

**Personnel Committee – 8 February 2023**

**Annual Health & Safety Report covering the year 2021-22**

**1. Purpose of the report**

This report is an information item presenting the Annual Health & Safety Report, covering the year 2021-22, taken to Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 26 January 2023. This report is aimed at Members, but with key data of interest to all senior managers in Walsall Council.

**2. Recommendations**

Members are recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the Annual Health & Safety Report and share it as appropriate to help promote a positive health & safety culture across the council.

**Sponsoring Director**

**Simon Neilson**

Executive Director – Economy Environment & Communities

**26 January 2023**

**3. Report detail**

- 3.1 CMT agreed to the production of an Annual Health & Safety Report, to be presented at Personnel Committee. This year's draft report was agreed at CMT 26 January 2023, and the final version is attached to this report (Appendix 1).

The report gives an overview of how we manage health & safety in Walsall Council, along with key statistical information and key achievements for the year.

This is our sixth annual report since they were reintroduced in 2017. The reports have been well received and so we have retained the format.

We believe the underlying message is that health & safety is well managed across the council. We have systems to ensure that the right controls are in place, and regularly audit those systems both for reassurance, and to help identify areas for improvement – after all, we are a complex organisation and

standards can slip from time to time, particularly during times of restructure and change.

The report notes that whilst Covid-19 was still an issue during the period and occasionally impacted our work programmes, on the whole we had largely learnt to live with it; albeit many of the ways we work have changed markedly from pre-Covid times.

Our customer focused new ways of working are now embedded and the reductions in accidents and aggressive incident numbers we saw in the first year of Covid have now largely become the norm, although we note that [sporting] accidents to non-employees in our leisure facilities have recovered since they are fully open again, and accidents/incidents in schools are at or near pre-Covid levels.

Our audit, fire risk assessment and training programmes are now fully back on track, albeit Covid still occasionally causes the postponement of an activity due to staff availability.

Despite having relatively mature systems, we are committed to continuous improvement in health & safety. As such, we continue to develop policies, systems and procedures to achieve that aim – we have a rolling programme to review our internal standards, and many of our processes have been simplified and modernised over recent years – a trend that will continue.

#### **4. Financial**

There are no direct financial implications of this report; however, Members will be aware that having the right systems in place and keeping people safe helps prevent both criminal and civil proceedings against the authority, and helps mitigate if things go wrong. Members will also be aware that the level of fines for health & safety offences has increased significantly in recent years, in line with Sentencing Council guidelines.

#### **5. Legal**

Other than the general duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff and others, which our policies, monitoring and reporting help achieve, there are no direct legal implications of this report.

#### **6. Risk Management**

Our policies, systems and procedures help us mitigate against the health & safety risks faced by the council. Audit programmes are also in place to help monitor systems and give a level of assurance that our risks are being managed effectively.

#### **7. People**

Our health & policies, systems and procedures help keep our staff and customers healthy and safe.

## **8. Consultation**

The Annual Health & Safety Report will be shared with directorate Health & Safety Committees, where the contents and learning points will be discussed with union colleagues and management representatives.

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