



AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 22 October 2024

REPORT TITLE:	HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval from Audit and Risk Management Committee for the Council's Health and Safety Annual Report.

The report provides an update on the work that is being undertaken to identify and manage health and safety risks and improve health and safety practice across the Council. The report also outlines the specific work undertaken in relation to Local Authority Controlled schools.

This content of the report supports delivery of all themes of the Council Plan 2023-27 through embedding of Health and Safety practices across the organisation.

This report is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Audit and Risk Management Committee is recommended to;

- a) Approve the Health and Safety Annual Report;
- b) Note the current and ongoing work to identify and manage health and safety risks and improve health and safety practice across the Council.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council Plan: Wirral Working Together 2023-27 acknowledges the need for collaboration and working together to meet the challenges Wirral Council faces. The vision is 'Working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities' and the plan is developed around six core themes:
1. Efficient, effective and accessible Council
 2. Early help for Children and families
 3. Promoting independence and healthier lives
 4. People-focussed regeneration
 5. Protecting our environment
 6. Safe, resilient and engaged communities
- 1.2 Delivering the Council Plan relies on the availability of competent employees and the reduction of sickness absence. The embedding of Health and Safety practices across the organisation are fundamental to support the workforce in achieving our vision.
- 1.3 The Audit and Risk Management Committee is provided with an annual report with a summary of Health and Safety activity during the financial year 2023/24. This includes analysis of standards that relate directly to the management of Health and Safety.
- 1.4 The Report is at Appendix A with an update on the key activities and controls for managing its health and safety duties.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The report in Appendix A is an Annual Report and is provided as part of good governance. Alternatively, the document could not be produced to the Committee, but would not provide the same standard of governance.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act (1974) provides a legislative framework to promote and enforce Health and Safety standards at work. The Council has a legal obligation to manage health and safety risks arising from its activities. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act (1974) requires that the Council provides and maintains:
- A Health and Safety Policy.
 - Safe systems of work to control risks in connection with the use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances.
 - A safe and secure working environment, including provision and maintenance of access and egress to premises.
 - Safe and suitable plant and work equipment.
 - Information, instruction, training and supervision as necessary.

- 3.2 The report at Appendix A includes examples of Health and Safety Regulations applicable to the Councils activities.
- 3.3 Also provided are details of reported accidents and incidents for the year 2023-2024 across all Council services and Local Authority Controlled schools of those reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.
- 3.4 As part of the Authority's continuous improvement approach a position statement on the policies and activities across the Council to continually improve health and safety performance and to deliver the health and safety objectives with the Health and Safety policy.

Health and Safety Organisation

- 3.6 The Authority is a large employer and delivers a wide range of services. The Authority has a legal responsibility to ensure it operates safe services for its workforce and the public. The Council must have good systems in place to identify and manage risks and ensure that its workforce has the appropriate skills and resources to work safely.
- 3.7 A new Health and Safety Policy was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 17 July 2024, which detailed the roles and responsibilities of all employees and management for health and safety, identified performance indicators to reinforce compliance, best practice and promoted a positive health and safety culture within the organisation.
- 3.8 The Strategic Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board (HSWB Board) is responsible for monitoring the strategic approach to the management of health and safety. The Board meets quarterly and reviews performance for Health and Safety compliance. This Board is Chaired by the Chief Executive or nominated officer and comprises the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 3.9 On an Operational level the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Operational Group (HSWB Ops Group) is accountable to the Senior Leadership Team – Health, Safety and Wellbeing Board. The HSWB Operational Group meets quarterly with representatives of each Directorate Management Team to embed a culture of ownership of health and safety risks. This Board is Chaired by the Assistant Director – People and Organisational Culture.
- 3.10 In partnership there is a Joint Management and Trade Union Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The Committee is formed as a requirement in workplaces under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended). Council Officers meet Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives regularly to discuss health and safety issues and seek to address any concerns and issues.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no new financial implications arising from this report. The Council's revenue budget makes appropriate provision for professional advice and guidance to be provided from the Council's Health and Safety Team and for relevant training to be provided.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As identified within the body of this report there is a statutory requirement under the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 for the Council to have in place a general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of its employees and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out that policy. The Act requires a written statement of policy and for that statement to be kept under review and updated where necessary. This policy, and any revision of it, must be brought to the attention of all employees.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 This report has no resource implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The risks in relation to Health and Safety are referred through the Council's existing policy.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 This report does not require any specific engagement/consultation.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications arising from the report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of greenhouse gases or environmental implications.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Health and Safety Annual Report

The PDF file may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact andy.mcmillan@wirral.gov.uk if you would like this document in an accessible format.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Health and Safety Policy (approved at Policy and Resources Committee)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date