East Herts Council Report

Human Resources Committee

Date of Meeting: 26 May 2021

Report by: Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Report title: Health and Safety – Annual Report April 2020 – March 2021

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Summary

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

(a) To consider the Health and Safety – Annual Report for April 2020 to March 2021 and provide comments to the Head of HR & OD and the Health and Safety Officer.

(b) To agree that the Health and Safety Officer combines the Q4 report H&S with the Annual report next year as suggested by the Leadership Team to reduce duplication.

1.0 Proposal

1.1 This report sets out a summary of Health and Safety annual activities and project work from April 2020 – March 2021.

2.0 Background

2.1 Commitment to Health and Safety has remained strong and further re-enforced as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic. The Health and Safety Officer has continued to build, support

and further develop Health and Safety throughout the organisation in 2020/2021.

2.2 This report has been considered by the Leadership Team before being submitted and will also be sent to the Executive including the Portfolio Holder for information and to ensure awareness.

3.0 Annual Accident Data

3.1 **Accident data Accident Totals 01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021.**

Year	2020										2021			
Month	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**		**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**TOTAL**
Staff Non Reportable Accidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**0**
Staff Reportable Accidents under RIDDOR 2013	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**1**
Non Reportable Accidents involving Members of the Public	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**0**
Reportable Accidents under RIDDOR 2013 involving Members of the Public	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**0**
Non Reportable Accidents to Contractors Guests / Visitor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**0**
Non Reportable Accidents at the 5 Swimming Pools and Gyms	0	0	0	0	0	6	13	2	3		0	0	0	**24***
TOTAL 20/21	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**13**	**2**	**3**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**25***

* Swimming Pools and Gyms were open for a short period between September 2020 and December 2020 prior to the start of the second Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic lockdown.

3.2 All accidents that occurred during this period have been reviewed and where appropriate follow up action taken. We can confirm there has been no unusual increase, abnormal patterns or traits identified.

3.3 There was one accident reportable under the Reporting of Incidents Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR), on investigation there was no fault or failure of equipment but a procedural oversight was identified. Following the incident lone workers have been reminded that they should carry the lone worker device at all times. As a result of this the Health and safety Officer will be proposing that where issued the use of the lone worker device in lone working circumstances is a mandatory requirement.

3.4 Levels of accidents are not really comparable to the previous year (2019/20) see below, as there has been a significant reduction from the total of 199 (2019/20) to only 25 (20/21). This reduction is explained by the closure of the pools in March 2020, with a limited opening in October 2020 and then further closure until April 2021, the accident figures have also reduced by staff working alone at home. Average monthly accidents in the pools/leisure centres are around 17-18 per month meaning this figure would be expected to around 200 if it was in line, the limited openings and restricted numbers meant this average would reduce significantly and we can see in October 2020 it was 13 accidents which is lower than average but this is explained by limited customer numbers.

Accident data Accident Totals 01 April 2019 – 31 March 2020.

Year	2019										2020			
Month	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**		**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**TOTAL**
Staff Non Reportable Accidents	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	0		0	0	0	**6**
Staff Reportable Accidents under RIDDOR 2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**0**
Non Reportable Accidents involving Members of the Public	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0		0	1	1	**5**
Reportable Accidents under RIDDOR 2013 involving Members of the Public	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**0**
Non Reportable Accidents to Contractors Guests / Visitor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	**0**
Non Reportable Accidents at the 5 Swimming Pools and Gyms	16	22	18	21	10	18	21	16	14		14	18	See Note *	**188**
TOTAL 19/20	**16**	**22**	**19**	**22**	**11**	**20**	**25**	**16**	**14**		**14**	**19**	**1**	**199**

*Due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic figures are not available for the period leading up to the lockdown as the pools were closed.

3.5 Historically the benchmarking against accidents per 10,000 visits provides a degree of rationality, with the monthly accidents around half terms typically seeing a higher rate of accident per 10K visits.

3.6 For 2020-21 accident numbers are well below historical performance, this has been significantly affected by Covid-19 and the closure of the facilities. This has meant the cessation of school holiday activities or half terms along with school swimming lessons which are typically more younger users where we see higher accident levels due to the nature of the activities (fun swimming sessions, pool inflatable session for example) they participate in, compared to other user groups.

3.7 An analysis provided by the Leisure & Parks Development Officer of a sample of 18 accident reports from 2020 explains the following; 4 are down as natural causes which range from feeling unwell after finishing swimming session and a number of nose bleeds. 2 sporting injuries were during swim club sessions, where on 1 occasion a participant injured their wrist when racing and on 2nd occasion the participant's skill execution during a tumble turn caused them to hit the poolside. From remaining 12 accidents that are classed as "other type," there was 1 accident involving a swimmer getting into difficulty in the pool and required assistance in the water. There were 5 cuts which when reviewed 3 cuts were as result of tiles around the poolside, where these incidents occur we assess, review and complete remedial works to prevent any further issues. The remaining 2 cuts are result of skill execution errors where participants have not exited the pool correctly and have cut shins or elbows where they knocked these areas when trying to

exit the pool. The remaining 6 are contact injuries, which do not necessarily show a pattern, an example of some of these accidents are; Injured Person (IP) was tripped by school pupil; IP jumped off benches in spectator area and bumped knee whilst under parental supervision; After exiting the shower there was some playful behaviour and the young boy slipped; Child ran through wet changing room and slipped over, whilst under parental supervision.

3.8 Benchmarking Data – not available this year, focus has been risk assessments and responding to the COVID Pandemic.

3.8.1 The Health and Safety Officer sought benchmark data to make comparisons to other authorities through the East of England LGA (EELGA) but unfortunately only limited responses (7) were provided. Therefore a reliable benchmark was not achieved this year; this will be revisited as it is believed the response rate was affected by availability of staff/data due to COVID-19 restrictions. The limited feedback received confirmed that East Herts has sound reporting processes compared to others and the limited accident data provided was consistent and did not suggest any concern. The Head of HR and OD is going to approach EELGA to explore if accident data can be collected on a quarterly basis which sets out the number of staff and if possible visitors and the number of accidents to achieve a percentage which would then allow meaningful comparisons to made in the next annual report. Please see section 12 below for more details.

4.0 Annual Risk Assessments

4.1 The annual risk assessment review was undertaken and all services Risk Assessments have been completed and published on the intranet.

4.2 The Health and Safety Officer is reviewing the corporate risk assessments in order to reflect current covid arrangements and the Agile Working Programme.

Table of Completed Risk Assessments 2020/21

Service	Risk Assessment
Housing and Health	Bodies, Human Remains and Bodily Fluids Nox Tubes Psychological Trauma Site Visits Water Safety Working at Height and in Confined Spaces Hillcrest Working Alone Safely Hillcrest Fire Safety Arrangements Hillcrest External - Communal Areas Hillcrest Internal - Communal Areas Hillcrest Hostel Flats Hillcrest Office Based work Hillcrest Exposure to Violence & Aggression
Strategic Finance & Property Facilities Management	Caretakers Driving Work Caretakers Lone Working Caretakers Hand Tools Caretakers Lone Working Caretakers Working at height and in Confined Spaces Caretakers Leaf Blower Caretakers Snow/Leaf Clearing Legionella Testing PAT Testing Facilities Arrangements for Holocaust Event Council Chamber Wallfields
Generic Risk Assessment Templates	Manual Handling Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Planning and organising events Working at Height Working at Height and in Confined Spaces Working with Volunteers Working With Young People
Planning	Site Visits

Revenues and Benefits	Outside Officers Visits
Hertford Theatre	Hertford Theatre Assessment
Corporate Risk Assessments Managed by the Health and Safety Officer **Human Resources and Organisational Development**	Workplace Fire Safety Workplace First Aid Workplace Shared and Common areas Workplace in Wallfields General Workplace in Charringtons General Workplace Safety General Office Workplace in Buntingford General All Weather Working Driving at Work Workstation Safety Lone Working Home Working Violence and Aggression Use of Alcohol Gels

5.0 Health and Safety Policy

5.1 In 2020/21 the review of operational health and safety policy arrangements was completed. Policies are approved by LT and the Safety Committee which includes Unison. All updated policies have been published on the intranet

6.0 Display Screen Equipment and Workstation assessments

6.1 The Health and Safety Officer supported all staff to undertake Display Screen and Workstation Assessments in their home set up and supported adjustments where appropriate. The H&S Officer will be preparing for the next review of Display Screen and Workstation Assessments in June 2021.

6.2 All staff including new starters will be issued with the self-assessment questionnaire. The aim of the review will form part

of the Agile Working Programme implemented in April 2021 and to review the impact of coronavirus on home working,

7.0 Learning and Development – Partnership training and E-Learning.

7.1 During the period 1 April 2020 to 31st March 2021 three Health and Safety Training courses were successfully delivered using Zoom:

Event/Course	No of participants
Asbestos Awareness and Management	12
Project Risk Management	14
Legionella Risk Management	11
TOTAL Participants	37

7.2 East Herts continue to explore shared training opportunities with neighbouring authorities to increase economies of scale and to support Town and Parish Councils in our District. All recent face to face training has been postponed due to the Coronavirus situation and is being reviewed to be implemented in due course.

7.3 Current future events planned include but not limited to:

- First Aid at Work (Refresher) 2 day
- First Aid at Work (Qualification) 3 day
- Defibrillator Awareness and Refresher
- Evacuation Chair User

7.4 The following modules on the Councils E-Learning platform 'Skillsbuild' were updated:

- Health and Safety in the Workplace. All staff – new starters and annual refresher.
- Lone Working for all staff who are designated as lone

workers
- Display Screen Equipment & Workstation Safety all new starters and support for DSE reviews.

7.5 A more detailed Fire Safety Awareness module will be developed to reflect the Agile Working Programme to support fire safety protocols in addition to the core H&S module which covers basic fire safety.

8.0 Contract Management and Compliance

8.1 The Health and Safety Officer is pleased to report that there has been a positive uptake and engagement with Contract Managers who are now attendees of the Councils Safety Committee providing feedback on the main projects being undertaken which includes;

- Contract management overseeing the new build Grange Paddocks Swimming Pool and Gym
- Hartham Swimming Pool and Gym refurbishment
- Shared Waste Services Contract and the increase in residual waste now being collected
- Parks and Open Spaces – Play Area Developments
  - Hartham Common Play Area
  - Trinity Close Play Area, Bishops Stortford
- Hertford Theatre Redevelopment
- Northgate End and Old River Lane Development

8.2 The Health and Safety Officer will continue to work closely with contract managers and providers for the high risk services being delivered;

- Accompanying the Contract Managers on site visits
- Reviewing accident, incident and near miss reports and statistics (this includes direct access to providers H&S records where possible)
- Attending Contract Management meetings and contributing

to the review of health and safety arrangements

The key contract areas include;

- The Sport and Leisure Management contract for the management of the five swimming pools/leisure centres in the district.
- The Grounds Maintenance Contract operated by Glendale.
- The Shared Waste Services Contract

8.3 Heads of Service and Service Managers are required to ensure that any new contract is identified to the Health and Safety Officer during the specification stage to ensure H&S elements are considered and documented.

9.0 Safety Committee

9.1 The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development has actively supported raising the profile of health and safety and has continued to be the permanent chair of the Safety Committee.

9.2 This included a review of how the Committee functioned and reported matters, the quarterly reports are now discussed at draft stage by the committee before being submitted. Reports are then submitted to the Leadership Team for consideration before being submitted to the Human Resources Committee and also shared with the Executive (including the portfolio holder) for information to ensure full awareness and accountability.

9.3 The membership has also been extended to include the Major Project Manager and Contract Managers from Operations to ensure feedback on the main outsourced contracts for the Swimming Pools, Grounds Maintenance and Shared Waste Service. Membership continues to have Unison representation,

the Service Manager for Environmental Health as well as the Insurance and Risk Business Advisor.

10.0 Lone working Solution – Contract Renewal

10.1 The Health and Safety Officer, East Herts is the lead project manager for the procurement of a Lone Working Service Provider. The existing contract has expired but has maintained/extended throughout the coronavirus pandemic to ensure safety continuity.

10.2 The procurement exercise is being undertaken in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council to seek a single provider but operate two separate operational contracts.

10.3 In March 2021 the Health and Safety Officer arranged and co-ordinated 4 pre-market engagement presentations with lone worker solution providers through the Procurement for Housing Framework. The meetings were attended by East Herts and Stevenage Council stakeholders in person or via Zoom.

10.4 Providers gave a practical presentation on the service delivery and product range and answered questions from stakeholders.

10.5 The Health and Safety Officer and lead officer for Stevenage have now finalised the contract specification and quality question set and through Procurement have arranged to test the service providers management portals.

10.6 The Health and Safety Officer and lead officer for Stevenage Borough Council will liaise with each other over the lifetime of the contract to discuss performance and value in the service in conjunction with stakeholders and the service provider.

11.0 Defibrillator

11.1 Face to face cardiac and defibrillator awareness training will be delivered as soon as the current situation with Covid-19 allows. In the meantime the first aiders are trained in the basics of how to use the machine and the machine also guides users through voice instructions.

12.0 Benchmarking

12.1 A survey was previously circulated through the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) seeking views on benchmarking standards to be considered to compare with East Herts Councils Health and Safety performance.

12.2 The survey asked what areas of health and safety other Council's report on e.g. accidents, incidents, near miss statistics, contract monitoring and compliance etc. It also asked how they review H&S in terms of committees.

12.3 **Results**

12.3.1 EELGA has 50 member Councils, unfortunately only 7 authorities responded to the survey last year and responses were difficult to compare.

12.3.2 It was not possible to gain additional responses for 20/21 and it appears restrictions from COVID have made this more challenging this year but we will continue to explore options of benchmarking with neighbouring authorities and seek a benchmark to compare with next year.

12.3.3 There may be difficulties comparing data due to the different ways authorities manage their services e.g. Stevenage Borough Council still have Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance in house in addition to Housing.

13.0 Rectory Hall, Stanstead Abbotts

13.1 Rectory Hall, Stanstead Abbotts, formerly Thele House has undergone extensive upgrades and improvements to bring it in line with regulations governing temporary residential accommodation. New fire safety equipment has been installed with a new fire detection system, the boilers have been replaced and the water storage tanks have been replaced. The adjoining Annexe and Cedar Cottage have also undergone extensive remodelling for use by highly vulnerable homeless persons with high dependency issues, mental health needs etc. In order to ensure privacy the two building have been fenced in order to prevent children from disturbing residents. The garage/store has been converted into an office for the Hostel Officer who can access both buildings.

13.2 The Health and Safety Officer, Corporate Property Services Manager, Property Services Team accompanied by the Homeless Services Manager and Service Manager have carried out site visits throughout the development to identify snagging issues.

13.3 The development consists of:

- 11 Apartments in Rectory Hall
- 4 Rooms in the Annexe
- 2 Rooms in Cedar Cottage
- An office and meeting room for the onsite Hostel Officer

14.0 Hertford Theatre

14.1 The Health and Safety Officer has been working with the team at Hertford Theatre as they prepare to decant to Wallfields while work is carried out on the redevelopment of the theatre.

14.2 The Health and Safety met with the Front of House Manager to discuss the timetable for relocating to Wallfields and covered the following issues;

Theatre will be closing to the public on the 07th June 2021

Phase 1 Decant Period: 07.06.21 – 28.06.21

- Begin process of moving to Wallfields.

28.06.2021 – 30.07.2021

- Back of House Asbestos removal commences.
- Front of House clearance undertaken.

07.06.2021 – 27.06.2021

- All equipment to be decanted

28.06.2021 - CLOSURE

30.07.2021

- HANDOVER
  Contractor takes responsibility for building.

15.0 Buntingford Service Centre

15.1 Site re-lining was undertaken and completed in December 2020, however due to a defective batch of line marking paint the surface material lifted this was at first thought to be an isolated incident but was later attributed to the same failure at one of the Councils pay and display car park with a further failure on a site outside of East Herts. The company have undertaken to prepare and reline the two sites.

15.2 The Health and safety Officer, submitted premises safety documents to Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Services County Fire Protection and Safety Team for consideration and these

have been approved. The documents will be installed in a Premises Information Box (PIB), this is a weather and tamper proof box that is fitted to the exterior of a building and contains safety information pertinent for the use by the Fire Service, it contains the details of the building layout, site layout, location of hazardous chemicals and materials, position of nearest fire hydrant and mains water and electricity and gas supplies. Once finalised these will be placed in the premises information box and the documents will be used as the template for additional Premises Information Boxes to be installed at Wallfields, Charringtons House, Hertford Theatre, Hillcrest and Rectory Hall Hostels.

15.3 The Health and Safety Officer can report that all contractors on site are maintaining robust Covid secure operating procedures on site and in the public domain. Urbaser are the designated lead and contact for co-ordinating Covid secure measures at Buntingford and appropriate covid safe signage is being displayed.

16.0 Police and Crime Commissioner and County Council Elections

16.1 The Health and Safety Officer supported the Elections Team in preparations to get polling stations and the elections count centre covid secure. The Health and Safety Officer acting as Polling Station Inspector (Health and Safety) provided support to develop site risk assessments and identify measures to ensure the election process took place with as minimal disruption as possible.

17.0 Agile Working Programme

17.1 The Health and Safety Officer has been working with Leadership Team and Heads of Service in the development of the Agile Working Trial that commenced on the 19th April.

17.2 In order to maintain covid security desks are bookable using Skedda a system used by Launchpad to book a desk. Authorised users log onto Skedda and can select a desk from the floor plans and allocated desks displayed.

17.3 Workstations have supplies of hand sanitiser and hard surface wipes to allow users to clean desks before and after use.

17.4 Users that require workstation modifications, adapted furniture, equipment and chairs will not participate in the first trial. The trial will be used to determine the viability of the programme and how users with specific needs are accommodated.

17.5 There are still strict coronavirus protocols that must be adhered to such as one way systems, restricted limits on numbers in shared rooms, use of the kitchens and toilets and entering and leaving the building. This has been strengthened with the use of twice weekly lateral flow testing by staff who are accessing the office or working away from home.

17.6 Public access to Wallfields will be controlled and no public attendance in large numbers is permitted. The Council chamber social distancing measures remain in place at 2 meters as to reduce this would then require all attendees to wear a face mask because of the reduced distance between participants.

18.0 Enforcement and Licensing Interviews

18.1 The Health and Safety Officer assisted the Area Environment Inspection Officer to reconfigure interview room 3 at Wallfields to allow for the undertaking of interviews under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and the Regulatory and Investigative Powers Act (RIPA). The room has been made covid secure with a dividing screen between the officers and the interviewees and allows for the recording of interviews in

accordance with the acts.

18.2 The room can also be used by the Licensing Enforcement Teams for interviews as well as the Revenues and Benefits Teams and by making these changes the Council avoids the costs of hiring an interview room at the local police station.

19.0 Health and Wellbeing

19.1 The Health and Safety Officer has been supporting the Health and Housing Projects Officer on planning health and wellbeing checks for staff with the NHS, this has been a popular programme delivered over previous years. The Health and Safety Officer and Health and Housing Project Officer met with Rachel Cumming, Health Improvement Specialist, Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service.

19.2 Public Health Directorate to review arrangements for the schedule in July 2021.

20.0 Networking

20.1 The Health and Safety Officer is a member of a quarterly informal Hertfordshire Health and Safety Advisors Group.

20.2 The group consider legislation and regulations, good practice and acts as an information sharing body. In addition it allows the opportunity to share training opportunities and develop shared working and resources.

20.3 The Health and Safety Officer will be discussing benchmarking options with the group.

21.0 Options

N/A

22.0 Risks

Health and Safety is a clear risk area, the report sets out the work being done to manage such risks.

23.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety
As covered by the report the measures or controls put in place will impact positively on community safety e.g. re parks and open spaces or reception re-opening to the public.

Data Protection
No

Equalities
No

Environmental Sustainability
No

Financial
No

Health and Safety
Yes – as described in the report

Human Resources
Yes – Health and Safety is part of the HR & OD Service

Human Rights
No

Legal
Yes - Health and Safety practice, reporting and monitoring is in place to comply with legal requirements and the report has been reviewed by LT which includes the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Specific Wards No

Background papers, appendices and other relevant material
N/A

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