incidents/ near misses reported across the Council, up from the Q3 figure (38). Incidents recorded as a near miss which related to *property vandalism, property arson or evidence of drug use* at the public conveniences are recorded separately from accidents.

6.3 There were 4 incidents which required reported under RIDDOR to the Health and Safety Executive. The RIDDOR and other significant incidents are detailed in the paragraphs below:

- i. **RIDDOR 1** (reported on 4/1/2023): Waste loader who during normal duties felt a pain in his ankle and had to stop work whilst on the round and return to the depot. No slip or trip incident related to the injury, or environmental factors involved. Individual attended A & E as a precaution but no breaks or other confirmed injury to the ankle. Time away from work 12 days. **Work related absence of more than 7 days must be reported under RIDDOR by the tenth day of the employee's qualifying absence. Having reviewed this absence the H&S Team concluded it should not have been reported (under RIDDOR) as there was no occupational incident to the employee.**
- ii. **RIDDOR 2** (27/3/2023): Waste loader loading black waste sacks into hopper of the refuse vehicle and received a cut to his upper right thigh most likely caused by a

sharp object. Significance of injury not realised at the time so offending sack not retrieved – incident caught on vehicle CCTV. Within a few minutes of the injury being noted individual was bleeding from right thigh and returned to the depot to receive first aid before attending the hospital where he received stitches to the wound. Toolbox talks to be undertaken to reinforce appropriate manual handling techniques, and the need to examine suspect waste sacks where possible.

- iii. **RIDDOR 3 (24/3/2023):** Gas engineer was collecting a gas boiler from Travis Perkins for installation later in the day at tenant property. The boiler had been delivered in a crate which created an awkward two-person lift. Whilst undertaking the lift the employee felt pain in the middle of their back and had to stop. Employee needed to return home and was advised to take pain killers and rest by doctor. Situation of boiler collection at Travis Perkins was unusual. Task specific manual handling risk assessment to be reviewed by Gas Team manager and business representative, to ensure that this situation does not reoccur.
- iv. **RIDDOR 4 (23/3/2023):** Waste loader who aggravated a pre-existing injury when on domestic waste collection duties. Individual lifted a heavy black sack which caused back injury to flare up, he finished the round but could not return the next day. Referred back to occupational health services for further assessment. An updated individual risk assessment will be completed once the individual is fit enough to return to work.
- v. **Incident 1 (27/1/2023):** Waste loader on normal duties was clipped by a vehicle reversing into their driveway whilst collecting sacks from property. Incident reported to the Police and investigation initiated. Individual was wearing normal full class 3 high visibility clothing at time of incident. Knee sprain/ strain which kept the individual away from work for 12 days.
- vi. **Incident 2 (7/2/2023), Contractor Incident:** a maintenance contractor tasked with works in a void housing property which included works to the front porch. A routine asbestos management check was undertaken by the internal asbestos team and found that the asbestos artex ceiling to the front port had been removed, but there were not any supporting risk assessment or method statements to demonstrate that works had been completed to an appropriate standard. Health and Safety Advisor undertook a full investigation and this confirmed that Asbestos Management Survey had been provided to contractor. Learning points are to ensure the presence of asbestos containing materials (ACM's) is clearly raised with contractors in correspondence, and works to ACM's (if any) confirmed. The asbestos textured coating is a low-risk material and can be removed under simple controls conditions in most situations, but the staff undertaking works must be competent. The removal of the textured coating ceiling should have been passed to the internal Corporate Asbestos Team to review, and for a licensed contractor to undertake the works (and subsequent update of the Keystone Asbestos Register). Void documentation and processes have been reviewed.

6.4 There were 21 vehicle incidents during the quarter 4 (see Table 2), down on Q3, and these will be reviewed as part of the routine quarterly vehicle accident review meeting. Significant issues are reviewed by Insurance Officer, Transport Manager and Health and Safety Advisor.

Table 2. Vehicle Incidents Q4 2022/23

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Q1 2022/23	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23
Waste	40	52	71	25	13	13	<b>10</b>
Housing Maintenance	7	13	17	4	3	3	<b>5</b>
Street Scene	10	13	13	1	1	4	<b>2</b>
Engineering Works	1	0	1	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Open Spaces	4	6	10	1	2	3	<b>1</b>
Transport	1	1	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Parking Enforcement*	-	-	1	0	0	2	<b>2</b>
Other	4	2	1	1	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>

## **7. HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING**

- 7.1 The Health and Safety Team provide 4 mandatory e-learning courses for all staff through the Seminar software system: Office Safety; Fire Safety; Manual Handling; and Display Screen Equipment. Additionally there is Driving on Council Business, and COSHH training for relevant staff. Staff are required to undertake refresher training for the four mandatory courses every two years.
- 7.2 A project group is reviewing the potential solution providers for a corporate *Learning Management System*, which will replace the Seminar system, is ongoing with a member of the H&S Team part of the group.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **9. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are none.

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are none.

## **11. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 No new requirements or issues identified.

## **12. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 No new requirements or issues identified.

### **13. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS**

Not sought, report is not being taken to Cabinet. Report will be taken to HR Committee.

### **14. EMT COMMENTS**

EMT considered the quarterly report and noted the RIDDOR 1 incident which on review did not meet the qualifying criteria.

EMT discussed the need to continue the review of vehicle incidents each quarter to aim to reduce incidents to as low a level as reasonable.

**For further information contact:**

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**Background Papers:**

None