

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 3 December 2020

Corporate Health and Safety Strategy and Plan 2020–2022

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Executive
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the 2020 – 22 Council Health and Safety Strategy and Plan is approved.

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Corporate Health and Safety Strategy and Plan 2020–2022

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has made positive progress with Health and Safety over the last few years, with a significant reduction in RIDDORs having been achieved.
- 2.2 The unprecedented challenges from COVID 19 to our communities and Council services has led to all Directorates having to adapt and renew – creating new ways to deliver services efficiently in this current, high risk, environment.
- 2.3 The focus of the 2020–22 Health and Safety Strategy and Plan is to re-align the current Corporate Health and Safety (CHS) arrangements to reflect upon, and support addressing these challenges within the Council, whilst maintaining the existing statutory health and safety offering.
- 2.4 This will mean adopting new ways of working and engagement by CHS to provide greater operational support and guidance for Directorates and Divisions, the building of meaningful and constructive relationships with employees and their trade union safety representatives, whilst providing the required governance and assurance measures necessary to ensure delivery and quality of both organisational ambitions and statutory compliance.
- 2.5 In tandem with this is the desire to develop and build upon the previously successful performance in the comparative reduction of adverse events from previous reporting periods, the Council now needs to consolidate as well as examine its performance in the context of the other similar Scottish local authority undertakings – measuring the Council against other like Councils. By such measurement, best practice throughout Scotland can be identified and translated into Council working practices.

3. Background

- 3.1 COVID 19 presents particular challenges to our communities and activities, including the Council's ability to deliver services safely and effectively. In order to directly meet these challenges CHS will refocus its activities (within existing budget and capacity) to heighten its presence within Directorates and Divisions and to offer

greater support and guidance whilst maintaining its statutory health and safety offering.

- 3.2 The Council has made good progress with Health and Safety over the last few years, with a significant reduction in RIDDORs¹ having been achieved.
- 3.3 Building on previous successes in RIDDOR reductions (based upon previous reporting period performances), in order to measure, learn and develop, the Council must compare its performance against other local authorities/Councils in Scotland and learn from best practices. Only through such comparison will the Council measure, in a meaningful way, its overall performance in the Scottish local authority context and be able embrace best Scottish public service health and safety practices.

4. Main report

- 4.1 It is recognised that despite positive performance metrics, there is still more to do. Employee turnover and COVID 19 have both had a significant resource impact on the CHS team and to take matters forward it is proposed that the Council consolidate its health and safety activities and reposition at this stage. These issues have also been recognised by the Executive Director of Resources as part of his Annual Governance Statement and ensuring that the resourcing of the team is progressed as an improvement action for 2020/21.
- 4.2 The Council's 'Adaptation and Renewal' programme challenges directorates and divisions areas to assess their previous working practices and to find, where appropriate, more effective and efficient (innovative) ways to safely provide their services, including recognising and taking into account the real and current threat from COVID-19 in Scotland.
- 4.3 CHS services must accordingly adapt to secure the wellbeing of our employees and ultimately the communities that we serve. Within existing resource allocation, CHS shall employ a greater degree of collegiate engagement with directorates and divisions that will, themselves be renewing and adapting their services - to support, enable and enhance new safe working practices.
- 4.4 The undernoted strategic objectives are therefore proposed for delivery over the period 2020-2022, with an action plan being developed and approved by the Council's Health and Safety Group, chaired by the Chief Executive.

¹ RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 - puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses).

1) **Objective 1 Consolidation, Adaption and Renewal**

- delivery of an appropriately resourced CHS team;
- restructure of CHS, adapting to the current COVID 19 environment;
- internal development and succession planning within CHS;
- greater communication and collegiate working between CHS and directorates/divisions and trade union safety representatives;
- working with directorates/service areas to ensure that the Council's policies, procedures and activities remain fit for purpose; and,
- fully operable, supportive, governance and assurance.

2) **Objective 2 Leading, Comparing and Learning**

- Subject to buy-in from other authorities, the formation of a Scottish Councils' Health and Safety Forum (or other like body), led by this Council initially;
- the establishment of consistent reporting data set and definitions (ensuring that each Council reports adverse events and other data sets similarly);
- consulting on consistent approaches to health and safety issues throughout Scotland;
- using Scottish Council's data to compare performance with this Council; and,
- introducing, identified best practices to directorates/service areas.

3) **Objective 3 Embracing New Technologies and Information Systems**

- any areas of health and safety in the workplace could benefit from deploying new technologies. Areas such as communications with employees who work in isolation (lone working), access to onsite best practice information and guidance when needed, immediate reporting of accidents, production of suitable and sufficient risk assessment, etc. could have a profound effect on how the council operates services;
- the current 'Safe Working Practices helpline', employed at the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, gave employees/managers immediate access (24/7) to professional corporate health and safety/environmental health advisors. This proved highly successful and will be examined to assess its value post COVID;

- the use of information systems and design technologies to design and deliver new and more innovative training materials; and,
- to identify both the investment required and any potential savings as a result of the potential adoption of new technologies.

4.5 The Health and Safety Strategy and Plan will be reviewed at each Council Health and Safety Group meeting, or sooner following any significant change, to ensure that it remains valid and appropriate. Progress will also be reported to the Health and Safety Consultative Forum.

5. Next Steps

5.1 If adopted, proposals will be designed to consolidate the current strengths of corporate health and safety, whilst recognising the current adapt and renewal agenda. The time line indicated in Appendix 1 'Health and Safety Strategy Plan' will be tracked/followed to completion.

6. Financial impact

6.1 The strategy and plan will be delivered within existing budget. Notwithstanding, areas of development, i.e. the use of new technologies will be measured against potential savings and should be cost negative, if considered for adoption.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Strategy and Plan has been developed in consultation with:

- Head of Legal and Risk;
- Senior Audit and Risk Manager; and,
- The Council's Corporate Health and Safety professionals.

7.2 The Strategy and Plan supports the:

- Council's commitment to protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees and third parties, including members of the public, contractors and service users;
- renewal and adaption of Corporate Health and Safety to address the needs of the organisation in the COVID 19 environment; and,
- governance and assurance statements within the Council.

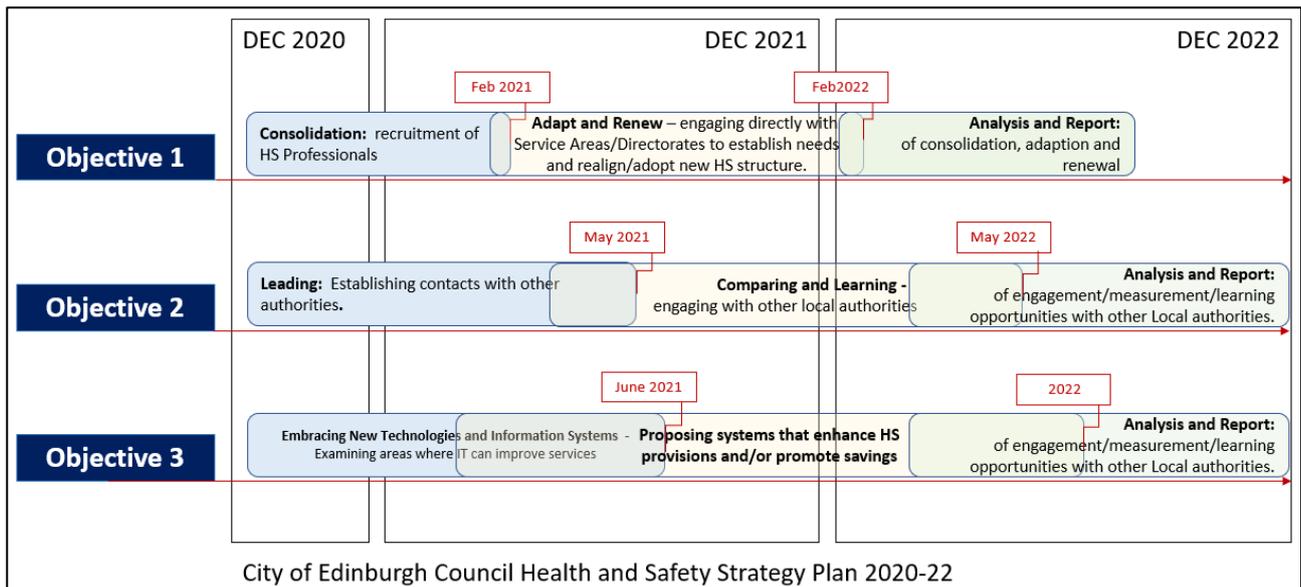
8. Background reading/external references

8.1 [RIDDOR 2013, The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences 2013 last accessed 26.10.2013.](#)

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Health and Safety Plan/Timeline.

Appendix 1: Health and Safety Plan/Timeline.



The timeline shows indicative periods by which certain elements of the objectives should be discharged. There is overlap between phases indicating the fluid nature of the work involved (dependent upon third parties).