



INFORMATION SHEET

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HEALTH AND SAFETY – ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016-17

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Executive Summary

1. The current contract with Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), for the provision of a health and safety service runs until March 2018. This agreement has strengthened the Council's resilience for health and safety matters with the provision of a part-time advisory presence on site at the QVR offices and a telephone advice line for managers/staff during office hours. This is complemented by the full time Health and Safety Co-ordinator post who offers immediate support and advice.
2. As was noted at the last Audit Committee meeting (23 March 2017), all of the agreed actions on the Health and Safety work programme for 2016/17 have been completed, with the exception of the introduction of new software for accident reporting and undertaking DSE Assessments. Progress on implementing these new systems was delayed whilst BCC appointed a new Principal Health and Safety Consultant.
3. A new work programme for 2017-18 has been developed, and was shared with the Audit Committee in March 2017.
4. Each WDC service area produced a health and safety action plan for 2016-17, and progress has been monitored quarterly. All Service Health and Safety Leads have reported that good progress had been made during the year and that agreed actions had been completed.
5. A model Health and Safety Action Plan for 2017-18 was issued to Service Leads in January with corporate issues that need to be addressed during 2017-18. Final Health and Safety Action Plans were agreed and work underway by end May 2017.

6. Overall, the Council's risk profile remains low. The number of accidents this year has remained broadly static. The annual statistics provided at Section F include two incidents of illness. There has been a small increase in the number of near misses; but no trends have been identified. Slips, trips and falls are the most reported category of accidents again this year; 28% of all accidents and near misses are slips trips and falls.
7. Health and safety training has continued to be a priority during the year; ninety-four employees attended a variety of health and safety courses. Twenty-seven new starters attended an Induction course, which includes the Council's procedures for managing health and safety.
8. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been fully implemented this year; the committee meets every two months to discuss various initiatives and strategies to improve the health, wellbeing and mental health of employees.

Background and Issues

A Health and Safety Work Programme 2016-17 - progress

9. During the last financial year the vast majority of the work programme actions have been successfully completed. The outstanding introduction of new software was caused by a delay at BCC whilst a new Principal Health and Safety Consultant was recruited and appointed in February 2017. Key areas addressed during the year are:
 - ensuring two service areas were audited. Both Parking Services and Housing Services were audited and both achieved a 'good' rating. All action points have now been completed.
 - ensuring all WDC services completed a health and safety action plan. Progress against these service plans has been monitored at each HWSBOG meeting.
 - ensuring all WDC service areas have up to date service risk assessments in place
 - supporting the rolling out of team stress risk assessments across the Council.
10. A review of WDC's safe practices and procedures has identified gaps in the information and guidance being provided for managers and employees. It was agreed to adopt Bucks County Council's set of health and safety policies and procedures to fill this gap. These were introduced from June 2016 onwards – the policies and procedures have continued to be amended to better reflect WDCs circumstances and adopt new guidance issued by enforcing authorities and other professional bodies.
11. The arrangements for monitoring the Council's Health and Safety Performance were reviewed in December 2016. It was agreed that because H&S risks

across the Council were low, and well managed, that we could streamline the monitoring arrangements by disbanding the Strategic group, and giving the Operational Group full responsibility for monitoring the Council's health and safety performance. Following each Operational Group meeting, a report is submitted to the Senior Management Board (SMB) for information and for any decision to be made where required.

12. The Manager's Health and Safety checklist (WDC H&S Policy 2.6) has been revised to produce two versions one for managers of low risk environments (for example the QVR offices), and one for Heads of Services and Service Property Managers (eg of higher risk sites such as Booker Depot and Saunderton Lodge). The 2 checklists will be launched shortly, so that all managers have clear signposting of what H&S information they need, what actions they need to take, and where to find assistance.
13. A comprehensive monitoring checklist has also been provided for contract managers managing third party providers who provide a service on behalf of WDC. This has been used by officers (for example in Community Services) who manage contracts delivered by third party service providers e.g. Ranger Services and Places for People.

B Health and Safety Work Programme 2017-18

14. The work programme for 2017-18 has been agreed and work is already underway to deliver it. The priorities this year are:
 - to ensure training needs are identified and a programme of health and safety training is developed with BCC;
 - an ongoing review and updating of WDC Health and Safety policies and procedures;
 - to develop new WDC policies e.g. for the use of drones (to be linked to emerging national guidance) and for bomb threats and terrorist incidents;
 - to ensure that stress and job based risk assessments are being completed by Services;
 - to monitor progress of seven Service Health and Safety Action Plans
 - to undertake a full review of BCC/WDC's Service Level Agreement (SLA) and future arrangements from April 2018;
 - to review the new internal governance structures (following changes made in January 2017);
 - to review the health and safety role of Property Managers;
 - to implement online accident reporting tool (Assessnet);
 - to develop online DSE self-assessment process.

C Health and Safety Audits

15. Two formal health and safety audits of WDC services were undertaken during 2016/17. Both Parking Services and Housing Services were audited and were graded as 'Good'. All action points have been completed.
16. Community Services, and HR/ICT/SSS will be audited during 2017-18 probably during August.

D QVR 14 office accommodation

17. During 2016-17, Corporate Health and Safety have continued to support staff with individual workstation assessments in QVR. Requests for new/different chairs have been the main issue again this year, together with some requests for different workstation accessories e.g. ergonomic mice/keyboards:

- 23 individual DSE assessments have been undertaken;
- 16 'users' identified with work related upper limb disorders have been provided with fully adjustable workstation chairs to relieve their symptoms;
- 50 damaged chairs have been identified and removed.

18. A small number of Varidesks have been purchased and been made available on all floors in QVR, following a recommendation from Public Health England on the health benefits of workers spending two hours a day standing rather than sitting at their workstations. Varidesks are a device that enables workers to quickly alternate between sitting and standing at their workstations.



19. Following the Fire Risk Assessment for QVR, work has been undertaken to improve
 - fire evacuation signage;
 - information signage on Fire Wardens and First Aiders for each floor/building.
20. An Environmental Survey was undertaken in September 2016 following the complaints from a small number of staff that were concerned that they were experiencing symptoms of Sick Building Syndrome. An independent company, Alcumus, was commissioned to examine all aspects of the office environment including monitoring to determine the presence of airborne bacteria, yeasts and mould spores within the offices. The survey compared the results with the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) guidance on the "ideal" environmental conditions required in an office. The survey identified slightly above average levels of carbon dioxide on the day of the survey. To address this, the Facilities Management team has installed a sensor into the air handling unit, which automatically increases the ventilation rates in the building, if required, to ensure the carbon dioxide levels remain within CIBSE's recommended guidance. Otherwise, the Environmental Survey concluded that

the office environment is safe, and there is no evidence of any micro-organisms that might be contributing to any ongoing staff illness or poor health. There have been no further complaints and an analysis of staff absence does not indicate any building related illnesses.

21. The Ken Morgan room has been adapted and procedures created to improve the personal safety of staff undertaking interviews 'under caution'. Training in the use of the equipment and procedures has been given to front line staff.

E Key WDC premises

22. During 2016/17 Corporate Health and Safety have continued to inspect higher risk premises to ensure that they are compliant with health and safety standards. The following positive progress has been made:

- Saunderton Lodge was inspected by the Corporate Health and Safety team in October 2016 and March 2017. Good progress has continued to be made with very few outstanding maintenance issues to be addressed.
- Booker Depot – An off-duty HSE Inspector advised WDC by e-mail on 26 November 2013, that he "*was concerned about overall traffic management*" on the Booker Depot site, and that there was "*potential for a serious workplace transport incident*" due to safety issues with the segregation of vehicles and pedestrians.

Health and Safety, Estates and DBK Management Agents inspected the Depot in June 2016. The depot was inspected again in September 2016 and although a traffic management system had been implemented progress on the action plan was slow, and some other issues also remained unresolved.

Booker Depot was inspected again in March 2017, and showed that good progress had been made in the intervening six months. This had coincided with the appointment of new Agent for the site. Very few action points now remain unresolved.

- Wycombe Resource Zone (WRZ) – Corporate Health and Safety is due to inspect WRZ again in May 2017.
- Easton Street Car Park – the Corporate Health and Safety team has met with Parking and Housing Services following complaints from staff encountering rough sleepers in the morning when they arrive for work.

Following these meetings, the risk assessment for parking at Easton Street has been amended, and now includes the wide-ranging measures and initiatives that Housing and Parking have implemented to try to reduce/resolve the problem.

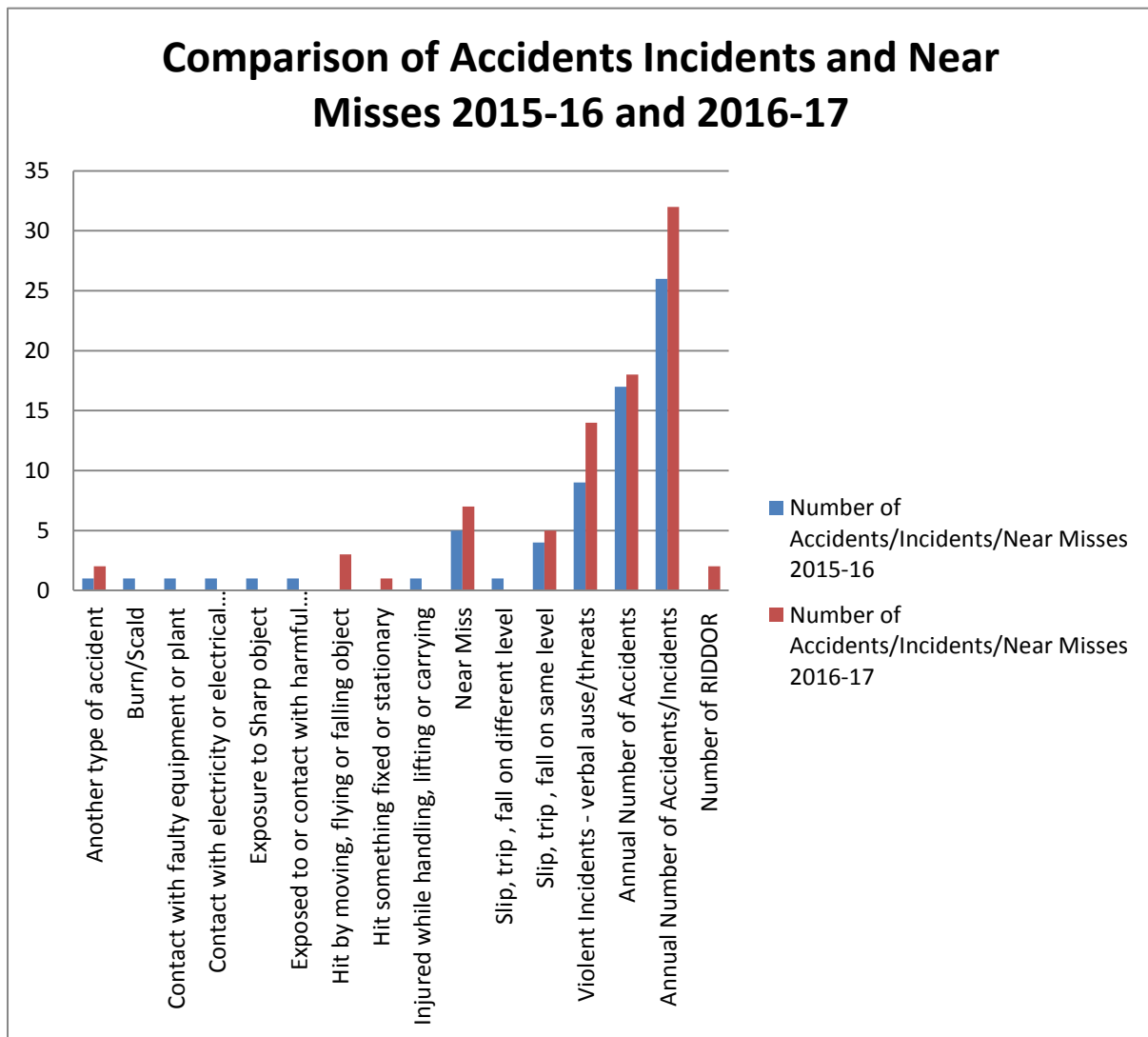
F Health and Safety Performance 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

F1 Accident/incidents 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Number Reported	RIDDOR Reportable	Number Reported	RIDDOR Reportable
Accidents - Employees	7	0	8	2
Accidents – Non-employees	5	0	2	N/A
Near Miss	5	0	6	N/A
Total Number of Accidents and Near Misses	17	0	16	2
Incidents of Illness where paramedics attended	1	N/A	2	N/A
Violence at Work Incidents (resulting in additions to Cautionary Contacts Register)	9	N/A	14	N/A

- The table above indicates that the number of accidents has remained broadly static between 2015/16 and 2016/17. This remains a very low level of accidents for an organisation of our size. During the year no major issues arose and a number of minor accidents/incidents were dealt with locally.
- There has been a very small increase in the number of near misses, but no trends have been identified. Slips, trips and falls are the most reported category of accidents again this year; 28% of all accidents and near misses are slips trips and falls.
- Two slip/trip/fall accidents have been reported to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), as the injured employees were absent from work for over 7 days. One of these accidents was reported as a precaution, as the employee who was injured had no recollection whether they fell on or just outside Council premises.
- Although the numbers remain low overall, there has been another increase in the number of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour incidents that have been reported this year. The number of violent

incidents has jumped from 9 to 14. The services most at risk (Housing Services and the Reception/Customer Services Centre) both have risk assessments in place, which includes personal safety training, refresher training on the use of personal alarms. The graph below compares causes of accidents for 2015-16 with 2016-17



F2 Annual Health and Safety Training Statistics 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

Course Name	No of Courses	Total No of Participants
Asbestos Awareness	2	15
Automatic Defibrillator Training	1	7
Control Of Substances Hazardous To Health	1	1
Evac Chair Training	1	8

Course Name	No of Courses	Total No of Participants
Fire Risk Assessment	2	3
Health & Safety Induction	3	27
Legionella	1	3
Manual Handling	2	2
Pin Point Training	11	23
TOTALS	24	89

- Training remains a high priority activity for Services. Training needs have been identified in Service Health and Safety Action Plans for 2017-18. One advantage of working with BCC is that Services have access to a wide range of health and safety training courses; some have been provided to teams at the Council offices in Wycombe.

G Health and Safety Resourcing

- The contract for health and safety partnership working with BCC continues to provide stability for the Council. Pat Beveridge has continued to attend the QVR offices one day a week as our “competent person” and is available at other times to ensure that our statutory obligations are met.
- The Partnership continues to work well - working relationships and levels of trust and co-operation are extremely positive
- Basic health and safety requirements (e.g. accident reporting, violence at work, fire safety, first aid etc.) are now more strongly managed
- Personal development of the in-house Health and Safety Co-ordinator has progressed well. He has continued to extend his knowledge and range of skills and achieve accredited health and safety certification.
- Overall, this partnership has ensured a robust and resilient health and safety service for the Council to ensure that our statutory obligations are met, and that safe practice is promoted and monitored. We will meet with BCC in the coming months to decide on the level of service that is required from April 2018 onwards.

Conclusion

- The health and safety function has continued to build on the previous year’s considerable work to introduce arrangements for complying with health and safety legislation and good practice. Although the Council’s risk profile remains very low, extensive work has been undertaken to improve the basic

framework for managing health and safety.

- In particular, the agreement with BCC for the resourcing of health and safety, the introduction of an extensive set of policies and procedures and a comprehensive training programme means that we have a strong and resilient base in place.