



REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 25 APRIL 2023

SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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 and proposed future actions.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (24) (c) and (25) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to formulating, supervising the implementation of and review as necessary the policy and practices of the council for all employees in relation to the recruitment, training and development, health, safety and welfare and practices of the Council.

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;**
 - ii) Approve the proposed future actions for 2023.**

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 2022 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 2022 to 31 December 2022. The report highlights the Council's safety performance and provides information on the types of accidents reported.
- 3.4 This report relates to the calendar year January to December 2022. During the early part of this period, the organisation as a whole and the services within it continued to be affected to some degree by the response and recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in response to the emergence of the Omicron variant. This impacted on health and safety at both a corporate level and within services to varying degrees. The organisation continued to operate in accordance with national guidance issued by the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and the HSE throughout. From May 2022, the messaging shifted to "Living with Covid-19" and whilst the guidance for workplaces did not change, there was a slightly different focus with some restrictions that had been in place being phased out or removed on a risk assessed basis. Those services for which working from home continues to be possible have begun moving towards this being a permanent feature as hybrid working is embedded in the organisation in accordance with the agreed policy and procedures on flexible working, with appropriate advice and guidance provided. More of a business as usual approach was evident, particularly during the latter part of 2022.
- 3.5 The report highlights that the number of accidents and dangerous occurrences reported in 2022 has increased slightly compared to the numbers reported in the previous three reports. Overall, incidents were up by 5% compared to 2021 but are still well below that reported in pre-pandemic years, which in light of the return of many services to a fully operational basis show that the accident figures have improved in comparison with similar years with similar service provision. It has been noted that restrictions imposed by the pandemic resulted in reduced service activity and provision in some areas in 2020 and 2021, likely to have led to a lower incident rate than might have ordinarily been expected when compared to previous pre pandemic annual reporting figures.

Education have the most reported incidents, followed by Environmental and Commercial Services, then Housing and Property followed by Health & Social Care. The overwhelming majority of incidents resulted in minor injuries with slips, trips and falls the main cause. Violence and Aggression continues to be an area of concern, particularly in Education and Supported Accommodation Facility. Of note is the reduction of incidents within Waste Services by 15% compared to 2021. The increase reported in 2021 in Environmental Services was identified as requiring a particular focus with more detailed work with the Waste Service being required. Whilst further analysis is ongoing, it would appear that this targeted approach has been successful. A similar approach will be taken in Building Services where an increase in vehicle related incidents has been reported.

- 3.6 Progress has been made on the issues reported on last year with services and the health and safety team working well together on priority areas. Due to changes in personnel following retirement, the Health and Safety team has been operating on a reduced basis for the period April to November 2022. Following the appointment of the Senior Health and Safety Adviser in April 2022, recruitment to the post of Health and Safety Adviser was undertaken (started July 2022) and thereafter, recruitment to the post of Workplace Assessor (started November 2022). The latter required a second recruitment process following the successful candidate withdrawing from the initial process. Despite this, good progress has been made, with a particular focus on fire risk assessment, with a risk based, planned programme of work providing an important framework. Other key areas of work have been progressed including the development and agreement of a Joint Inspection Programme with the Trades Unions, implementation of a revised Lone Working Policy along with supporting guidance and provision of advice to services; revision and adoption of guidance on risk assessment with the development of training to support implementation. There has been a particular focus in Education given the reported figures on Violence and Aggression but also more generally across the organisation. Work has been undertaken on Driving Safely in response to the vehicle incidents reported in previous reports, with the development of a revised Driving Safely Policy supported with relevant guidance documents. Work around the health and safety culture agenda has progressed with regular communications in place, revised and updated training offers, working closely with services on the key areas identified. 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.
- 3.7 Main themes arising from the report are the requirement to continue to target support in high risk/priority areas, to continue to focus on improving the health and safety culture across the council, to review the SMS and continue to identify priority areas, continue to support the work on challenging behaviour, to support the implementation of the Smarter Working Project and the move to embed hybrid working as a permanent feature and reducing the number of incidents based on human error.

- 3.8 The Annual Health and Safety Report for 2022 identifies the main areas for development and planned work over the next year as continuing to audit high risk services or issues and in particular work with services to ensure that appropriate winter maintenance plans are in place and to monitor the implementation of the Driving Safely Policy and guidance within targeted services; 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.

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 work with the OD team to support managers in targeted areas to monitor and raise awareness amongst their teams. This will also include ensuring review and implementation of changes to key areas of the SMS including the Fire Safety Policy and the Health and Safety Policy. Also continuing to provide advice and guidance on the implementation of recently revised and agreed policies on Lone Working and DSE, including arrangements to support the Smarter Working Project with the embedding of hybrid working, as well as monitoring progress with the joint inspections programme agreed in 2022.

- 3.9 Finally, further measures of improvement and progress will be developed over the course of 2023 with 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 have been consulted about the report at **Appendix 1**.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The 2022 annual health and safety report shows that the Council continues to provide a healthy and safe environment for its employees and service users. Whilst a slight increase in incidents has been reported, this is most likely as a result of a return to a more business as usual approach following the pandemic with services operating more on a pre pandemic basis, however, the figures reported are still well below those reported pre-pandemic. Good progress has been made on the key areas identified in the 2021 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 2022 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:

Ref:

SPMAN-1656699058-114 / SPMAN-1656699058-116
SPMAN-1656699058-115