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**REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 23 APRIL 2024**

**SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To ask the Committee to consider and note the annual Health and Safety report and approve the progress noted and proposed future actions.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:**

- i) consider and note the content of the annual health and safety report, as set out in Appendix 1, and the progress towards the outcomes established in the last report; and**
- ii) approve the proposed future actions for 2024.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act requires that organisations ensure the safety of employees and others who may be affected by their actions.

The main elements needed to provide protection are:

- Making plain the organisation's commitment to have good standards of health and safety management;
- Defining the roles that people at all levels play in ensuring the good standards are maintained;
- Having systems in place to ensure awareness of hazards and assessment of risks to employees, customers, partners and others who may be affected by our activities;
- Having in place effective arrangements to eliminate or control those risks;
- Monitoring the system in place and reviewing it on an ongoing basis;
- Providing access to health and safety advice and support;
- Engagement with employees at all stages of the process to ensure adequacy.

- 3.2 As part of this process, a report is provided every year on the Health and Safety provision within the Council.
- 3.3 The Annual Health and Safety Report for 2023 is set out in **Appendix 1**. It summarises the Council's health and safety performance corporately and is based on statistics for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. The report highlights the Council's safety performance and provides information on the types of accidents reported.
- 3.4 The report highlights that Violence and Aggression continues to be an area of concern, particularly in Education but also in Supported Accommodation Facility. Where Education is concerned the trend locally mirrors the national picture. Further work is being carried out at a national level and the Council will have due regard to any guidance issued to support the range of work being undertaken locally which includes a programme of measures and interventions to support pupils and staff. This has been the subject of separate reports to both the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee and the Community Planning Board. The Board agreed to acknowledge the national work ongoing around increased disruptive behaviour across schools and society; to acknowledge and endorse the local approach; that this work will be led in a multi-agency approach with a short, medium to long term action plan and to the request from the Council Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee to progress this work with urgency and require a further report to the Community Planning Board in May to include actions to address the issues and barriers in relation to cross cutting points raised in the report. Within Supported Accommodation, work is continuing within the service to monitor the impact of staff absences and review the interventions required to support staff and service users.
- 3.5 The report also highlights that the number of accidents and dangerous occurrences reported in 2023 has decreased slightly compared to the numbers reported in the previous three reports. Overall, incidents were down by 3% compared to 2022.
- 3.6 Following a similar pattern to 2022, Education have the most reported incidents, followed by Environmental and Commercial services, then Housing and Property followed by Health and Social Care. The majority of incidents resulted in minor injuries with slips, trips and falls the main cause.
- 3.7 Progress has been made on the issues reported on last year, with services and the health and safety team continuing to work well together on priority areas. There has been a particular focus on Work Related Violence given the reported figures on Violence and Aggression in Education and targeted work is being undertaken within the Education Service. More generally across the organisation, in response to a particular identified need, a course on dealing with challenging behaviour was developed by Organisational Development (OD). It is being delivered via the Councils online learning platform as well as via a number of face to face training sessions.
- 3.8 There has been a particular focus on fire risk assessment, with a risk based, planned programme of work providing an important framework. In addition, a key piece of work was undertaken in preparation and response to the need to adapt the Fire Safety Guidance due to a change in approach, by Scottish Fire

and Rescue service, into how they respond to the activation of a fire alarm. Guidance for premises responsible persons and call challenge teams was produced and communicated to all relevant parties.

- 3.9 The work undertaken in 2022 on Driving Safely, with the development of a revised Driving Safely Policy supported with relevant guidance documents has continued with the implementation of the guidance leading to further training of staff in services with a higher rate of vehicle incidents.
- 3.10 Work around the health and safety culture agenda has continued to progress with regular communications in place, revised and updated training offers, working closely with services on the key areas identified.
- 3.11 Work will continue on these areas in accordance with the plans in place which will be the subject of continual review, taking account of any competing priorities and demands. In addition, work has continued in accordance with the rolling programmes in place for fire risk assessments, audits and inspections using the agreed risk based, priority approach.
- 3.12 Main themes arising from the report are the requirement to continue to target support in high risk/priority areas, including supporting the work to respond to the issues around Violence and Aggression in Education and across the organisation, to continue to focus on improving the health and safety culture across the council, to review the Safety Management System and continue to identify priority areas, continue to support the work on challenging behaviour, to support embedding hybrid working as a permanent feature and reducing the number of incidents based on human error.
- 3.13 The Annual Health and Safety Report for 2023 identifies the main areas for development and planned work over the next year as continuing to audit high risk services or issues, continuing progress with actions to improve the behaviour challenges in schools and supported accommodation and continue to deliver on the rolling programme of fire risk assessments. In addition, to ensure the implementation of revised incident reporting system with supporting guidance. Also, to review the Corporate Health & Safety Policy including responsibilities and arrangements, as part of a rolling programme of policy and guidance review. Work will also continue to build on the foundations of developing the health and safety culture of the organisation including a particular focus on behavioural safety approaches and continuing work with the OD team to support managers in targeted areas to monitor and raise awareness amongst their teams. Also to continue to monitor progress with the joint inspections programme through the Departmental Health and Safety Committee structure.
- 3.14 Finally, further measures of improvement and progress will be developed over the course of 2024 to ensure a focus on outcome based performance measurement.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

This report provides information relating to Health and Safety activities within the Council to enable this learning and to ensure that the council continues to provide a safe and healthy workplace for employees to deliver services.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

Ensuring the health and safety of staff and service users is a statutory duty on the Council. An annual report is an effective method of recognising achievement and highlighting opportunities for further improvement.

**(c) Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Accidents can have implications for Council resources and may result in losses that are difficult to quantify.

**(d) Risk Implications**

Health and safety is included within all levels of the Council's risk register.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

Staff time will be required to implement the actions set out in the report. This will be accommodated within existing resources by adjusting the priorities to be worked on.

**(f) Property**

None.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

None.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

None.

**(i) Consultations**

CMT and the Central Health and Safety Committee and the Democratic Services Manager have been consulted about the report at **Appendix 1**.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The 2023 annual health and safety report shows that the Council provides a healthy and safe environment for its employees and service users with a planned approach to continuous improvement. Whilst Violence and Aggression, particularly in Education, continues to be a concern, there are measures in place to respond to the issues with a planned programme of work. Whilst a slight decrease in incidents other**

**than Work Related Violence has been reported, works continue to reduce the overall number of incidents with priority given to issues identified in the Annual Report. Good progress has been made on the key areas identified in the 2022 report and there is a continuing need to build on this work and drive forward with the development of the key areas identified in this 2023 report. In particular, it is planned to focus on the Council's health and safety culture, supporting managers and employees to take responsibility for and give priority to the health and safety of themselves and others as well as ensuring that changes that have been made over recent times are following through and becoming embedded into safe working behaviour and practices across the organisation.**

Author of Report: Katrina McGillivray, Organisational Development Manager  
Background Papers:  
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