

OMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
25 NOVEMBER 2019

HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update the Committee on performance with regard to corporate health and safety compliance within the previous 12 months and allow Elected Members to scrutinise the work that has been done.

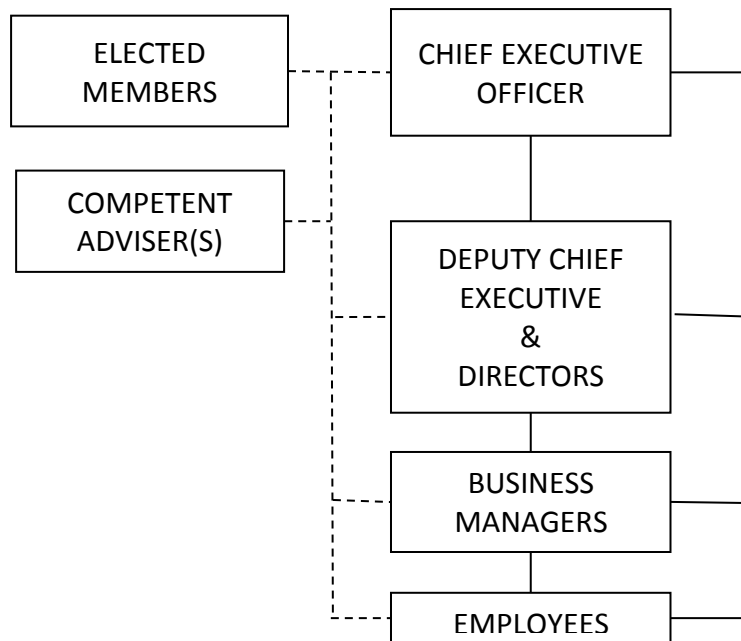
2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Council's Corporate Health & Safety Policy sets out the responsibilities of various posts within the organisation. Elected Members provide the Council with leadership and strategy direction and determination in the allocation of budgets to enable services to be delivered. Because of their influence on budgets and policy decisions, elected Members can affect how health and safety is managed. Therefore Members, when carrying out their functions, shall ensure:

- a) The provision of such resources, that are necessary, for securing the health, safety and welfare of the council's employees and anyone else who may be affected by its undertakings.
- b) That the decision making process they employ includes and considers risks to employees and others in the decisions they make.
- c) The Chairman of the Homes & Communities Committee shall be the lead elected Member for corporate health and safety.

2.2 As part of fulfilling this responsibility Members are given the opportunity to receive an update report on current performance around compliance with our corporate health and safety responsibilities and duties.

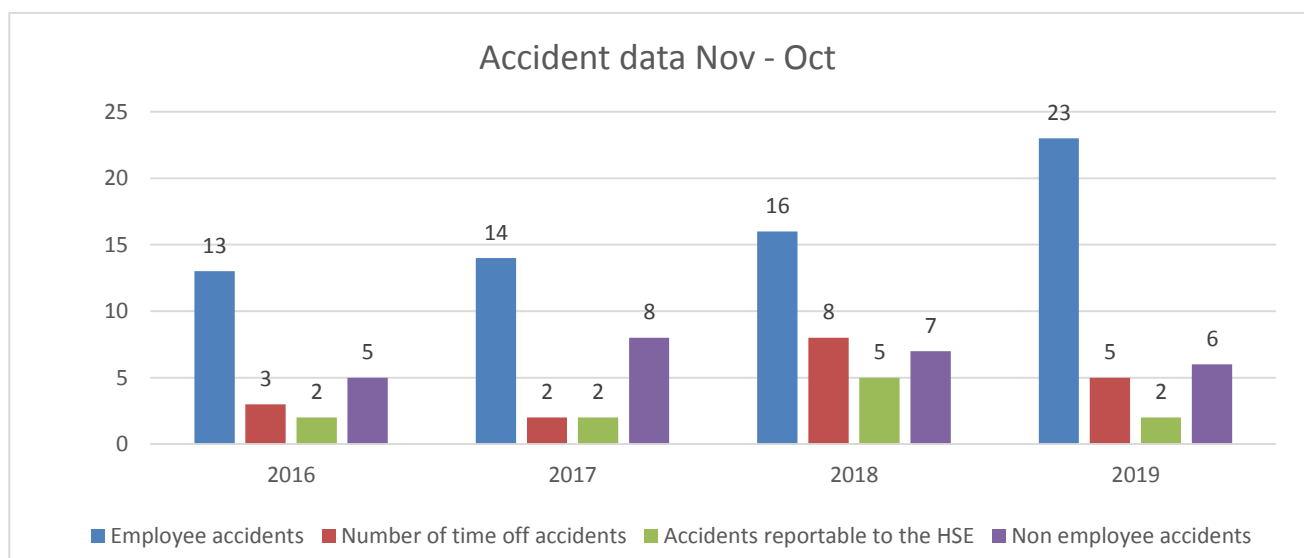
2.3 The diagram below shows the structure of how the health and safety responsibilities and accountabilities are set up. The solid black lines show the route of responsibility whereas the hashed lines illustrate the route of accountability.



————— = Responsibility
 - - - - - = Accountability

3.0 Accident Statistics

3.1 The graph below illustrates the Councils accident data for the previous four years, reporting period (1 Nov to 31 Oct inclusive).



3.2 A total of 29 accidents were reported for the period between the 1 November 2018 and 31 October 2019.

3.3 23 of the 29 reported accidents involved employees with the remaining 6 accidents involving non-employees.

3.4 Although there was an increase in the number of reported employee accidents, these resulted in fewer lost working days and a reduction in the number of severe accidents requiring reporting to the Health and Safety Executive, compared to the previous year.

- 3.5 A total of 5 accidents resulted in employees taking time off work during the last year. The total number of days lost due to these accidents was 116 days, 93 of which were due to a single accident.
- 3.6 The largest number of accidents occurred within the Waste, Litter & Recycling Business Unit. 11 accidents were reported within this section which accounted for 110 lost working days. Parks and Amenities reported 3 accidents. One of which resulted in the loss of 6 working days.
- 3.7 Two employee accidents required notification to the Health & Safety Executive. Notifications were triggered due to the amount of time taken off (greater than 7 days) rather than type or severity of the injury.
- 3.8 There were six reported non-employee accidents in this period. These involved visitors to the Palace Theatre/ National Civil War Centre, a play park and Castle House. None required reporting to the Health & Safety Executive.
- 3.9 All accidents reported have been fully investigated and where necessary controls have been implemented to prevent a reoccurrence. No accident reported during the last period resulted in the Health & Safety Executive undertaking an investigation or enforcement action.

4.0 Violent Incidents

- 4.1 There are currently 7 entries within the Council's Potentially Violent Person Risk Register. This is a reduction on the previous year which had 10.

This register records details of people who present a risk to our staff. It exists to act as a point of reference for officers who may have to deal with potentially violent members of the public. All entries remain on the register for a period of 18 months.

- 4.2 3 incidents have been reported since 1 November 2018. These incidents included:
- Verbal abuse during an interview at Castle House
 - Verbal abuse and threats during a food hygiene inspection
 - Verbal abuse and threats to an officer based at Seven Hills housing accommodation.
- 4.3 All individuals entered onto this register are notified of their inclusion, warned that the Council is not prepared to accept such behaviour towards its staff and will, where necessary, take appropriate legal action.

5.0 Significant Incidents

- 5.1 **Electric heating, Castle House.** An electric skirting heater panel, located within Castle House, failed causing an electrical short resulting in some scorching to an adjacent wall. No one was hurt as a result of this failure.

Due to the significance of this failure and the unknown potential for a repetition, all heating panels were immediately isolated.

An engineer has subsequently inspected all panels and some works were undertaken to prevent a reoccurrence.

In addition to the above a further survey has been completed to evaluate and where necessary mitigate the consequences of another failure. This survey has considered the likelihood of damage to the skirting and presence of combustible items stored directly adjacent.

6.0 Significant Work

6.1 **Health and Safety Policy.** In accordance with the requirements of relative legislation the Council's Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed and agreed with Joint Consultative Committee and SLT.

6.2 **Heritage Street Name Plates.** A cast iron heritage street name plate, located at height, fell off a building located within central Newark. On inspection it proved that the original fixings had failed.

Work was immediately undertaken to determine if other high level heritage plates were at immediate risk of failure and also identify the extent/condition of signs across the district.

A contractor was subsequently appointed to survey and undertake repairs to those identified at risk. This survey identified that approximately 12% of the heritage signs inspected had at least one fixing that had failed. All defective fixings identified were replaced immediately at point of inspection.

6.3 **Fire Risk Assessments.** A review of fire risk assessments for all council owned/managed buildings has been undertaken. The purpose of this review was to ensure that all premises have a suitable assessment in place. This review identified that all premises have a fire risk assessment and produced a plan that prioritised their future review.

Some outstanding actions were identified within this review. Outstanding actions identified are being monitored by the relevant Director and SLT.

6.4 **Asbestos Registers.** A full review regarding the suitability of current asbestos registers for all council owned/managed buildings has been undertaken.

This survey identified that a majority of buildings have a suitable register in place, however, it also identified that there were a small number of surveys requiring review. New surveys have now been completed for those sites requiring immediate review.

All remaining sites will have a new survey and review undertaken in accordance with the findings of the review.

6.5 **Water Safety Risk Assessments.** Work is currently underway to review hazards and safety arrangements for all council owned water courses/bodies. Risk assessments will be produced for all sites and shared with relevant Business Managers. An action plan shall be produced for any further control measures identified.

- 6.6 **Training.** Electronic training packages for staff who use step ladders and display screen equipment have been produced and now rolled out to all relevant staff. These packages are crucial to ensure all staff are suitably trained to prevent injuries/accidents and comply with relevant legislation.
- 6.7 **Buttermarket.** A full safety survey was completed following the recent purchase of the Buttermarket. This survey identified a number of items requiring attention, most of which were due to change in ownership or lack of available information provided by the previous owners.

All significant items have either been undertaken or are currently in progress. An action plan has been produced for all outstanding items.

7.0 Equalities Implications

- 7.1 None of the incidents reported had any equality implications identified at the time. Incidents which involve any of the 'protected characteristics' set out under the Equalities Act 2010 would be taken account of as part of any investigation.

8.0 Financial Implications FIN18-19/1247

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendation within this report. Where appropriate, analysis of the incidents and resultant improvements to prevent reoccurrences can reduce the financial exposure of the Council.
- 8.2 An effective health and safety management system, in which risks are identified and either eliminated or reduced will result in a reduction in costs to the organisation.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the content of the report and consider the actions taken to deal with health and safety issues that have arisen across the Council's activities over the past 12 months.

Reason for Recommendation

To allow the Committee to satisfy themselves through the process of scrutiny that corporate health and safety is being adequately managed and resourced across the authority.

Background Papers

NSDC Health & Safety Policy

For further information please contact Richard Bates on Ext 5593

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