

## COUNCIL

11 October 2021

# ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 2020/21

### Report of the Strategic Director of Places

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr L Stephenson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities, Environment and Climate Change	
Contact Officer(s):	Penny Sharp, Strategic Director of Places	01572 758160 psharp@rutland.gov.uk
	Martin Jones, Interim Principal Environmental Services Manager	mjones2@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	N/A	

### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Endorses the contents of the report and the positive improvements being made within the Health and Safety function.

## 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To report to the Council the position on Health and Safety (H&S) and related activity within Rutland County Council (RCC) over the last year 20/21.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 This report will reflect on the implementation of a new Safety Management System (SMS) which is driving the ongoing H&S improvements and enabling positive culture change within RCC.

Responsibility for the Corporate Health and Safety function sits within the Environmental Services Team. In May 2020, a full time Corporate Health and Safety Advisor joined Rutland County Council to provide support and guidance to the Council and all staff in this area. This support had previously been provided by a number of part time appointments.

- 2.2 An initial gap analysis and review of the existing Corporate Health and Safety (H&S) responses was undertaken during 2020. As a result of this work Joint Health and Safety Committee agreed to support a proposal to implement the following solution:
- i) An overarching Safety Management System (SMS) be created and implemented as a robust system of control for current and all new H&S related matters.
  - ii) This SMS solution to be aligned to ensuring compliance with current HSE guidance on statutory legislation and to the latest globally recognised ISO standard 45001.
  - iii) Health and Safety matters are always fully supported by the H&S Advisor, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and SMT.

This approach was supported by a new Health and Safety Policy that was agreed and published in July 2020.

### **Update on Progress**

- 2.3 **Safety Management System** - Implementation of the new (SMS) is progressing well with new sections of procedures and documentation being created as required, but primarily on a risk-based priority.

A Safety Steering Group (SSG) was formally established in January 2021. This group acts as a conduit for information, feedback and advice relating to H&S across all RCC Directorates and staff. It helps ensure a proactive approach to the management of Health and Safety in RCC's services and activities by listening to and engaging with staff at all levels in matters of safety. The SSG reports into the Joint Safety Committee to update Councillors on health and safety (H&S) matters.

- 2.11 The Joint Safety Committee (JSC) acts as the forum for liaison between the Members and Officers on H&S matters.

- 2.4 **Health and Safety Guidance** - Due to the extended home working conditions caused by the pandemic, a new Display Screen Equipment (DSE) procedure and corporate process was implemented in May 2020. This process was repeated after 6 months to ensure any outstanding actions from the original self-assessments had been addressed and new starters had also completed DSE assessments. The DSE procedure was also made available informally to Members.

- 2.5 **Health and Safety Advisor** - On demand support is being given to all levels of the directorate teams with regards to general health and safety e.g.:

- i) Assistance, help and reassurance being provided to maintain a "Covid Secure" environment for those returning to the Catmose offices and elsewhere.
- ii) Help and advice provided to support emergency procedures at Catmose, including the establishment of a "Lead Officer" role (the officer with the day to day lead responsibility in the office) and a revised Emergency Evacuation protocol at Catmose. This incorporates a new digital assembly system which is able to monitor who enters and leaves the building, providing live management

information should an evacuation be necessary.

- iii) Assistance provided to support the cross-department preparations for the Vaccination Centre and the Oakham Enterprise Park Lateral Flow Test Centre.
  - iv) Assistance given to the planned Remembrance Service events in regards to the requirements at the various service locations.
- 2.6 All Directorates worked hard to make their services and work areas Covid Secure, including:
- i) Corporate Covid 19 Risk Assessment written and issued.
  - ii) Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) staff risk assessments to identify and protect higher risk staff, implemented by the HR department.
  - iii) Covid secure layouts implemented for local elections.
  - iv) Covid secure layouts implemented in the public libraries and Oakham Castle.
- 2.7 Accident, Incident and Near Miss data is now being collated and analysed in house (previously part of our commissioned service with Peterborough City Council) with standardised reporting to Joint Health and Safety Committee.
- 2.8 A new Driving and Riding to Work process was approved by Strategic Management Team in February 2021 which has now been implemented. This sets out the requisite levels of training and approvals required by staff for using any vehicles for work purposes, especially minibuses.
- 2.9 Internal Audit conducted a review of the Council's approach to Health and Safety that concluded in August 2021 (**Appendix A**). This was intended to provide assurance that the new approach to corporate health and safety was appropriate and being implemented effectively. The Audit concluded that there was 'Good Assurance' for the Control Environment [Green], 'Satisfactory Assurance' for Compliance [Amber]; and 'Low' for Organisational Impact/risk to organisation [Green]. There were 3 recommendations arising from the Audit, one medium and 2 low priority. There are currently being progressed.

### **Next Steps**

- 2.10 Moving forwards RCC will be able to demonstrate ongoing continuous improvements in its management of H&S matters in line with the Safety Management System. This equates to a better and safer working environment which also results in safer, happier and more productive staff.
- 2.11 With the easing of Covid restrictions and more staff returning to office working, regular re-familiarisation emergency evacuation exercises will be held in conjunction with a robust schedule of H&S auditing.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 Consultation is undertaken with all levels of management and staff through the Safety Steering Group. Communication with Members is through the Joint Safety Committee.
- 3.2 The Corporate Communications Team are assisting with raising the profile of the H&S function within RCC, and keeping all staff appraised of new Corporate H&S responses as they happen.
- 3.3 The new SMS is being implemented in stages after consultation and authorisation from the Strategic Management Team.
- 3.4 The new SMS is being reported on, and in consultation with, both the Joint Safety Committee and the Safety Steering Group.

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 No alternative approach has been considered beyond the need to have effective corporate H&S procedures in place which are aligned to industry best practice.

### **5 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 Health and Safety responsibilities are clearly set out as a series of legal statutes and guidance documents, such as the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

### **6 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant risks/issues were found.

### **7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed all equality impacts have been considered under current legislation. Any implications arising are considered on a case by case basis as new policies and procedures are developed

### **8 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None directly arising.

### **9 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 As set out in the main body of this report.

### **10 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

#### **10.1 Environmental implications**

None directly arising.

#### **10.2 Human Resource implications**

Implications are considered as new individual policy and procedure are developed and tested.

### **10.3 Procurement Implications**

None directly arising.

## **11 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 The report sets out the significant progress in the introduction of robust health and safety procedures within RCC.

11.2 By fully engaging with the new SMS and exhibiting continuing best practice this solution potentially lends itself to future certification to the ISO 45001 standard.

## **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **13 APPENDICES**

13.1 Appendix A – Internal Audit Report: Health and Safety 2021/22

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**