

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Public Protection Policy Development and Review Panel

Date **9 September 2014**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

SUMMARY

This report reviews how the Council as an employer and provider of services works to continually monitor and improve health and safety performance for the benefit of all concerned by summarising the Council's health and safety performance during the period 2013/14.

RECOMMENDATION

The Public Protection Policy Development and Review Panel is asked to note:

- (a) the work undertaken to maintain health and safety standards and, where necessary, improve health and safety performance for the benefit of all concerned during 2013/14; and
- (b) that the Council as an employer continues to achieve a standard of health and safety management within its activities that meets statutory requirements and demonstrates competence in health and safety management.

INTRODUCTION

1. Protecting the health and safety of employees is governed by health and safety laws which place a duty on the Council in its capacity as an employer and on Members, the Chief Executive, Directors and managers in particular, all of whom have collective and individual responsibility for managing health and safety - including both criminal and civil liability should these duties be breached.
2. Within Fareham Borough Council it is established good practice that health and safety is integrated into the main governance structure and that the Chief Executive's Management Team and Members are kept informed of health and safety performance on an annual basis. This report provides a summary of Fareham Borough Council's health and safety performance during 2013 (1 April 13 - 31 March 14).

MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH & SAFETY

3. The need to manage health and safety is well recognised by elected members, the Chief Executive Officer, Directors and all managers who, via management systems and practices, continue to pursue the control of health and safety risks in order to support the Council:
 - Comply with its responsibilities as an employer
 - Implement the Council's Health and Safety Policy
 - Maximise the well-being and productivity of its employees
 - Prevent injury, ill health or worse to its employees and others
 - Avoid damage to the Council's reputation in the eyes of its customers
 - Minimise the likelihood of enforcement actions by the enforcing authorities (e.g. Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and Fire Authority) whilst at the same time avoiding consequent penalties, and
 - Provide a safe and healthy place for its employees to work.
4. Measuring performance is one of the key tasks of effective safety management and monitoring accident data is one method that gives an indication of performance as well as providing the opportunity to learn from mistakes and to improve both risk management systems and the control of particular health and safety risks.

ACCIDENTS

5. An accident can be defined as an unplanned event which caused (or could have caused) injury to persons, damage to property or a combination of both. In addition to the internal reporting of accidents, the Council has legal obligations under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), to report to the Health & Safety Executive certain types of defined accident, which are generally those that result in more serious injuries or absence from work that arise 'out of or in connection with work'.
6. There was only one incident occurring within the Council that necessitated a report to the HSE under RIDDOR. This is referred to later in the report.

ACCIDENT DATA

7. Excluding reported near-miss and miscellaneous events, there were 51 injury-causing incidents recorded during the period 1 April 2013 - 31 March 2014 - an increase of 6 on the total (45) for the same period in 2012/13.
8. Of this total, 37 incidents involved employees of the Department of Streetscene, (6 more than in 2012); the Department of Community Services witnessed 1 incident, a reduction of 4 on the previous year (5); 7 occurred to employees within the Department of Regulatory & Democratic Services, an increase of 3 on the previous year (4), and 6 to employees of the Department of Finance and Resources – an increase of 2 on the 2012 total. The Department of Planning and Environment had no incidents reported during 2013.
9. The area with the greatest area of risk and consequently the highest number of accidents was the Department of Streetscene. Given the overall statistics it is worth taking a closer look at Streetscene.

STREETSCENE

10. The 37 injury causing accidents which occurred within the Department of Streetscene represents a 4% increase on that of 2012 and involved approximately 30% of the (average) Streetscene workforce of 120 employees.
11. However, this total should be considered in terms of the department's services, which include (among others) the collection and disposal of all forms of waste, vehicle maintenance, street cleansing and grounds maintenance – effectively the Council's highest risk operational activities. Because of the high numbers, this department's accident data warranted further examination and revealed:
 - 24 involved operatives carrying out various waste collection activities.
 - 3 occurred to operatives involved in street cleaning activities.
 - 8 involved operatives engaged in grounds maintenance activities.
 - 2 involved operatives carrying out vehicle maintenance activities,

Accidents in the waste collection services increased from 17 in 2012, to 24 in 2013. Analysis of the data identified the work operations involved and the primary cause of injury to be as shown in the Table below. (Note: Figures in brackets refer to 2012 data.) Table showing Work Group & Primary Cause of Accident

WASTE	Struck by moving object	Lifting, Handling, Pushing, Pulling	Slips, Trips, Falls on same level	Contact with fixed object or machinery	Attack by animal	Trapped by equipment	Defective equipment	TOTAL
Recycling	(1)	(2)	-	-	2	1	-	3 (3)
Refuse	3	1(2)	4(1)	1(3)	1	-	1	11 (6)
Special: Glass/bulk/health	2(1)	(1)	-	-	-	1	-	3 (2)
Garden	1	(1)	2(1)	1	-	(1)	-	4 (3)
Bin Delivery	1	(1)	-	-	-	-	-	1 (1)
Trade waste	(2)	1	1	-	-	-	-	2 (2)
TOTAL	7(4)	2(7)	7(2)	2(3)	3	2(1)	1	24 (17)

12. The vast majority of waste collection operations involve physically handling a range of waste containers such as wheeled bins, Euro bins, waste bags (household and garden) etc. Over a twelve-month period the number of handling operations is, to put it mildly, substantial. For example, there are approximately 48,000 waste handling actions per week and some 20,000 lifting actions per fortnight associated with refuse/recycling and garden waste collections alone. It is, therefore, a reflection of good training and systems of work that there were only 2 accidents associated with manual handling in 2013/14 - a reduction of 5 over the same period in 2012/13.
13. 'Trips, slips and falls' accounted for 7 accidents – 5 more than in 2012. Four were due to trips whilst negotiating bins at roadside kerbs and one was due to tripping over an unseen pothole on returning to the vehicle. When handling a bin an operative slipped on a gravelled surface and another lost his balance and fell whilst manoeuvring a bin around a corner. It is difficult to establish with any certainty why slips and trips have increased.
14. There were 7 incidents of employees being 'struck by a moving object' – 4 more than in 2012. Three occurred when loading/unloading bins onto/from the refuse collection vehicle (RCV) hoist mechanism resulting in employees being hit by falling bins. The hoist mechanisms were checked by the vehicle fitters and all functioned correctly and the bins checked for defect of which there was none - it is likely, therefore, that the bins were not properly located on the hoist prior to the lift commencing. As a consequence, employees were reminded of the instructions for bin loading. Four other 'struck by moving object' incidents occurred as follows: employee attempted to arrest the fall of a stack of bins and was injured whilst doing so; foliage sprung back striking employee when emptying a garden waste bag; a wooden wardrobe door fell onto employee when collecting a Euro bin from its storage shed, and an impatient driver mounted the pavement to pass the RCV striking a glancing blow to the employee as he drove past. The latter incident was reported to the police.
15. Of the remaining incidents within the waste group;
 - two insect and one dog bite accounted for the 'animal attacks' (the latter not serious);
 - a garden waste operative came into 'contact with' a thorn hidden in amongst grass clippings
 - a refuse collector sustained muscle injury when the Euro bin stopped suddenly causing 'contact with' the bin.
 - a similar event to the latter occurred to a Healthcare operative whose hand became 'trapped' in the bin handle, whilst a
 - recycling operative's finger got 'trapped' between the bin handle and wheel arch of the RCV, and finally
 - an incident resulted in arm muscle strain to a RCV driver when the vehicle's power steering system failed ('defective equipment').

Street Cleansing

16. The Street Cleansing section recorded 3 accidents. There were two primary causes attributed to the three incidents but the consequences were not serious and all resulted in only minor injury. No additional measures or controls had to be

implemented that were not already in place.

Grounds Maintenance

17. Eight incidents were recorded within the Grounds Maintenance service, this is an increase of two on the previous year's total. None of the incidents resulted in serious injury.

Vehicle Maintenance

18. Two incidents were recorded for the Transport Repair Unit as shown. This is the same number of incidents as occurred in 2012.
19. One incident resulted in a minor burn injury. The other occurred when pulling off a metal side plate from skate board apparatus as part of a repair and a sharp edge went through the protective gauntlet cutting the middle finger. Over the next few days the finger became painful and required hospital treatment culminating in an operation to the finger. Fourteen working days were lost as a consequence of this incident which necessitated a report to the Health & Safety Executive under RIDDOR. Additional measures and controls were implemented to prevent a recurrence.

EMPLOYEE NEAR-MISS & MISCELLANEOUS INCIDENTS

20. During the year, 6 additional incidents were reported for which a definitive work-related cause could not be identified. Another incident was recorded as a 'near-miss' when a vehicle mounted a pavement and narrowly missed striking a refuse operative (reported to Police). A small fire in the rear of a RCV accounted for a further incident. The final incident was an inappropriate reversing manoeuvre and retrieval of debris during waste collection - resulting in the Council's Disciplinary Code of Practice being invoked.

VIOLENT INCIDENT REPORTS

21. The total of reported incidence of 'violence' increased from five in 2012 to 15 in 2013 and occurred to employees of the following work groups:
- Building Services 2
 - Health & Regulatory 2
 - Revs & Bens 4
 - Refuse Collection 4
 - Housing 2
 - Car Parks 1
22. Three of the incidents resulted in minor physical injury to employees (dog bites). One Police report advised a cautionary approach when dealing with a potentially violent resident. One resulted in damage to property through vandalism and one involved a laser light being directed into a RCV driver's eyes. All other incidents involved verbal abuse or threatening/aggressive behaviour toward employees.

INCIDENTS INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC & CONTRACTORS

23. The Council's primary concern is directly associated with accidents to employees. However, in the current economic and 'conditional fee' climate, where incidents involving members of the public or contractors carrying out work on Council premises are reported they are recorded for insurance purposes. Twenty one such reports were received but none of the incidents was attributed to any fault or negligence related to the Council's undertakings.

POLICIES AND SYSTEMS REVIEWS

24. All departments completed a health and safety audit, action plans were progressed and completed during the year.
25. As part of the monitoring of health and safety management, a programme of quarterly workplace H&S inspections was undertaken in conjunction with UNISON representatives. Matters highlighted were discussed with managers prior to reports being finalised and issued to the Director and subsequently reported to the Health & Safety Committee.

CONSULTATION

26. The Council has a duty to consult union appointed health and safety representatives and within the Council this is achieved on a quarterly basis via the Council's Health and Safety Committee which acts as the formal platform for dealing with all matters affecting employee health and safety.
27. The Committee consists of departmental managers and trade union representatives, and in 2013, was under the chairmanship of the Director of Regulatory & Democratic Services with Member participation by Councillor Cartwright.
28. Minutes of meetings are publicised using the Council's 'intranet' with hard copies made available to the Depot and other work groups without direct access to electronic communication.

HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING

29. During the year, health and safety training was limited to first aid requalification, induction for new employees, and specific task related training due to the development of the new corporate computer based training programmes (e-learning). The Skillgate eLearning system was launched in July 2013 and has been extensively used since. The Regulatory eLearning modules incorporate a range of Health & Safety topics.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH

30. Promoting and raising awareness of health related issues to employees can benefit the Council by reducing absenteeism and increasing productivity and motivation. During the year 136 employees took up the offer of flu vaccinations; 131 attended the biennial health checks undertaken by a qualified nurse, which aim to help employees understand their health and identify potential health risks.

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE (HSE)

31. An Inspector from the HSE carried out a follow up inspection of the Streetscene Waste Management health and safety systems. On completion, the Inspector reported that he was very happy that Fareham's high standards had been maintained. Anecdotally, he was again extremely complimentary about the service, indicating that Fareham remained well ahead of all the other authorities in Hampshire. There was no other workplace intervention or visit by HSE Inspectors during 2013.
32. Apart from the incident identified earlier in this report, there was no other reportable accident or incident requiring HSE involvement during the year.

ZURICH MUNICIPAL INSURANCE (The Council's Insurers)

33. Zurich Municipal Insurance (ZM) completed a risk improvement survey of the current risk management policies and practices specific to the Council's transport, combined liability and property management operations. The purpose of the survey was to identify the existing control measures and establish ability to reduce insurance based losses to the Council.
34. Fareham Borough Council is meeting the required standards and officers are working to further improve and develop existing procedures in respect of inspection regimes and recordkeeping. ZM acknowledged the ongoing work that is being done within the Council in managing these risks.

OBSERVATIONS

35. Analysis of accident reports established that not all reported 'accidents' were attributable to a specific work-related cause. The total figure for actual injury causing accidents at work was 51 – an increase of 6 on the previous year's total of 45. It is important to note that all accidents were of a minor nature with no serious injury attached.
36. It is disappointing to note the slight increase in the number of accidents within the Waste Collection section from 17 in 2012/13 to 24 in 2013/14. The reason for this increase is difficult to pinpoint with accuracy but it is hoped that a proposed programme of training planned to be implemented in the latter part of 2014 for the whole of the Streetscene Department will refresh employee awareness of the health and safety aspects of their work and in so doing contribute to accident prevention and reduction.

RISK ASSESSMENT

37. Failure to comply with health and safety law may have serious consequences for the Council, members and all individual employees. Sanctions may include fines, imprisonment, or both. Addressing health and safety issues likely to affect employees is not viewed as a regulatory burden, but an opportunity to reduce risk to the Council, members, and its employees from potential sanctions whilst at the same time benefitting from reduced costs associated with lower employee absence/turnover rates, fewer accidents and the lessening of the threat of legal action.

CONCLUSIONS

38. The need to be aware of workplace health and safety issues and the ability to manage them sufficiently is very much embedded in the Council as evidenced, for example, by the positive outcomes following the HSE waste management inspection and the Council's insurers audit referred to in this document.
39. The Council can be assured that much has and will continue to be achieved by its managers to encourage a proactive approach to managing health and safety during 2014/15 so that the Council, its managers and employees achieve a standard of health and safety that not only continues to meet statutory requirements but also demonstrates competence in health and safety management.

Background Papers:

None.

Reference Papers:

None.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Ian Rickman (Ext 2401).