

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Health and Safety Annual Report 2015/16</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on 28 July 2016
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR</b>	Graham Ebers, Director Finance and Resources
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member for Resident Services

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

The Council has a legal duty to protect the health and safety of its employees and other people who come into contact with the Council's services e.g. service users, pupils, contractors etc.; the standard of that duty is set by law with employers required to do what is considered to be 'reasonably practicable'.

The effective management of health and safety is an essential part of good corporate governance; furthermore, the active management of accidents at work is essential, not only to protect our employees and others but to also minimise financial loss through employee absence and other direct and indirect related costs.

The legal responsibility and thus accountability for health and safety lies with the employer. In addition to service staff, the Authority is the employer in the case of community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nurseries and pupil referral units. A Governing Body is the employer in respect of foundation schools, voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools.

Wholly owned subsidiaries of Wokingham Borough Council operate as separate companies and are employers in their own right; as such they must discharge their own health and safety statutory duties. The Council's Health and Safety Annual Report 2015/16 does not include the health and safety performance of its companies; it is up to those boards to monitor and review their own internal health and safety performance.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Executive is requested to:

- 1) note the corporate health and safety performance for 2015/16; and
- 2) endorse the approach described and the health and safety priorities for the current municipal year.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to introduce the Wokingham Borough Council Health and Safety Annual Report 2015/16 for consideration by the Executive. Whilst not a statutory report, the preparation and issue of an annual health and safety report by a local authority (a health and safety regulator in its own right) in respect of its own internal health and safety reflects good practice and provides assurance to senior levels.

The annual report relates to occupational health and safety in respect of this Authority's services and community schools and provides:

- a summary of the corporate health and safety performance during the reporting year;
- an update on the progress made to date in respect of the three year corporate Health and Safety Plan which provides the mechanism for the formal follow through and tracking of actions to support the key objectives for health and safety; and
- for recommendations in relation to the corporate health and safety priorities for action during the current municipal year.

## **Background**

The Health and Safety Annual Report 2015/16 is a high level report that looks back at internal health and safety performance during that period, highlighting the main achievements over the year and outlining key priorities for the current year.

The annual report is transparent; it provides stakeholders with information on health and safety performance to enable an understanding of the key issues facing Council staff and provides assurance to the Executive that the main risks have been identified, appropriately prioritised and are being adequately addressed.

The annual report is reviewed internally by various management and staff consultation groups; the Corporate Leadership Team and the central employee consultation forums for services and schools receive supplementary information in the form of statistical charts with data breakdowns, for example, by work area and hazard type to aid analysis, identification of trends and patterns and to support the ongoing development of suitable risk prevention strategies.

## **Analysis of Issues**

In overall terms the Council's internal health and safety performance for 2015/16 can be viewed as positive.

## **Services**

- Incident reporting levels for services remain fairly static with the majority of reports coming from staff working at the Bridges Resource Centre, something to be expected of a facility providing care for disabled children and young persons.
- With regard to the remaining incident reports, there were no discernible trends other than a reduction in slips and trips from eight during the previous year to three.
- Of the total 44 incidents reported by service employees, 42 fell into the classifications of minor or no injury incidents.
- Statutory notifications under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) in respect of serious injuries sustained by employees remained the same as last year at two reports for services. The fall injury has led to efforts to improve general housekeeping within workplaces through awareness raising and reinforcing the need for personal responsibility by all.
- The Council's reportable injury rates for employees are considerably lower than the most recently published national average for comparable sectors. All of the Council's RIDDOR incidents are subjected to a detailed corporate investigation and appropriate remedial action was taken in all cases.
- RIDDOR requires for work related injuries involving members of the public to be reported where the injured person was taken straight to hospital for treatment. The one report of this nature during 2015/16 involved a young child who trapped their finger in a toilet door at Dinton Countryside Park; the necessary action was taken to prevent a recurrence which included checks of all internal and external doors.
- Steady progress has been made against the Health and Safety Plan; one area of note has been the review of the Council's arrangements for protecting staff from the risks associated with lone working and violence at work. A report with findings and recommendations is due to go forward to CLT in the near future.

## Schools

- Incident reports raised by the workforce in community schools increased from 286 in 2014/15 to 370 in 2015/16. As with previous years the vast majority of reports come from the two special schools; 261 from Addington School and 36 from Southfield School. Mainly with minor outcomes, this information is vital to the ongoing development of individually tailored behaviour/support plans designed to protect staff and pupils alike. As a learning organisation and in line with good practice, the Council encourages a positive reporting culture across its workforces.
- Of the 370 incidents reported by the schools workforce, 17 were no injury incidents and 352 sit within the 'minor injury' classification.
- In the case of 16 out of the 352 minor injury incidents the outcome was more serious in that sickness absence and/or a visit to the hospital was involved; however, for classification purposes major injuries relate to the categories used in RIDDOR i.e. specified injuries e.g. fractures and amputations and injuries resulting in the employee being unable to work or carry out their normal duties for 7 days or more.
- Aside of SEN related incidents, the trend of slips and trips for the school workforce continues with a rise from 21 incidents in 2014/15 to 28 during 2015/16 with poor housekeeping and food debris on dining hall floors representing the main causes. The Schools' Workforce and Health and Safety Committee will be reviewing this trend in the near future and discussing what more can be done to address this hazard type.

## Analysis of Issues (continued)

- The number of RIDDOR reports in respect of serious injuries sustained by school employees reduced from three in 2014/15 to one in the current reporting year whereby a teaching assistant tripped over the edge of a built up sandpit, fracturing and dislocating her elbow.
- The one RIDDOR report relating to a non-employee involved a primary school pupil who fractured her arm on falling awkwardly when participating in a high jump event.
- The annual report lists some of the highlights from 2015/16 and in respect of schools the seeking health and safety assurance programme proved to be successful in that the new approach not only helped schools develop their local competencies, it also provided the Authority with assurance that key risks were being effectively managed.

## Health and Safety Priorities for 2016/17

Moving forward to the current year, the HR Service is working on a number of key projects designed to support the continuous improvement of the Council's health and safety management system, the most significant of which spans both workforces; with an overall theme of sensible and proportionate risk management, it involves a complete review and repositioning of health and safety reference material to aid managers and Headteachers in fulfilling their delegated health and safety responsibilities.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
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None
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<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
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Health and safety is a cross cutting issue that should be given due consideration and be integrated into all the Council's decisions and priorities.
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<b>List of Background Papers</b>
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The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and 'Managing for Health and Safety' (HSG65), a guide for employers published by the HSE.
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