

Personnel Committee – 4 March 2024

Health, safety and wellbeing annual report covering the year 2022-23

1. Purpose of the report

This report is an information item presenting the health, safety and wellbeing annual report, covering the year 2022-23, taken to corporate management team (CMT) on 18 January 2024. 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 health, safety and wellbeing annual report and share it as appropriate to help promote a positive health & safety culture across the council.

Sponsoring Director

Dave Brown

Interim executive director – Economy environment & communities

18 January 2024

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 18 January 2024, 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 seventh annual report since they were reintroduced in 2017. The reports have been well received and so we have kept a consistent format although this year, as requested, we have amended the title to include wellbeing and have included a section outlining the wellbeing initiatives we have in place.

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 does note a rise in employee accidents (5.1), particularly in EE&C and R&T; however, despite the rise, accident numbers are still around half of that pre-pandemic. It also notes a rise in non-employee accidents (5.2), which we believe is down to better, more consistent, reporting by our leisure facilities.

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 health, safety and wellbeing annual 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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