

# JOINT AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



Report of the Head of Corporate Services

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To: Joint Audit and Governance Committee

DATE: 31 January 2023

## Health and Safety Progress Review

### Recommendation(s)

(a) That the committee notes the progress on the actions originally outlined in the Health and Safety strategic review.

### Purpose of the review

1. This is the 6-monthly progress review of the Health and Safety actions as outlined in the Health and Safety Strategic review undertaken in 2019. This review follows on from the joint audit and governance committee report on 7 July 2022.

### Strategic Objectives

2. Managing the business safely underpins all our strategic objectives.

### Background

3. As part of the ongoing commitment to put in place a robust health and safety management system key actions were outlined in the report to this committee in January 2021, with the most recent update presented in July 2022.
4. The actions support and contribute to more efficient procedures and services, provide for an assessment where necessary and an update of health and safety

compliance. The actions introduce mechanisms for the escalation of health and safety performance outcomes and enable the councils to demonstrate adherence to the requirements of UK health and safety legislation.

## **Progress on actions**

5. The move of the Health and Safety team to People and Culture remains positive and has enabled the councils to begin the drive to deliver a more focused and positive health and safety culture. The additional resource required to fully support the operational delivery of the councils' health and safety objectives, is under evaluation by the Head of Corporate Services.
6. The programme of work to review and develop a suite of core policies that underpin the councils' health and safety management system continues. Through a process of collaborative work groups facilitated by health and safety and good staff involvement, the capture of best practice is being ensured. Key policies have been approved and implemented by senior management team (SMT).
7. Further new policies under development include: the Equipment Management Policy, to help ensure all equipment used by the councils for work remains cost efficient, safe to use and compliant with legislation; the Workplace Transport Policy, to incorporate recent updates to legislation; the Selection, Management and Control of Contractors Policy, a new policy to formalise requirements for the safe management of workers under the direct control of the councils, and; the Water Hygiene (Legionella) Policy, to prevent people exposed to council controlled water systems suffering illness and disease.
8. The Safety Champions Forum, approved by SMT and the selection of suitable Safety Champions by Heads of Service continues. Due to resource constraints within the Health and Safety function, the delivery of the support pack required for the Safety Champions to be effective in their role has been delayed, the start date for the forum remains pending.
9. Training continues to be an integral part of the competency framework for staff and is controlled and managed by the People & Culture team. There are several courses available to staff through the LEAH online training platform. Health and Safety continue to work with colleagues in People & Culture to define the core elements required to deliver good health and safety competence, legal compliance, whilst remaining cost effective. This work is ongoing, with priority focused on providing training that is safety-critical and that meets specific legislation such as the use of mobile elevated working platforms, commonly known as cherry pickers or scissor lifts.
10. Measuring health and safety performance is fundamental to ensuring risks are identified and properly managed. All reports provided by Health and Safety to SMT inform the actions required by the councils to address gaps in health and safety management. We continue to improve data collation and analysis within these reports.
11. Health and Safety continue to work closely with the internal audit team to ensure audits incorporate health and safety in the scope when appropriate. These reports provide more focused detail on the status of health and safety management at the councils.

12. As part of the strategic reporting cycle, an annual health and safety review is presented by the Health and Safety Business Partner to the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Transformation & Operations) and the Head of Corporate Services. This was carried out in October 2022. In addition, regular health and safety reports are provided to SMT on a quarterly basis by the Head of Corporate Services; health and safety remains a standing item on all SMT meetings.
13. Communication of health and safety matters is fundamental for good health and safety performance and the programme of work continues to improve delivery through the councils' intranet system (Jarvis) and learning platform (LEAH). For all training modules provided through LEAH we can monitor how many staff have completed the modules and report this to service areas as required.
14. Senior leadership remain informed on health and safety matters through regular reports, as detailed above, and can cascade relevant information to Service Managers and staff throughout their area of responsibility. 'All staff' emails continue to support the delivery of information regarding health and safety initiatives.
15. Health and Safety continue to provide comment on all the councils' projects and provide input into cross functional meetings. Health and safety general activities continue to support across the whole organisation, including with the development of policies and procedures, advice and guidance for risk assessments, specific projects, new activities, and incident investigations. Health and Safety administer the lone worker system and other council tools, organise and procure suitable health and safety training courses, assist with site inspections, and internal audits as needed.
16. During October 2022 the councils moved into Abbey House and the Health and Safety team have supported colleagues with this transition providing advice and guidance as required. As many staff are working in a hybrid way, we continue to promote good health and safety practice for staff working from home or other non-council buildings. The recently agreed Hybrid and Remote Working policy alerts staff to the many factors, including health and safety, that they should consider if they are working in these ways.
17. Continuous improvement of the health and safety management system is a key deliverable for enhancing the councils' performance. Health and Safety continue to work to simplify and reduce the documentation and work burden on staff, centralise policies and procedures. However, as noted above, the appropriate level of resource is required to support the health and safety function to enable the councils to fully realise the value and cost benefits of the actions being taken.
18. Following the recent recruitment of several new Heads of Service and to refresh and update the knowledge of leaders already in post, Health and Safety will be running a bespoke 'Leading Safely' course. This course will enable senior managers to recognise the value of their responsibilities, of strategic health and safety and its integration into business management systems. A 'Managing Safely' course will also be offered to service managers so that all are able to recognise their responsibilities and provide the support required to expedite delivery of the councils' health and safety objectives.

## Key performance indicators

19. Current key performance indicators relate to the number of incidents and near miss incidents. Appendix 1 provides a summary of incidents and near misses from 1 April to 31 December 2022.

## Financial Implications

20. There are financial implications if we fail to fulfil our duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASWA). These range from prosecution and fines for lack of suitable safety management procedures and implementation through to specific prosecution fines and claims payments for not delivering safe plant, equipment, buildings, locations, and processes.

## Legal Implications

21. As above there are legal implications if we fail to fulfil our duties under HASWA.

## Risks

22. Risk identification is an integral part of our health and safety management system and of this progress review.

## Other Implications

23. Any major incident or injury caused to staff, the public or our contractors because of failure in our health and safety system could result in significant reputational damage.

## Background Papers

None

## **Appendix 1 - Health and Safety Key Performance Indicators**

The graphs below provide a summary of incidents and near misses that have been reported to Health and Safety at the councils, with a total of 46 incidents occurring since the start of this council year (1 April 2022).

Please note the annual comparison graph uses data compiled by calendar year, all other graphs use data compiled by council year (1 April 2022 to present). Health and Safety continue to champion the reporting of near misses and potentially dangerous situations (PDS) by staff. These reports provide an opportunity for the councils to reduce their liability and protect against more serious and costly incidents occurring in the future. It should be noted that the rate of reporting is significantly lower than theoretically expected for the type and size of the organisation.

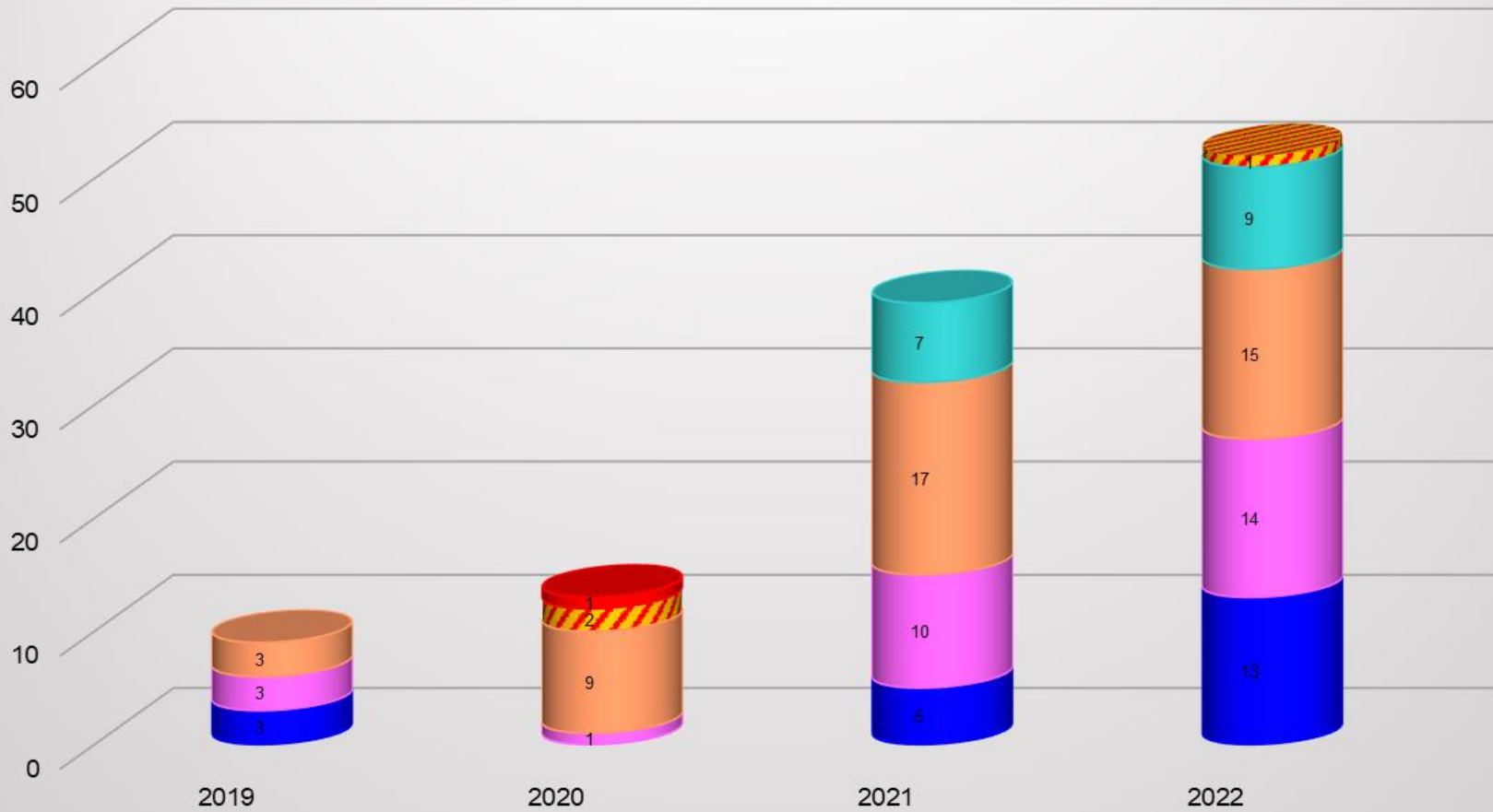
Notes:

RIDDOR = Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

RIDDOR LT – RIDDOR incidents reported after 7 days

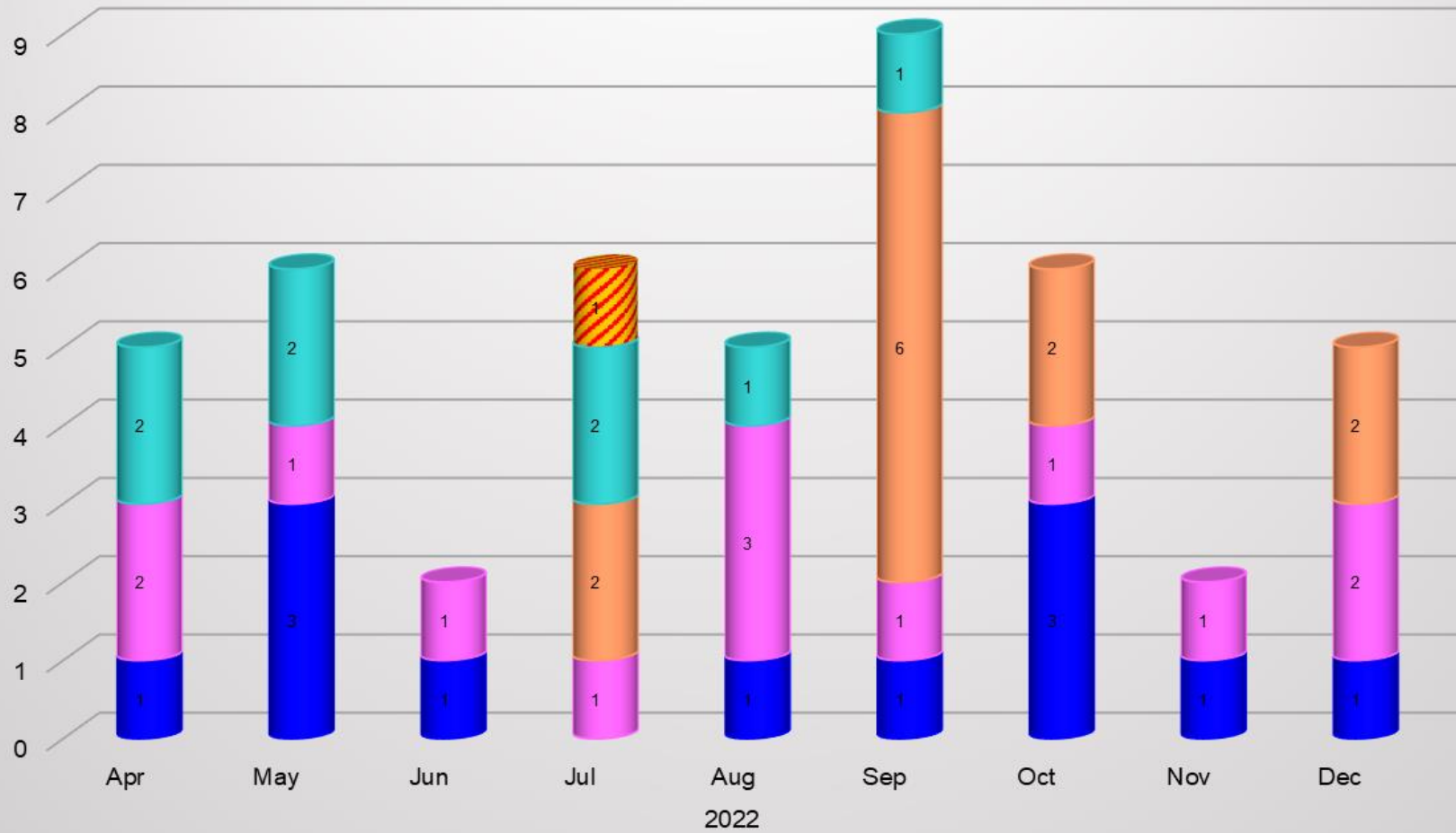
Incidents Reported (Calendar Year - Present)

■ Abuse/Threat   
 ■ Minor Injury   
 ■ Near Miss/PDS   
 ■ Property Damage   
 ■ RIDDOR Injury/Disease   
 ■ RIDDOR LT = >7dy



Incidents Reported (April 2022 - Present)

■ Abuse/Threat ■ Minor Injury ■ Near Miss/PDS ■ Property Damage ■ RIDDOR Injury/Disease



### Incident Type (Apr 2022 - Present)

■ Abuse/Threat  
 ■ Minor Injury  
 ■ Near Miss/PDS  
 ■ Property Damage  
 ■ RIDDOR Injury/Disease

