



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Governance and Audit Committee


Date 26 September 2023

Report of Councillor Phillip Knowles,
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

Annual Health and Safety Report 2022/23

Report Author

Philip Swinton, Health and Safety and Compliance Manager

 phil.swinton@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report presents the annual Health and Safety Report for 2022/23. It provides an overview of South Kesteven District Council's management of health and safety. It summarises progress made, highlights areas for improvements, and identifies accident rates for the period 2022/23.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Note the attached Health and Safety report for the period 2022/23.
2. Provides comments or feedback to assist with maintaining the effectiveness of the Council's health and safety arrangements.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing that meets the needs of all residents Healthy and strong communities Clean and sustainable environment High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no specific financial comments arising from this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Failure to comply with health and safety requirements can result in significant legal implications for the authority. There are no such implications arising from the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2022/23 necessary to bring to the attention of the Committee. The Council's overall health and safety performance is categorised as strong.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 Failure to comply with health and safety could have a significant reputational and financial impact should an incident occur, and a claim is made against the Council. Having robust health and safety measures in place should protect employees, and members of the public, and could provide strong mitigation in the event of a claim.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.4 Whilst Health and Safety requirements are necessary to manage risk, the Council is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, due regard will be paid to any reasonable adjustments required (where practicable) by staff and Members in the delivery of their duties. No adjustment that would risk the safety of an employee, elected Member or contractor could be considered and therefore officers would work to ensure all suitable alternative options were explored to provide an equitable outcome for all.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Human Resources

- 1.5 The annual Health and Safety report holds significant implications for Human Resources. There is an intrinsic link with employee wellbeing and ensuring our people have the right working environment that does not jeopardise their physical or mental wellbeing. There are also links with employment laws, employee productivity, absenteeism, and employee satisfaction. Furthermore, insights derived in the report inform our training and development plan enabling the Council to address specific skills gaps and ensure our employees are adequately equipped in health and safety.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt, Head of HR

Community Safety

Health and Safety guidance and monitoring provides an approach to preventing, reducing and responding to risk and the impact of harm related to staff and communities. This Annual Health and Safety report shows the positive progress being maintained in terms of the Council's overall performance, which is categorised as strong this year.

Completed by: Adrian Ash Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

- 1.6 Inadequate health and safety policies and processes would pose a direct link to employee's mental health and wellbeing. There is therefore an important link between the two and it is ensured that the annual report and future health and safety actions align to the Council's wellbeing strategy.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt, Head of HR

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Annual report 2022/23 (attached at Appendix A) demonstrates that the Council's commitment to health and safety and its performance have been strong in this period. It is important that the Council continues to review systems and improve them where practical, as well as actively monitoring behaviours and trends in safety compliance. Members will be aware that

the Authority provides a varied range of services, some of which present a higher risk due to the nature of works and the frequency with which they are undertaken.

- 2.2 The annual report identifies that reported accident numbers have fallen for a third consecutive year, as detailed in this report. While it is a welcome reduction it is unlikely that this will be maintained, and the Council will see some fluctuation in the coming years. To further demonstrate its commitment to safety the Council has recruited a new post to the team. This has not only increased the level of operational and technical support that can be provided but will allow for greater levels of review and audit into the use of and adherence to provide guidance and best practice.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 This report invites feedback from the Members of the Governance and Audit Committee.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 There are no other options. This report is provided on an annual basis for Members.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The Management of Health and Safety is a legal requirement, and the Council holds a moral obligation to safety. Failure to monitor, review and effectively manage matters of safety could lead to individuals being exposed to injury or ill health. Any failure in this duty would also leave the Council exposed to financial and reputational risks from both Civil and Criminal cases.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – Annual Health and Safety Report 2022/23