

Classification: Open	Decision Type: Non-Key
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 04 September 2024
Subject:	A review of health and safety performance in 2023-24 and a proposed Health and Safety Strategy for the next 3 years.	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR	

Summary

In accordance with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) best practice the Council produces an annual Health and Safety Report. This report sets out key health and safety activity over the preceding financial year alongside a summary of reported health and safety incidents and is presented to members for their comment and approval.

As part of the annual reporting process the Council’s Health and Safety Policy is also reviewed (in-line with HSE Best Practice) and the Policy is also included here for approval.

Additionally, in-line with the recommendations from an external review of Health and Safety arrangements in the Council conducted in 2023, the Council has developed a new 3-year Health and Safety Strategy which proposes a set of priorities for 2024-27 and is presented for approval.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to approve the 2023-24 Annual Health and Safety Report, revised Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety Strategy for 2024-27.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

To ensure continued compliance with health and safety legislation HSE best practice guidance and, ultimately, to support a safe working environment for staff and those who access Council services.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has now established a strong governance regime around health and safety activity, which includes an annual review of the organisation's Health and Safety Policy (as per HSE guidance) and consideration of an annual outturn report. Each year these are considered jointly by Members and the Trades Unions via the Corporate Health and Safety Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and, ultimately, subject to Cabinet approval.
- 1.2 A review of the Council's health and safety arrangements, carried out in March-June 2023 by external health and safety consultants noted the significant recent progress that had been made in terms of Health and Safety governance, Trade Union collaboration and the production of annual and quarterly reports. It also acknowledged the commitment of staff at all levels in the context of the financial pressures facing the Council. However, the review made a number of recommendations for improvement both strategically and operationally. A key recommendation was the development of a longer-term (3 year) Health and Safety Strategy and supporting set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to set out the overarching improvement journey for health and safety in the Council.

2. Reports for Consideration and Approval

- 2.1 This document introduces three reports for discussion and approval by Cabinet. To support and assure these documents the external consultant who reviewed health and safety arrangements across the Council in 2023 was asked to review these reports against the recommendations from their work as well as HSE best practice and their feedback has been incorporated. The reports have also been considered and agreed by the Council's JCC.

2.2 Health and Safety Policy

- 2.2.1 The Council's Health and Safety Policy (Appendix A) sets out how the Authority will meet its responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other associated legislation to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all employees, and to provide such information, instruction and training as may be necessary for this purpose. In addition, it also sets out how the Council will take responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of third parties such as contractors, visitors or members of the public who may be affected by our activities.
- 2.2.2 The policy is reviewed on an annual basis as per HSE guidance. There are no major changes proposed this year. Some minor amendments have been made to strengthen and clarify language, particularly in relation to roles and responsibilities, in response to feedback.

2.3 Annual Health and Safety Report 2023-24

2.3.1 The annual report (Appendix B) provides an overview of health and safety management activity during 2023-24. It includes progress against the Council's agreed health and safety objectives and an analysis of incident statistics. In addition, it highlights the support provided throughout the year to Council services and takes account of the organisational, local and national context. It also includes a progress report against the 31 recommendations made through the external review noted above.

2.3.2 The overarching aim for 2023-24 was to embed and strengthen the core basic requirements of a robust health and safety management system. Significant progress has been made here, and some key highlights are:

- A revised health and safety policy, signed by the Chief Executive and Leader and was published
- A robust and consistent new risk assessment process has been developed and launched, with risk assessments now all stored centrally.
- A detailed health and safety training matrix has been developed for the Operations Department, and action is being taken to close any gaps.
- The School's Health and Safety Policy was updated and issued with a strengthened request for assurance information. Responses were received from all 33 schools within scope.
- The Council's occupational health service was outsourced in July 2023 and a managed health surveillance programme developed. As of 3 June 2024, 88.2% of staff requiring health surveillance have already attended or have appointments scheduled.

2.3.3 Additionally, some key statistics for 2023-24 are:

- 232 accidents/incidents/near misses/dangerous occurrences were reported
- 151 involved employees and 81 involved members of the public. – There has been a concerning increase in incidents of violence and aggression against staff and additional steps have been taken in response to this including strengthened guidance and targeted training and support
- 29 were near misses. – This is a significant rise on the previous year and a positive indication.
- 5 were RIDDOR reportable

2.4 Health and Safety Strategy for 2024-27

2.4.1 A Health and Safety Strategy for 2024-27 (Appendix C) has been developed, which clearly sets out the Council's approach to health and safety management, its priorities for the next three years and a number of KPIs to monitor performance. The Strategy's priorities include:

- Ensuring full compliance with our robust new risk assessment process
- Developing a system to centrally monitor health and safety training and working towards full compliance

- Developing a robust health and safety culture
- Integrating Housing Services into our approach to health and safety

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Please summarise how this links to the Let's Do It Strategy.

Strong health and safety practice is key to the Council delivering the Let's Do It! Strategy by ensuring employees have the confidence and infrastructure to deliver effectively in their roles.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

*Please provide an explanation of the outcome(s) of an initial or full EIA and make **specific reference regarding the protected characteristic of Looked After Children**. Intranet link to EIA documents is [here](#).*

An Equality Impact Assessment of the Council's Health and Safety Policy was undertaken at the time of its original approval and no negative impacts identified.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

*Please provide an explanation of the Environmental impact of this decision. Please include the impact on both **Carbon emissions** (contact climate@bury.gov.uk for advice) and **Biodiversity** (contact c.m.wilkinson@bury.gov.uk for advice)*

No negative impacts identified.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The lack of a robust Health and Safety Policy and Strategy, which align with HSE guidance, would pose a risk to employee and public safety as well as legal challenge.	Policy and Strategy approval, communication and continuous monitoring and review
Lack of compliance with the organisation's Health and Safety Policy and Strategy	Engagement and training to be rolled out following communication of the Policy and Strategy, with requirements for compliance
Lack of clear governance and priorities for health and safety	Agreement of this report and close and continuous joint working with the Trade Unions

Legal Implications:

This report requests members to approve the Health and Safety Annual Report. It is also to update Cabinet on the Council's Health and Safety performance over the last 12 months and sets out national priorities and the priorities for the next 12 months. As an employer the Council has statutory responsibilities to carry out our undertaking (all activities) so far as is practicable in a safe and healthy working environment for our employees, contractors and partners. In addition, as an Authority we have a duty under s18 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to make adequate provision for health and safety regulations in our area.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising directly from the approval of this report. Implementing the strategy will ensure the council uses its resources efficiently and effectively manages its risk exposure, helping to prevent workplace incidents which can lead to cost savings associated with medical expenses, compensation claims and potential legal fees. A proactive health and safety strategy is an investment in risk reduction.

Appendices:

Please list any appended documents.

Appendix A Health and Safety Policy

Appendix B Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-24

Appendix C Health and Safety Strategy 2024-27

Background papers:

[Report to Cabinet: 12th July 2023 – Health and Safety Annual Report](#)

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
JCC	Joint Consultative Committee