

AGENDA

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2024

4.00 PM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,
MARCH**

Committee Officer: Linda Albon
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- 1 Appointment of Chairman for the Municipal Year
- 2 To receive apologies for absence
- 3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year
- 4 Previous minutes (Pages 3 - 4)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 30 October 2023.
- 5 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified.
- 6 To receive members' declaration of any interests under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting
- 7 Health and Safety Annual Report 2023/24 (Pages 5 - 18)

This report provides the Employment Committee with an overview of the Council's Health & Safety Annual Report for 2023/24
- 8 Items which the Chairman has under Item 5 deemed urgent

Wednesday, 4 September 2024

Members: Councillor G Christy (Chairman), Councillor Dr H Nawaz (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor J Clark, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor A Gowler and Councillor S Imafidon

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2023 - 3.30 PM



PRESENT: Councillor G Christy (Chairman), Councillor Dr H Nawaz (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor J Clark, Councillor A Gowler and Councillor S Imafidon

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mrs M Davis

Officers in attendance: Peter Catchpole (Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer), Nick Harding (Head of Planning) and Linda Albon (Member Services & Governance Officer)

EC14/23 **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 6 October 2023 were approved and signed.

EC15/23 **PLANNING TEAM RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - MARKET SUPPLEMENT**

Members considered the Planning Team Recruitment and Retention – Market Supplement report presented by Peter Catchpole.

Members made comments, asked questions, and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Nawaz said that having read the report his reservations from the previous meeting have been answered and he was pleased to note a comparative cost analysis has been conducted and included within the report, the detail of which is to be commended. Referring to page 9 of the report, he asked why it mentions Fenland District Council and local district council and what the difference is between the two. He also asked what effect this has had on employees who do not work in Planning.
- Peter Catchpole responded that the report uses the generic term rather than naming councils individually because of confidentiality. Nick Harding added that it is not appropriate to name them openly in the report, but each local authority goes through a job evaluation process, which is the salary range indicated in the report. The job evaluation process does not consider issues of staff shortages or retention.
- Peter Catchpole added that the report shows the wide range of salaries, which offers flexibility. The top of FDC's range is not completely out of kilter but there is no comparing apples with pears, no two jobs are the same and each have different demands. He believes the market supplement is pitched at the right level, but time will tell if people are attracted to the roles. The work here has not been hidden, the Planning team has the most significant recruitment problems and there has been no negative or unfavourable response from other staff within the Council.
- Councillor Benney said the principal has been debated, the Council has a problem that needs to be put right and any separate pay issues can be dealt with as they come along. However, if the Council wants to recruit quality staff, they must be paid for. This is an investment which will help FDC's aspirations. He thinks this is a good report and time will tell if it resolves the problems or not, but ultimately this is about staff retention not a golden hello.
- Councillor Clark pointed out that as a former employer he knew the importance of creating a good working environment where staff felt valued and worked well as a team which increased job satisfaction. Just as an observation, noting there are eleven vacancies in Planning, he wondered if the Council is a happy place to work. He agreed with Councillor Benney but does

not think £5k will be the magic bullet that cures all problems; the offer being made now was made by Norfolk 12-18 months ago. What concerns him is that other teams are not reacting. With all the difficulties that some authorities have found themselves in over equal pay, he is concerned that there could be repercussions with some staff in other areas claiming unfair pay.

- Peter Catchpole responded that this is not the first time this has happened, and a similar exercise was undertaken for Environmental Health. Some Planning vacancies have only arisen because Peterborough ended the shared service arrangement on 1st April and certain roles were carried out under that joint working arrangement, there is nothing untoward going on in the Planning team. A council apprentice has just won a national award so the development side for staff is good. It is worth pointing out that nationally employees are being offered a lot of money to work in the agency market rather than for an employer and if the Council gets this right, it can save a lot of money on paying agency rates.
- Councillor Benney referred to Councillor Clark's concerns and commented that the Council cannot not do something because something else may happen. Councillor Clark said it was a fair challenge to ask if the Council is creating a good employment position to encourage people to work here and he felt it important to point out the repercussions that should the £5k be challenged it could potentially lead to thousands of pounds having to be added to the payroll. Having said that of course he would hope there would be no problems at all.
- Peter Catchpole responded that this is something that needs to be tried; nobody knows if it is the right or wrong thing to do but all options have been explored and the market needs to be tested. Planning is the Council's most challenging resourced area; the report has been through the union, and they have signed it off.
- Councillor Gowler said that members must not forget that this is an investment. Planning creates a significant income for FDC and the more efficiently it works, the better FDC can balance the books. It is a positive action to support.
- Councillor Benney said that at the previous committee meeting, he said his concern was that this measure did not go far enough, equally there is a need not to be over generous as this could highlight the situation that Councillor Clark has expressed concern about. The test for whether this proposal is any good will be the applications received. The proposal in front of members today is a start.
- Councillor Christy agreed the proposal is fair, justifiable and a good starting point and requested that the committee be kept informed of the progress of the planning recruitment.

Proposed by Councillor Nawaz, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and AGREED to approve the introduction of market supplement payments for new staff within the planning team at a cost of £50,500 in Year 1 and £50,500 in Year 3 dependent on the timing of new starters and to approve the introduction of market supplement payments for existing staff as set out in Appendix 1.

This item comprised EXEMPT INFORMATION within Appendix 1 which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) but it was not necessary to go into confidential session.

4.09 pm

Chairman

Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Employment Committee	
Date:	12 September 2024	
Report Title:	Health and Safety Annual Report 2023/24	

1.0 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Employment Committee with an overview of the Council's Health & Safety performance for 2023/24.
- 1.2 To enable the effective management of health and safety, an employer is required to monitor and review its performance. The purpose of this annual report is to comment on the Council's health and safety performance during the period April 2023 – March 2024.
- 1.3 The scope of this report covers the key activities of updating / reviewing Council health and safety guidance documentation, accident statistics, health and safety training, occupational health (health surveillance) and a review of the progress with the Health and Safety Action Plan.

2.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 The Council has seen continued performance in health and safety, some of the key points within the report are:
 - The total number of accidents has increased to 26 recorded during the year (compared to 18 the previous year).
 - There were four injuries classed as 'reportable injuries' requiring reporting to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
 - The ongoing delivery of the Council's health and safety training programme, with 65 staff receiving corporate health and safety training.
 - A programme continues to review/update the Council's Health and Safety Codes of Practice, to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient for use.
 - Progress of the Health and Safety Action Plan (to 31 March 2023) and a summary of the work planned for 2023/24 is included.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Employment Committee to note the Council's performance for 2023/24 in the report, which has previously been presented to the Corporate Management Team and the Health and Safety Panel.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden – Leader of the Council
Report Originator(s)	Sam Anthony - Head of HR, OD & Customer Services Email: santhony@fenland.gov.uk Tel: 01354 622268
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Background Papers	N/A

Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report

2023/2024



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Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report

2023/2024

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a statement of Fenland District Council's health and safety performance to the end of the financial year 2023/2024 and of its intentions regarding health and safety for the year 2024/25. It demonstrates that Fenland District Council shows strong commitment to the health and safety of its workforce and to others who may be affected by its activities.

The Council employs approximately 337 employees (full and part-time) which equates to 290.7 full time equivalent employees in varied roles and exposed to similarly varied risks.

1.1 Progress against the Health and Safety Action Plan 2023/24

Good progress has been made over the last 12 months to deliver our objectives as set out in the health and safety action plan for 2023/24, see Action Plan (Appendix 1) for full details. Some of the actions are highlighted below:

- The final roll out of internal health and safety e-learning courses developed for staff training via the Intranet.
- An analysis of all accidents and their consequent actions has been undertaken.
- The Accident Incident Rate (based on 100 per employees) was 7.71, which is an increase of 1.4 on the previous year.
- Health and Safety corporate training was delivered to a total of 65 staff.
- A programme of audits and inspections undertaken.

2. KEY ACTIVITIES

2.1 E-learning Health and Safety Courses

The internal development and roll out of various health and safety e-learning courses has continued during the reporting year, with Health and Safety Management and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) added to the available courses. The following courses are now available on the Council's e-learning platform:

- Bomb Threats and Suspicious Packages
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- Display Screen Equipment
- Fire Safety and Procedures
- Health and Safety Induction
- Health and Safety Management
- Manual Handling
- Personal Safety
- Risk Assessments
- Stress and Mental Health Wellbeing
- Working at Height

2.2 Codes of Practice (COP) Review

A key part of the function of Corporate Health and Safety is the provision of policies, codes of practice (COPs) and guidance to provide managers and employees with the necessary support to meet their health and safety obligations.

The Council has a programme of ongoing review and implementation to support effective health and safety management. The below COPs were revised/implemented during the year:

- Employee Protection Register
- HAVS
- Health Surveillance
- Sharps
- Smoke-Free Workplace
- Work Equipment
- Working at Height

2.3 Training

Health and safety training needs are identified in several ways including springboards, regular one to ones, team meetings and through the Council's Health and Safety Panel. A corporate health and safety matrix has been developed during the reporting year which is now available on the health and safety intranet pages. This details all courses available either via e-learning, internally or externally delivered and which courses are applicable to specific services/teams.

We ensure that training is compliant and consistent with our duties and legal responsibilities.

A rolling training programme is produced for the year, which takes into consideration training needs identified in 1:1's and provides refresher training on a regular basis and courses for new employees. The following health and safety training was delivered during the year (not via e-learning).

Course Type	Numbers Trained	Comment
Conflict Management	8	Skills and confidence for dealing with conflict and risk situations staff can face in their work (lone working / reception desks)
Display Screen Equipment Assessor	12	Knowledge and skills in how to set up workstations correctly and the health associated issues that can be encountered.
EVAC Chair Use	12	How to use an EVAC Chair safely and correctly. The course enables staff to have hands-on experience in operating and deploying the chair and provides guidance on the safe evacuation of the mobility impaired.
Managing Challenging Phone Calls	23	Skills, confidence, and strategies in managing angry and demanding customers over the telephone.
First Aid at Work Re-qualification (2-day course)	2	Competence to maintain as a qualified First Aider.
Emergency First Aid at Work	8	Competence to administer emergency first aid to someone who is injured or becomes ill whilst at work.

Training is also supported by on-the-job training within all service areas, but especially at the higher risk sites such as the BASE and Wisbech Port. Training at the BASE is delivered in several ways including 'Toolbox Talks' which are brief practical sessions for employees on site.

Other types of training also include for example induction training specific to the job role, tasks and equipment used, driver CPC training and reversing assistant training. The aim of the training is to ensure that the job is carried out in the correct safe manner to reduce the accident rate.

2.4 Health and Safety Emergencies

2.4.1 Fire Safety

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires employers to have a strategy to evacuate all occupants within a building. As part of the Council's fire safety arrangements nominated staff are trained either as Fire Wardens or in the use of fire extinguishers. They perform essentially two roles, ongoing assessment of fire hazards and risks during their normal daily work tasks, and in the event of an evacuation conduct a sweep of their allocated fire zone to ensure all persons have safely evacuated.

All Council occupied buildings undergo a six-monthly no-notice fire evacuation drill to test response and procedures.

2.4.2 First Aid

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

As part of this requirement, the Council provides two levels of first aid trained staff in its buildings. At Fenland Hall and the BASE, staff are fully trained First Aiders and are required to undergo three days initial training with re-qualification every three years.

At the Business Centres, staff are trained in Emergency First Aid at Work, which is a one-day training course with re-qualification every three years. They also provide additional support at Fenland Hall. In addition to the above training, annual re-fresher first aid training is also provided.

Numbers of First Aid Trained Staff

Location	First Aider Qualified	Emergency First Aid at Work Qualified
Fenland Hall	7	14
BASE	3	9
Business Centres	1	14

2.4.3 Mental Health First Aiders

A total of 60 staff from across the Council have been trained and accredited by Mental Health First Aid England to assist staff who are experiencing mental health issues.

A Mental Health First Aider is trained to be able to:

- Understand the important factors affecting mental ill.
- Identify the signs and symptoms for a range of mental health conditions.
- Listen non-judgementally and hold supportive conversations using the Mental Health First Aid action plan.
- Signpost people to professional help.

2.5 Health and Safety Panel

Health and safety committees give a structured approach to consultation. They provide a forum where management and employees can work together to resolve any health and safety issues. Within the Council we have the Health and Safety Panel which meets quarterly, this is chaired by a Corporate Director, and comprises the Head of HR, OD and Customer Service and 13 workplace “health and safety champions” across the Council including Trade Union representatives.

The Panel approves codes of practice, reports and supports the determination of the Council’s priorities in health and safety.

2.6 Occupational Health

The external Occupational Health provider has continued to meet the organisation’s requirements for dealing with and promoting health at work issues. The core functions of Occupational Health are work-health assessment screening, sickness absence management and health promotion.

We work closely with the Occupational Health Advisor to provide a proactive health surveillance programme to required staff following the risk assessment process. This is based on a two-yearly programme of health surveillance checks, consisting of skin surveillance, hand-arm vibration, audiometry, vision screening and general life-style well-being checks. The services that are part of the health surveillance checks and number of staff assessed during the reporting year were as follows:

Team	Number of Staff Assessed
Environmental Services (drivers)	41
Street Scene	5
Vehicle Workshop	4
Marine Services	10
Other FDC commercial vehicle drivers	3

3. PERFORMANCE

3.1 Accident Totals by Kind

The table below sets out the accident figures by kind.

Accident Kind	Annual Total 2019/20	Annual Total 2020/21	Annual Total 2021/22	Annual Total 2022/23	Annual Total 2023/2024	Benchmark East Cambs DC 2023/24	Benchmark Hunts DC 2023/24
Contact with machinery	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Struck by object	0	0	3	0	2	1	7
Struck by moving vehicle	1	0	1	0	1	2	1
Struck against fixed object	1	4(2*)	0	2	0	2	1
Slip, trip, fall same level	5(1*)	9(3*)	6	8(2*)	7(1*)	7	8
Lifting & handling injuries	4(1*)	1(1*)	4	4	7(2*)	2	2
Injured by an animal	1	1	2	2	0	1	0
Fall from height	0	1	0	2(1*)	0	0	0
Physical Assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contact with electricity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exposed to fire/explosion	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Exposure harmful substance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Kinds / Unspecified	5	5	2	0	9(1*)	6	2
Total	17(2*)	21(6*)	18	18(3*)	26(4*)	21 (2)	23 (0)
Incident Rate per 100 FTE employees	6.17	7.55	6.31	6.31	7.71	12.23	3.85
Near Miss Reports	2	0	6	4	1	N/A	N/A

*RIDDORS (reportable injuries)

Key points to consider from the figures presented in the above table are:

- The total number of accidents over the past year has increased by 8 as the previous year with a total of 26 accidents recorded. The largest cause of accidents was 'other kinds/unspecified' with 9 incidents, followed by 'Slips/Trips' and 'Lifting and Handling' with seven incidents each.
- The Incident Rate gives a more accurate benchmark of accident statistics and is calculated based on the accident rate per 100 employees (This has increased by 1.4 to 7.71)
- Despite a programme to raise awareness of Near Misses, the number reported has decreased in 2023/2024.

3.2 Accident Totals by Service and Teams

Corporately the number of accidents reported by employees and agency staff within each service is set out in the following table:

Service	Annual Total 2019/20	Annual Total 2020/21	Annual Total 2021/22	Annual Total 2022/23	Annual Total 2023/24
Communities, Environment Leisure & Planning	13	18	13	14	21
Property Assets & Major Projects	1	1	2	0	0
Marine Services	0	0	0	1	0
Policy & Governance	0	0	1	1	0
People, Resources & My Fenland	3	2	2	2	5
Total	17	21	18	18	26

As the largest service within the Council, (Communities, Environment, Leisure & Planning) remains the service with the most reported accidents with 21 reported accidents during the year, 21 of which were within Environmental Services (not including Near Miss reports).

Breakdown of Accidents by Teams 2023/24		
Team	Accident kind	Total number of incidents
Environmental Services	Manual Handling	6
	Slip/Trip	5
	Struck by object	1
	Other	6
	Struck by vehicle	1
My Fenland	Manual Handling	1
	Other	1
Comms	Other	1
Planning	Struck by object	1
Member Services / Elections	Slip/trip	2
Contractor	Other	1

3.3 Reportable RIDDOR injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences involving Council employees.

Type	Annual Total 2019/20	Annual Total 2020/21	Annual Total 2021/22	Annual Total 2022/23	Annual Total 2023/24	East Cambs DC 2023/24	Hunts DC 2023/24
RIDDOR Accidents	2	6	0	3	4	2	0

These figures are for injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences that are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). During 2023/24 there were 4 accidents that were reportable to the HSE (over 7 Day Injuries), none of which required further investigation by the HSE.

Where RIDDOR accidents do occur, they are subject to an internal health and safety investigation which is undertaken to identify the causes and make recommendations for any required control measures where appropriate.

3.4 Total annual lost working days

Type	Annual Total 2019/20	Annual Total 2020/21	Annual Total 2021/22	Annual Total 2022/23	Annual Total 2023/24
Number of work-related days lost	148	87	11	88	133

The number of days absent from work because of an accident whilst at work has shown an increase over the past year to a total of 133 days, which was a combined total for 13 members of staff.

The table below gives the number of lost working days for each individual accident, including accident kind and the service. We provide all reasonable support to these individuals to optimise their return to work at the earliest opportunity.

Accident Kind	Lost Working Days	Service
Slip/trip or fall.	21*	Environmental Services
Manual Handling.	54*	Environmental Services
Other.	58*	Environmental Services

*RIDDOR Reportable

3.5 Accidents involving Members of the Public (*Work Related*)

Type	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Tivoli 2023/24	Freedom Leisure 2023/24
Public	0	1	0	1	2	0	0

*RIDDOR

Injuries in connection with work activities involving members of the public have remained low over the past few years; with 2 recorded during 2023/24. Where these have occurred, they predominately involve slips/trips and falls occurring on Council properties or playgrounds. Action has been taken to address the causes of these accidents where reasonably practicable to reduce the risks of similar incidents from occurring in the future.

3.6 Conclusions from Accident Data

Accident statistics have risen in the last 12 months, although an analysis of the accident information has not indicated any trends.

The majority of these accidents have occurred in our Environmental Service team, and so we will be undergoing a refresher training programme in this area in due course.

We had 4 reportable RIDDOR injuries during the past year. Other Kinds / Unspecified types of accident are biggest contributor to our accident statistics, with Lifting & handling injuries also increasing, and Slips, trips and falls remaining high.

Training and other interventions remain in place to address the areas of highest injury. We also continue to focus on areas which are generally not contributing to the accident statistics, but which have great potential to cause serious injury and must therefore not be overlooked. Such areas include asbestos/legionella management, fire safety and contractor management.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE TO MARCH 2024

An ongoing Action Plan to monitor the corporate health and safety goals is established. The goals established for 2023/24 and the extent to which they have been met is set out in Appendix 1.

Work continues to drive forward improvements in health and safety management where required.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIONS FOR 2024/25

In 2024/25 the emphasis will be to continue to support managers and staff to continue good standards of health and safety, provide refresher training and upskilling in areas where there has been a high accident rate.

A summary of some of the work planned for 2024/2025 is provided below:

- Continue to review and update of the Council's Codes of Practice as required under the three yearly revision programme, and/or as a result of any legislative changes.
- Delivery of the ongoing corporate health and safety training programme.
- Conduct accident investigations as applicable and continue to build management skills in conducting these investigations.
- Coordinate delivery of a health surveillance programme across the Council.
- Development of e-learning training courses for the Council's new e-learning platform.
- Undertake audits/inspections of individual services/teams/buildings as per the audit programme.
- Continue to update intranet-based health and safety information for staff use.
- To deliver a programme of proactive health and welfare events across the Council

Appendix 1 - Health and Safety Action Plan for 2023/24

KEY - RAG indicator

- No action yet taken
- Action progressing towards completion
- Action completed

Progress Against Action Plan (to March 2024)			
Action	Progress	Status	Target Date
Delivery of a corporate health and safety training programme across the Council.	Training programme delivered during the past year; refer to page four of this report for further details.	Completed	March 2024
Undertake audits in line with the Council's health and safety audit programme. Dependent on the service risks, the audit is either undertaken by the Health and Safety Manager or self-completed and submitted by the Head of Service for assessment.	Health and Safety audit were completed for the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and Open Spaces • Legal and Governance • Marine Services • Refuse & Cleansing • Transport Workshop 	Completed	March 2024
Development of e-learning training courses for staff via the intranet. These will be mandatory for staff dependent on their roles/levels.	In addition to the previous nine health and safety e-learning courses developed during the previous year, two further courses have now been developed during this reporting period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of Substances Hazardous to Health • Health and Safety Management 	Completed	December 2023
Delivery of the Health Surveillance programme to monitor nominated staff health.	In conjunction with the Occupational Health Advisor a health surveillance programme was delivered to a total of 63 staff, refer page six for further details.	Completed.	January 2024
Co-ordinate meetings of the Council's Health and Safety Panel including setting agenda items etc.	Quarterly meetings held, refer to page six of this report for further details. Production of agendas, accident statistics, reports etc are required for each meeting.	Completed.	March 2024

Marine Services – participate in the Port Management Group and undertake an annual International Ships and Port Security (ISPS) audit of the Port of Wisbech.	Bi-monthly meetings of the Port Management Group are held, with agenda and minutes produced. The ISPS audit assesses security and control measures in place at Port of Wisbech and is undertaken on an annual basis.	Completed.	January 2024
Implement/review and update the Council's health and safety codes of practice on a three yearly programme or as required to comply with legislation requirements.	Codes of practice implemented/reviewed to comply with legislation requirements during the year were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Protection Register • HAVS • Health Surveillance • Sharps • Smoke-Free Workplace • Work Equipment • Working at Height 	Completed.	March 2024
Update and improve intranet-based health and safety information for staff use.	Review of information held on intranet underway, future improvements will need to be completed in conjunction with the HR team.	Continue to review and update information held/displayed.	Ongoing