



## **THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Title of meeting:</b> | Employment Committee  |
| <b>Subject:</b>          | Health and Safety Interim Annual Report (for period 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023) |
| <b>Date of meeting:</b>  | 30 November 2023  |
| <b>Report by:</b>        | Jeremy Underdown - Head of Facilities   |
| <b>Wards affected:</b>   | All   |

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### **1. Requested by**

- 1.1 The Annual Report on Health and Safety to the Employment Committee.

### **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 To provide assurance to the Employment Committee that Portsmouth City Council is complying with health and safety legislation and is ensuring the health and safety of those affected by the council's activities.

### **3. Information Requested**

- 3.1 The Annual Report on Health and Safety activities within Portsmouth City Council during the reporting period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 3.2 The committee would also normally receive at this point, progress reports against the previous year's agreed action plan and a draft of the forthcoming year's Health and Safety action plan to agree. However, it is requested of the committee, and for reasons explained below, that the timing of the annual report to the committee is reviewed to enable a more timely review of the previous year's progress and a more informed view of the actions for the year ahead. This report is therefore an interim report to provide the committee with reassurance that the Health and Safety management system remains in place and provides appropriate management of health and safety risks. A more detailed report encompassing proposed actions and priorities for the year ahead will be brought back to the committee with greater alignment to the period the activities relate to.

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### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The Health and Safety function has recently been subject to a review resulting in a structural change bringing the function under the management of the facilities management service, part of the Corporate Services Directorate. There are a number of synergies that are facilitated with this change in structure including enabling a direct link between policy development and operational delivery within the same function.
- 4.2 The change in structure only took place in October 2023, and therefore there has been little opportunity to understand the demands placed on the team and where focus should be placed. Although clearly one item on the plan will be to review required resources, health and safety priorities and bed in any service changes required.
- 4.3 Regardless of structural changes, the Corporate Health and Safety management system continues to be maintained, monitored, and developed by the Corporate Health and Safety team. The team continue to provide specialist advice, guidance, training and support to council members, managers, and employees to enable them to fulfil their Health and Safety responsibilities and comply with UK Health and Safety legislation, guidance, and best practice.
- 4.4 There is continued need to review risks, and adapt policies and processes, training and to comply with legislation; this work has continued in 2022/23. A live risk register is maintained and used to inform priorities for the Health and Safety team and to adapt the Health and Safety management system as necessary.
- 4.5 The Health and Safety Forum continues to meet quarterly and has representation from all services within the council and trade union representatives. It acts as a consultative body for new policies and procedures, a forum for management of risks and dissemination of changes arising from policy or legislation. The Forum is a key part of the Health and Safety management system.

The plan for 24/25 is likely to have a number of key strategic themes including:

- Digitisation:
  - o All reporting functions (Accidents, first aid etc.) to be available as on-line forms.
  - o Better use of data to analyse trends and target action, with interventions based on knowledge, and priorities determined by evidence of areas of greatest risk.
  - o The use of digital tools and AI for such elements as FAQs and user-friendly web pages to enable efficiencies and improve the customer experience.



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- Reasserting roles and responsibilities
  - o Ensuring roles and responsibilities are understood across the organisation and appropriate actions are being undertaken by staff, managers and those with specific responsibilities such as building managers.
- Enable and strengthen an appropriate audit programme

### **5. Policy**

- 5.1 The overarching Health and Safety Policy for PCC is currently under review having reached its published review date, and this is likely to be issued to the wider organisation after the Health and Safety forum in December.
- 5.2 All other policies and procedures are currently up to date. Work is underway to ensure that these are easily accessible online to all staff and customers.

### **6. Risks**

- 6.1 The main health and safety risks that have affected Portsmouth City Council over the previous reporting period are:
  - Slips, trips, and falls
  - Incorrect use of display screen equipment (DSE)
  - Work related violence including both verbal abuse and physical violence against staff.
- 6.2 Fire, Asbestos and Legionella Safety Groups

Whilst responsibilities in this area are devolved to building services, via the Director of Housing Neighbourhood and Building Services, the Head of Facilities is a member of each of these groups who meet quarterly. Update reports are provided to the Health and Safety Forum.

#### **Fire**

There are regular liaison meetings with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service to discuss feedback regarding fire incidents, share information and plan joint working initiatives to promote fire safety.

#### **Asbestos**

There have been three 'asbestos related' incidents reported to the Corporate Health and Safety Team involving contractors (i.e., not a PCC failing). The Corporate Health and Safety Team works with colleagues to ensure compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

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- 03/08/2022 Contractor – Removal and storage of AIB soffits in an unsafe manner despite being identified in survey due to a changeover of contractor site manager. Investigated by PCC HNBS and Principal contractor. Licenced asbestos removal company engaged to monitor and remove AIB. Full review by contractor, new site induction, operative training undertaken, and site manager handover procedure reviewed.
- 07/10/2022 Subcontractors – disturbed AIB while undertaking balcony refurbishment works and placed in a skip despite being identified in survey. Investigated by PCC HNBS and Principal contractor. Licenced asbestos removal company engaged to monitor and remove AIB. Training for operatives, site supervisor instructed to be more proactive.
- 09/03/2023 Contractor – operative witnessed drilling into AIB by PCC asbestos surveyor. Licenced asbestos removal company engaged to decontaminate area. Contractor review of processes and training.

### **Legionella**

The Council employs the services of an external specialist contractor (Water Hygiene Centre). The Water Safety Group, has representation from each Directorate and provides assurance that there is appropriate risk management infrastructure and control in place to minimise the risk of harm and infection from Legionella bacteria. An Operational Water Safety Group reports into the Water Safety Group and their remit is to collate and review records of compliance for water safety and to ensure that water safety is being proactively managed on a day-to-day basis.

## **7. Training**

7.1 Completed health and safety training sessions are shown below and include e-learning and 3x classroom-based courses\*.

| <b>Training Course</b>      | <b>2020/2021</b> | <b>2021/2022</b> | <b>2022/2023</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Asbestos Awareness          | 53               | 114              | 76               |
| Display Screen Equipment    | 990              | 877              | 944              |
| Fire Safety                 | 1156             | 1560             | 1087             |
| Health and Safety Induction | 586              | 680              | 664              |
| Incident Reporting          | 214              | 204              | 149              |
| Legionella Awareness        | 130              | 90               | 73               |
| Manual Handling of Loads    | 156              | 226              | 370              |
| Manual Handling of Loads*   |                  |                  | 25               |
| Manual Handling of People*  | 134              | 15               | 299              |
| COSHH Awareness (new)       | -                | -                | 52               |
| COSHH Assessment (new)      | -                | -                | 51               |

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| <b>Training Course</b>                | <b>2020/2021</b> | <b>2021/2022</b> | <b>2022/2023</b> |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Risk Assessment (new)                 | -                | -                | 25               |
| Personal Safety & Lone Working (new)* |                  |                  | 104              |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>3419</b>      | <b>3766</b>      | <b>3919</b>      |

- 7.2 Whilst the training figures are mainly based on e-learning, figures are included for classroom based manual handling courses for the reporting period recognising a transition back to classroom-based delivery following changes because of Covid.
- 7.3 The training data also captures information on a number of new courses that have been recently introduced.
- 7.4 Compliance levels for Mandatory Health and Safety training is monitored and reported to the Health and Safety Forum, along with direct follow up with Departments.

## **8. Incidents (Accident and Violent Incident reporting)**

- 8.1 There were 12 RIDDOR reports submitted in this reporting period (9 in PCC + 3 in LA schools), compared to 28 in 2021/22 and 11 in 2020/21.
- 8.2 In 2022/23 'Overall' incidents reported to the Corporate Health and Safety Team (accidents and violent incidents) were 486 (302 in PCC + 184 in LA schools) compared to 2021/22 = 453 (226 in PCC + 227 in schools), and in 2020/21 = 266 (175 in PCC + 91 in schools). This increase is due to improved reporting following work with directorates and schools.
- 8.3 Corporate incident statistics are within expected industry norms.

## **9 Visits from Enforcing Authorities**

- 9.1 To our knowledge there were no visits by enforcing authorities during the reporting period.

## **10. Monitoring, Compliance, Audit, and Inspections**

### **10.1 Audit programme**

There is a need for major focus on the audit programme in the coming reporting period. Whilst there is little to report on in terms of actual audits of sites, the Health and Safety team are developing tools that will assist with this, particularly an extensive site management tool, that will provide guidance for those with site management responsibility and set the framework for audit.



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The digitisation of reporting records and the ability to better analyse and spot trends, will allow for more targeted audits to occur and should also create capacity within the team to provide more focus in this area.

**11. Communication and Consultation**

11.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Team continue to use a wide range of communications channels to deliver appropriate Health and Safety messages.

- During this reporting period there were four formal quarterly 'Health and Safety and Forum' meetings (June, September, December and March). The function of this Forum is to ensure the health and safety of those affected by the Council's activities by encouraging and promoting co-operation and communication, maintaining a safe and healthy working environment, ensuring safe systems of work, and providing a forum for effective council-wide consultation and engagement on health and safety matters.
- E-newsletter - circulated and published on the Health and Safety Intranet pages following each quarterly Health and Safety Forum meeting.
- SharePoint, staff intranet, Teams Channels and email provide access for all council and school employees to Corporate Health and Safety guidance documents and forms.

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Signed by Jeremy Underdown - Head of Facilities

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

| Title of document | Location |
|-------------------|----------|
|                   |          |