



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 26 MAY 2021**

SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to consider the annual Health and Safety report and approve the progress noted, proposed future actions and carry forward of outstanding actions for the next year.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance, (para 9 of the minute refers)

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) Considers 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 carry forward of outstanding actions and proposed future actions for 2021.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Health and Safety at Work 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 2020 is set out in **Appendices 1 and 2**. It summarises the Council's health and safety performance corporately and is based on statistics for the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. The report highlights the Council's safety performance and provides information on the types of accidents reported.
- 3.4 This report relates the calendar year January to December 2020 and for most of this period, the organisation as a whole and the services within it were affected by the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This impacted on health and safety at both a corporate level and within services to a significant degree. Some services continued to operate in the usual workplaces, with appropriate advice and guidance provided on risk assessments, mitigation and control measures, resulting in different operating procedures to ensure everyone's health and safety. All in accordance with national guidance issued by the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and the HSE. Some services ceased for periods of time, with workplaces closed as a result. Other services continued to operate but from home rather than within the usual workplace environment. The information provided in this report needs to be regarded within this overall context.
- 3.5 The report highlights that the number of accidents and dangerous occurrences reported in 2020 has decreased compared to the numbers reported in the previous three reports. Overall, incidents were down by 33% and it is most likely that the reason for this is that there were fewer employees working in their usual workplaces as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the varying restrictions that have been in place during most of 2020. However, within this, there continues to be variation at departmental level. Education continues to record the highest number of health and safety incidents with total incidents during 2020 falling by just 21%, compared to incidents recorded within Environmental Services decreasing by 46% and those in Social Care down by 29%.
- 3.6 Against the particular context within which services and the health and safety team were operating during 2020, the main areas of progress on planned work in 2020 have again been balanced with responding to the work required from specific issues arising throughout the year, in particular work related to the impact of COVID 19. This, coupled with the volume of ad hoc work, has impacted on progress on planned work. Despite this, targeted work has been undertaken with Environmental Services regarding vehicle incidents, a rolling plan of fire risk assessments has been put in place using a risk based, priority

approach, and there has been delivery of planned audits of risk assessments in high risk areas. Much of the work around risk assessment has necessarily been related to Covid-19. Building and activity risk assessments are in place and are being continually reviewed in light of the changing national guidance as appropriate.

- 3.7 Main themes arising from the report are the requirement to continue to ensure that workplaces are Covid secure, particularly moving further through the recovery phase and towards a more business as usual approach, to focus on improving the health and safety culture across the council, to target support in high risk areas, involving an OD approach as appropriate, to support the work on challenging behaviour in schools and reducing the number of incidents based on human error.
- 3.8 The Annual Health and Safety Report for 2020 identifies the main areas for development and planned work over the next year as continuing to audit high risk area risk assessments and progress with the work relating to vehicle incidents, improving manager understanding and activity, progressing with actions to improve the behaviour challenges in schools and provide the business as usual such as accident / incident investigation, inspections and fire risk assessments. The increased health and safety risks of working within a COVID-19 environment will continue to be incorporated into normal working, with a focus on supporting the recovery and return to a more business as usual approach. To this end, policies on DSE and Lone Working in particular will be reviewed and measures implemented as appropriate. In addition, the profile and awareness of normal health and safety risks both within and across the council activities will continue to be maintained.

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) Consultations

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

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The 2020 annual health and safety report shows that the Council continues to provide a healthy and safe environment for its employees and service users. Given the context within which the Council has had to operate over the past year, the decrease in incidents may be attributed to the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, rather than an indication that the incident rate across the Council has decreased as a result of other measures. Thus, there is a need to continue to work on the main areas outlined in previous reports and build on the progress that has been made over the course of 2020, despite the context within which services and the health and safety team have had to operate within. In particular, it is planned to continue work to allow the Council's safety culture to continue to develop with a focus on supporting managers and employees to take responsibility for and give priority to the health and safety of themselves and others.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-1656699058-25
SPMAN-1656699058-26
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