

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2024/25</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION – CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES, COUNTY COUNCILLOR BEN CALLARD</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>JANUARY 2026</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>WHOLE AUTHORITY</b>

## **1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To consider and approve the Council's Annual Health and Safety Report for 2024/25 at Appendix 1.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2024/25 is approved.
- 2.2 That the health and safety risk register and mitigating actions included at Appendix 1 to the Annual Health and Safety Report is noted.
- 2.3 That the health and safety priorities identified for 2025/26 are agreed.

## **3. KEY ISSUES**

### **Background**

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees, service users, contractors and members of the public affected by its activities.
- 3.2 Failure to manage health and safety effectively exposes the Council to legal, financial, and reputational risks.
- 3.3 This inaugural Annual Health and Safety Report reflects the Council's commitment to strengthening its health and safety culture and improving transparency and accountability in this critical area.
- 3.4 The report covers a wide range of health and safety topics including accident and incident data, sickness absence trends, occupational health, training, regulatory oversight, and assurance mechanisms. It also outlines the Council's alignment with national health and safety priorities and sets clear priorities for 2025/26.

## Key Messages

- 3.5 **Restructure and Capacity Building:** In 2024/25, the Council undertook a strategic reconfiguration of the Corporate Health and Safety function. This included the appointment of a dedicated Schools Health and Safety Advisor and the realignment of the Senior Health and Safety Advisor from Neighbourhood Services to the Corporate team. These changes have increased capacity and resilience, enabling a more proactive approach to health and safety management.
- 3.6 **Improvement and Assurance:** The report highlights areas of good practice and progress, including improvements in accident reporting, training delivery, and health surveillance. However, it also identifies areas requiring further attention, such as the need for more robust monitoring, better data quality, and improved support for employees affected by violence and aggression.
- 3.7 **Service Maturity:** The Corporate Health and Safety function is not yet a mature service. It is recognised throughout the report that further development work is required to ensure it can provide the necessary level of assurance around health and safety performance and compliance.
- 3.8 **Strategic priorities for 2025/26:** Clear priorities have been identified for 2025/26, including:
- Strengthening health and safety assurance frameworks
  - Enhancing sickness absence management, particularly in relation to that which is work related and psychological illness
  - Improving property-related health and safety compliance and assurance
  - Expanding digital reporting and training platforms
  - Developing an Employee Protection Register
4. **QUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**
- 4.1 Effective management of health and safety has positive impacts across all well-being goals and protected groups. It strengthens the Council's ability to safeguard staff and communities, prevent harm and promote equality, well-being and long- term sustainability.
- 4.2 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and is available at Appendix 2.
5. **EVALUATION CRITERIA**
- 5.1 The effectiveness of the Council's health and safety management arrangements can be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Statutory Compliance:** Evidence of compliance with relevant legislation and official guidance
- **Risk Management:** Effectiveness of risk identification, control measures, and assurance processes
- **Incident Performance:** Trends in reported accidents and near misses, work related sickness and occupational health data
- **Training and Competence:** Completion rates and impact of health and safety training programmes
- **Continuous Improvement:** Progress against Corporate Health and Safety Action Plans
- **Leadership and Culture:** Evidence of senior management commitment, communication and engagement

5.2 The Committee is invited to note that one of the key priorities for 2025/26 is to strengthen the Council's health and safety performance framework by developing a dashboard of performance indicators that can be monitored through our Corporate Health and Safety Group and reported annually.

## 6. **REASONS:**

6.1 The Annual Health and Safety Report 2024/25 provides a comprehensive overview of the Council's current position and future direction. It demonstrates a clear commitment to continuous improvement and acknowledges the need to further develop the Corporate Health and Safety function to meet organisational and regulatory expectations.

## 7. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any actions requiring expenditure will be met from existing service budgets or through separate business cases.

## 8. **CONSULTEES:**

8.1 The Governance and Audit Committee acknowledged the health and safety risk register and mitigating actions when they considered the report on 30 October. The Committee also endorsed the health and safety priorities identified for 2025/26 which will strengthen the Council's health and safety management framework.

8.2 The Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee endorsed the health and safety priorities identified for 2025/26 when they considered the report on 18 November.

8.3 The following have also been consulted on the report:  
 Corporate Health and Safety Group  
 Strategic Leadership Team  
 Head of HR  
 Resources DMT

Principal Insurance and Risk Management Officer

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 - Health and Safety Annual Report 2024/25

Appendix 2 - Integrated Impact Assessment

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