



COUNCIL :

5 APRIL 2023

Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Gareth Dowling

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SUBJECT: HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGIC PLAN 2020/23 - UPDATE

Wards affected: Borough wide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the progress made in relation to the 2020/23 Health and Safety Strategic Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That progress against the Health and Safety Strategic Plan 2020/23 be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Members will recall that a strategic approach was adopted to proactively manage health and safety issues within the Council.

3.2 The resultant Strategic Plan is refreshed every 3 years and focuses on review, as well as delivering improvements, to handle risk effectively within the Council. Ongoing updates are provided to the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Committee.

4.0 THE 2020/23 HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGIC PLAN

4.1 The 2020/23 Plan builds on previous work by concentrating on the changes introduced following the pandemic, as well as changes in staffing structures and new ways of working, that have dictated the Council's approach to health and safety must also change to remain functional, proactive and relevant.

4.2 The implementation of the 2020/23 Plan reinforces the Council's commitment to provide a safe and healthy working environment for its employees, Members and visitors. However, progress against the 2020/23 Plan has inevitably been affected by pandemic. Appendix 1 to this report provides an outline of the significant amount of work completed to date and those projects intended for completion with relevant targets.

4.3 Following this update report and to ensure recent changes to Council services and staffing structure are suitably addressed, an updated Corporate Health and Safety Policy will be presented to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee. This and an updated Strategic Plan 2023/26 will be submitted to Council for approval later in the year to ensure continued commitment and support for both documents.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no significant financial and resource implications associated with this report.

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers.

8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council's approach to health and safety compliance impacts on the health and wellbeing of those that use and/or impacted by its operations. The report thereby supports relevant themes, including:

- Promote good health and wellbeing and enable people to flourish
- Prevent and tackle the causes of ill health;
- Encourage and enable all people to take a role in identifying and addressing barriers to improve health and wellbeing.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

Appendices

1. Health and Safety Strategic Plan 2020/2023 Update

Appendix 1: Corporate Health and Safety Strategic Plan 2020/23 Update

Action	Target	Completion	Responsible Service / Officer(s)	Progress	Comments
Review of Corporate and Service Health and Safety Committee meeting attendees and structure	Revised and agreed attendance	June 2020	Corporate H&S Service	Complete	Attendees have been reviewed and settled for main committee and meetings have taken place according to schedule and established processes. Sub committees have been established for Robert Hodge Centre incorporating Leisure and Rangers services, Derby Street incorporating the Investment Centre and Westgate incorporating Gorsey Place. Invite has been issued to all staff at all levels at these locations to participate and take up the role of health and safety champion. Sub committees have been happening on an ongoing basis but not as frequently as the central committee.
To review the health and safety audit process	Agreed and published audit programme	July 2020	Corporate H&S Service	Complete	Covid-19 and change in working methods have meant that priorities have been reviewed. Audits have been carried out based on risk and trend analysis.
	Revised audit process	October 2020		Complete	New audit template created for use.
	Audits conducted	Annually		Complete	A range of general and topic specific audits have been conducted on an ongoing basis. The audit schedule will be reviewed and revised in the next work

					plan.
Improved Corporate Health and Safety communications and service standards	Customer policy	July 2020	Corporate H&S Service	Complete	New intranet page launched. The new intranet page includes new pages for health and safety management including risk assessment, training and accident/incident management and topic specific pages such as DSE.
	Communication Plan (incl. attendance at team meetings, campaigns and promotional materials)	July 2020 (Commence November 2020)		Complete and ongoing	Communications messaging has been produced to all staff on a rolling basis depending on current risk levels and key topics, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular reviews of the Covid-19 risk assessment and communicating the significant findings - Embedding health and safety into appraisals and one to one meetings. - Working with health and safety champions via the health and safety committee system - Topic based comms such as extreme weather, DSE, fire and evacuation etc. <p>A new suite of comms messaging will be devised and planned into 2023-2024, which will continue to embed the new policies and risk assessments rolled out in 2023.</p>
Review of Corporate	Documents to be	March 2021	Corporate	Review	Central health and safety documentation

<p>Health and Safety Documentation</p>	<p>easily accessible, succinct and understandable</p>		<p>H&S Service</p>	<p>complete. Action to update existing documents remains ongoing</p>	<p>has been reviewed to ensure that this library of support best ensures compliance whilst supporting managers in understanding their duties. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revision and reissue of the risk assessment template to improve quality and compliance. - Reissue of frequently used forms - A central package of policies has been created with associated generic risk assessments to cut down the volume of health and safety documentation, reduce duplication, assist managers and increase compliance. - End to end review of health and safety management documentation completed from recruitment, through induction and then throughout employment. <p>There were significant changes to ways of working during and post-pandemic with adaptations required to health and safety management systems. This level of change was greater than anticipated which has increased the amount of work to complete this point.</p> <p>This work will be ongoing into 2023/2024. There are still some central policies and risk assessments that need to be reviewed</p>
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					and revised, which will be built into the future plan. Further work will be needed to embed these into risk assessments and safe ways of working appropriate for individual service areas and into appropriate training packages.
To review and rationalise the Health and Safety Gateway into a more sustainable and resilient format upon the intranet	Maintain effective and efficient management and control of contractors	March 2021	Corporate H&S Service	Review complete	The Health and Safety Gateway has been retired and all relevant information is now held on the intranet. Live risk assessments are now held in collaborate folders within service areas to allow easier review and revision by managers and easier auditing by the health and safety team.
Proposals for external audit / verification / peer review / external accreditation	To have considered and decided on a suitable verification method of the Council's health and safety management	March 2021	Corporate H&S Service	Review complete	Review complete. The team are actively engaging with neighbouring local authority health and safety teams to benchmark and share ideas and information. The organisational focus is on continuing to embed HSG65 and best practice standards rather than undertaking ISO accreditation. We will continue to seek opportunities for transparent review and positive feedback including through the Unions.
Implement recommendations for external audit / verification / peer review / external accreditation	To deliver and report on the chosen verification method	March 2023	Corporate H&S Service	Complete	In addition to benchmarking with neighbouring local authorities, the Council has actively sought opportunities for external review including from our insurance company (fleet risk audit organised by the Insurance Team) and

					from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service in relation to our fire safety obligations.
Reduced number of accident / incident reports	<p>To maintain a downward trend of incidents and accidents</p> <p>[Links to communication plan – to ensure any reduction is not resulting from a reduction in reporting]</p>	March 2023	<p>Corporate H&S Service</p> <p>HoS</p>	<p>Complete and ongoing</p>	<p>The team continues to encourage improved accident, incident and near miss reporting. However, there continues to be likely under reporting. A communications campaign was developed to promote this topic, a new accident and incident policy launched, updated forms produced and ongoing scrutiny at committees. Opportunities have been taken to learn from things that have gone wrong in order to reduce the risk of recurrence.</p> <p>The HSE has increasing focus on health impacts of work activities and several of their current work programmes focus on health rather than traditional safety focuses. To reflect this shift in priorities, the team has been working closely with HR and our occupational health service to look for opportunities to address health concerns through recruitment and employment. Health has also been given an increased focus and a new form has been launched for reporting cases of occupational ill health, which could relate to anything from work related stress, to respiratory conditions associated with inhalants, to upper limb disorders associated with DSE or work equipment use.</p>

Improve near miss / hazard reporting	To continue communications relating to near miss / hazard reporting	March 2023	Corporate H&S Service HoS	Complete and ongoing	Please see row above. In addition to the above, a new intranet page has been developed to provide simple to understand guidance, support and signposting for staff and line managers.
Review and revise risk assessment documentation controls	Devolve control of risk assessment to service level Risk assessments reviewed	July 2021 Annually	Corporate H&S Service HoS / Line Managers	Review complete	A new risk assessment template has been launched and generic corporate risk assessments have been produced to assist managers, cut duplication, ensure compliance and gain consistency. This will be an ongoing work programme into the next strategic plan where the team will continue to develop this risk assessment library and ensure that teams are adopting and adapting risk assessments for their service areas.
Improved oversight of health and safety performance	Increased use of Pentana to allow oversight of risk assessment and related processes	July 2021	Corporate H&S Service HoS	Review complete	The Team has explored the options of using Pentana to help manage health and safety documentation in conjunction with other Council services, but it was determined that this would not lead to material improvement. A Pentana bolt on package could be procured to help manage health and safety risk documentation and a VFM assessment would be required to reach a decision. We will continue to review opportunities for improvement.
Manager health and safety training	To deliver suitable training session to	March 2021	Corporate H&S Service	Complete and ongoing	A turnover in management in the last 3 years has created additional work for the

	managers to support them in controlling their own service health and safety risks				<p>health and safety team in ensuring new managers understand their health and safety duties within the organisation.</p> <p>Accordingly, the team has supported the roll out of the Managing Safely qualification to more than 70 managers across the organisation.</p> <p>The Team will continue to develop the manager resources to assist them in their health and safety duties.</p>
All accident (including RIDDOR) events reported and investigated	<p>Procedures reviewed</p> <p>Levels of reporting investigation noted</p> <p>No adverse outcomes from enforcement agency follow-up</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Corporate H&S Service</p> <p>HoS / Line Managers</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>A new Accident, Incident and Near Miss Policy is in place and new and updated forms produced to support the policy. An intranet page has been created to support the programme and a comms package produced to support it.</p> <p>Figures, trends and specific cases of note are routinely reported to health and safety committees.</p> <p>There has been no visit or enforcement activity by the HSE in the last 3 years. Following a fire in the waste transfer station at the depot, some learning points were shared by the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and adopted in Council procedures.</p>
Ensure all staff continue to receive appropriate	To review the health and safety induction	January 2022	Corporate H&S Service	Complete and ongoing	A new training policy and supporting staff training checklist has been produced. A

induction and training	and refresher training module		HoS / Line Managers		<p>new intranet page has also been produced which links to HR staff induction and appraisal processes. A new health and safety induction training presentation and manager health and safety awareness training has been developed and is available on the intranet.</p> <p>A replacement e-learning training provider is anticipated in spring 2023. The health and safety team worked with HR on the tendering specification and will continue to work with the HR team on implementation of the new system.</p>
Examine links between health and safety controls and ill health absenteeism	To review insurance claims, sick absence statistics to identify and implement proactive controls to reduced incidents	March 2022	Corporate H&S Service / HR	Review complete	The Team has been working with the HR and Insurance teams to streamline processes and avoid duplication. The new accident and incident forms are an example of this. New procedures are in the process of being embedded within the recruitment process so that occupational health better understand the risks within specific roles. The team is also actively engaged in the tendering process for our new occupational health provider.
Support effective building management compliance processes and related safety standards.	Improved links between Corporate Health and Safety and Property Services and Estates to provide a	March 2022	Corporate H&S Service / Property Services	Complete	The Health and Safety Team regularly liaises with the Property Services Team and other services in relation to overlapping duties and new emerging duties. Regular meetings are in place.

	coordinated compliance regime				
Develop health and safety competencies for job categories	To link staff responsibilities to minimum requirements for health and safety training	March 2022	Corporate H&S Service / HR	Review complete	<p>Specific training has been produced for staff and managers to help them understand their roles. The Driver's Handbook has also been revised and reissued as a targeted higher risk piece of work. In 2022/2023 the team has been heavily involved in redesigning a more streamlined and simple set of policies and risk assessments. The new training policy and checklists embeds the importance of ensuring all staff have a bespoke training plan and ensures that they are trained on the team risk assessments relevant to them.</p> <p>A larger piece of work will take place in 2023/2024 and beyond to carry out a gap analysis, ensure that mandatory training is identified for relevant roles and to ensure that training is appropriate and tailored for the audience. Much of this work will depend on the functionality the new e-learning training portal can bring. The roll out of new policies and risk assessments will naturally lead into a training review and redevelopment of training and toolbox talks.</p>
Reduction in reporting/recording of occupational health and	To demonstrate a downward trend in incidents	March 2023	Corporate H&S Service / HR	Review complete	There is likely to be under reporting of work related ill health as above and we will continue to raise the profile of this area of

wellbeing issues					work on an ongoing basis. The Team has had ongoing involvement with HR and occupational health to cut duplication and look for improvements to our systems. A new ill health reporting form has been developed and rolled out but is currently under used. A comms programme will be produced in 2023/2024 to raise the profile of this work area.
Ensure competencies within the Corporate Health & Safety Service	Staff training and development in line with development appraisal process	March 2023	EH Manager	Review complete and needs identified pending recruitment	There are challenges in recruiting to and retaining high calibre staff within this specialism. Additional temporary resources were provided during the pandemic. However, senior specialist recruitment has remained challenging. As such the team structure has been reviewed and additional funding has been secured through the budget setting process in 2023/2024. It is anticipated this will address the issues identified and build resilience.
Support and improve operational links between Corporate Health and Safety Service and key services – Insurance, Property Services, Environmental Services	To foster improved collaborative working and proactive risk control	March 2023	Corporate H&S Service	Complete	The Health and Safety, Insurance, Property Services and other relevant services have fostered strong working relationships. Overall resourcing and capacity issues continues to be a major problem across the authority, but plans are in place to help rectify some of these problems.
Corporate building	HoS complete	Annually	HoS	Complete	A programme of inspections is in place for

inspections	corporate building (and related areas) inspection				corporate stock involving the relevant managers and teams and this feeds directly into the health and safety subcommittees.
Record of Corporate and Service health and safety meetings	Meetings held and minutes actioned and recorded	Quarterly	Corporate H&S Service HoS	On target	All full health and safety committees have been held on an ongoing basis and have been minuted.
Ensure sufficient training and guidance is provided regarding leadership in health and safety	One training session per year provided to CMT and/or senior managers	Annually	Corporate H&S Service CMT	Complete and ongoing	Training has been designed for managers and health and safety committees are also sessions that can be used for training. All Managers have had the opportunity to undertake the Managing Safely qualification. Procedures, forms and guidance have been written in as simple a way as possible and have been condensed to reduce the volume of documentation. The team has also been working hard to foster good working relationships with all of the relevant service areas to encourage open and 2-way communication. Accident/incident reports have been shared at committees and with specific service areas where there have been important learning points.
Ensuring comprehensive training programs and opportunities are available to staff	Increased use and take up of health and safety training opportunities	Ongoing	Corporate H&S Service HoS / Line Managers	Ongoing	Training programmes are constantly under review. We are anticipating the award of a new e-learning contract later in the year and this will help guide how our training is provided, delivered and recorded. The

					new training checklist helps managers identify mandatory training, but there remains a temporary gap in training currently.
Support joint working between employee representatives, management and the Health and Safety Service.	Effective joint inspections, task based risk assessments and health and safety initiatives [when requested]	Ongoing	Corporate H&S Service HoS / Line Managers / Unions	Complete and ongoing	The health and safety team had gone to great efforts to maintain good two-way communication with staff at all levels of the organisation and to maximise the success of projects by working with key service areas. For example, review of the Driving at Work Policy and Handbook involved several members of staff including managers and supervisors at all level where this risk sits, the Fleet Manager and the Insurance Team.