

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Director of Legal and Governance Services (Monitoring Officer) – Charlotte Benjamin
Submitted to:	Audit Committee
Date:	24 July 2025
Title:	Health and Safety Annual Assurance Report 2024
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value

Proposed decision(s)	
<p>That the Audit Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTES the arrangements in place to manage health and safety within the Council and progress within the last year. • AGREES that the information provides assurance that health and safety management arrangements are suitable and that plans to further strengthen those arrangements are sufficient. 	

Executive summary
<p>This report sets out the arrangements in place to ensure the Council meets its legal obligations in relation to health and safety. The report sets out the Health and Safety governance framework, actions delivered during 2024 and planned actions for 2025</p>

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions by delivering best value and ensuring that robust governance arrangements in place surrounding health and safety within the workplace.
- 1.2 This report also outlines the Council's approach to health and safety management and summarise activity in the past year and planned activity for 2025 in order to provide the Committee with assurance that the Council has robust arrangements in place, as required by the Health and Safety Act 1974.

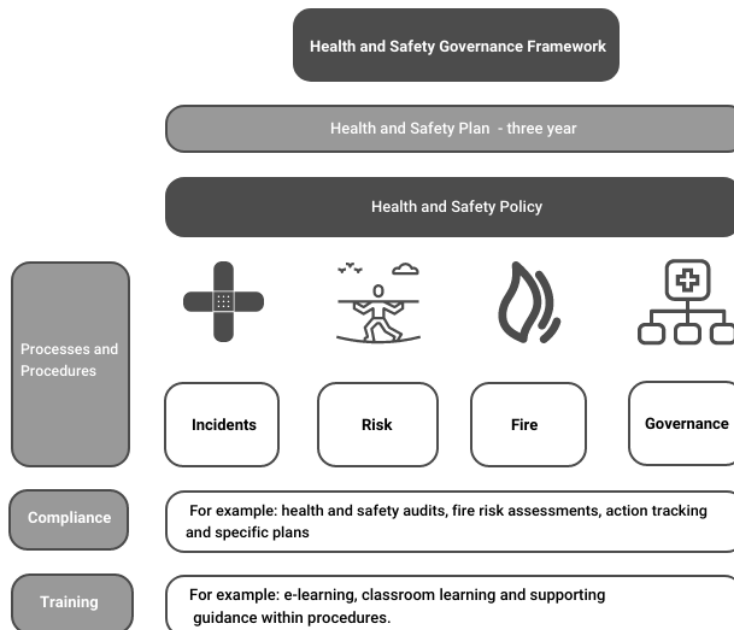
2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Audit Committee:

- **NOTES** the arrangements in place to manage health and safety within the Council and progress within the last year.
- **AGREES** that the information provides assurance that health and safety management arrangements are suitable and that plans to further strengthen those arrangements are sufficient.

3. Background and relevant information

- 3.1 Health and safety management is the collective responsibility of all elected members and officers of the Council, with key statutory responsibilities falling to the Chief Executive and management as the employer.
- 3.2 The Council has in place the following governance framework structure to oversee health and safety, ensure compliance with legal requirements and deliver ambitions in relation to Health and Safety.



Progress in delivering the Plan during 2024

- 3.3 The Health and Safety Plan within the above diagram sets out the Council's plans in relation for a three-year period and is supported by an action plan which is reviewed annually. Progress on these actions is set out below.
- 3.4 The digitised health and safety management application (My Compliance) has continued to be developed, and service improved, processes are fully embedded within day-to-day risk management. My compliance now also has a fully operational legal register which provides a detailed list of all relevant legal requirements applicable to the Council's activities and is incorporated into the health and safety management system.
- 3.5 As a significant level of data has been built up in the system it has enabled the Council to improve the intelligence it can develop from:
- incident reporting and investigation;
 - health and safety audits;
 - service area audits;
 - fire risk assessment; and
 - action tracking.
- 3.6 This has been used to improve understanding of the impact of violent incidents, unblock systematic issues to improve compliance and increase Officer and Member visibility and oversight.
- 3.7 Regular reviews of underpinning documentation with the governance framework are undertaken. During 2024 the following procedures were implemented and or reviewed:
- Incident Management Procedure reviewed.
 - First Aid Procedure reviewed.
 - Legal and Other Requirements reviewed.
 - Risk Assessment Procedure reviewed.
 - Communication and Consultation implemented.
 - Display Screen Equipment Procedure reviewed.
 - Objectives and Targets Procedure reviewed.
 - Working at Height Procedure reviewed.
 - Allergen's Policy created and implemented throughout the local authority.
- 3.8 There was also a change in leadership within Middlesbrough Council, this resulted in updates to the Health and Safety Policy and a refresh and update of the Statement of Intent which has been issued to all officers within the Council.
- 3.9 Reporting content for oversight of health and safety has also been refreshed, utilising the new capabilities of My Compliance and Power BI to enable reports to focus on the lessons to be learned, trends and areas of concern, while providing assurance as to the robust datasets in place to track health and safety compliance.

3.10 A key focus of the team during 2024 has been on the implementation of the service area health and safety audits to ensure compliance with the health and safety management system. A self-assessment health and safety compliance list was sent to all heads of service to establish with evidence that service areas were complying with internal policies, procedures and best practice. This has ensured that there is a robust system in place to support both officers and members. Throughout 2024 service area audits were complete on the following areas:

- Integrated Transport Unit
- Asset Management – Asbestos themed audit
- Traffic Signals.

3.11 The Council continues to deliver training and support to staff to ensure compliance with health and safety obligations and understanding of roles and responsibilities. In addition to the suite of eLearning materials that were already available to all staff, during 2024:

- Face-to-face incident investigation awareness, evacuation chair and fire warden courses were delivered to supplement e-learning.
- Face-to-face manual handling and people handling courses were delivered to support operational areas.
- Face-to-face personal safety including breakaway techniques training was delivered to improve the safety of both officers and members.
- eLearning resources were refreshed to enhance manual handling training.
- Use of fire extinguishers eLearning package was developed and implemented.
- Tendered an external contractor to deliver multiple scopes of first aid training to Middlesbrough Council officers.

3.12 During 2024 the health and safety team were subjected to an Internal audit to check effectiveness of the health and safety management system which has been implemented throughout the local authority. The audit was extremely positive and returned with substantial assurance with no mitigating further actions.

Health and safety activities for 2025

3.13 During 2025, further work will be undertaken to implement the new strategic plan for health and safety. This ensures that the Council's commitment to continual improvement in health and safety management is delivered.

3.14 The health and safety team will continue to monitor and assist in developing the digital solution linking Power BI and My Compliance in order to generate improved intelligence on health and safety incidents. Further work is also planned for the development of safety training information from Middlesbrough Learns and PowerBi to further develop business intelligence available to senior management.

3.15 The following policies and procedures will be produced, reviewed and uploaded onto the intranet in line with planned refresh cycles:

- Drugs and Alcohol Procedure;

- Fire Safety Procedure;
- Incident Management Procedure;
- Lone Working Procedure;
- Manual Handling Procedure;
- Potentially Violent Persons Policy;
- Risk Assessment Procedure;
- Training and Competency Procedure; and
- Work at Height Procedure.

3.16 Health and safety audits for service areas will be conducted to further enhance the Council's health and safety framework. These audits have been scheduled throughout the fiscal year, following self-assessments carried out by heads of service. This approach enables the health and safety team to verify the implementation of best practices across all levels of the Council.

3.17 The health and safety team will also continue to deliver fire risk assessments and premises health and safety audits against all Council occupied buildings. In addition to programmed service or building specific audits, focussed audits will also be undertaken. These will be undertaken on a risk based approach based on emerging issues or trends that are evident within the Council or highlighted from the Health and Safety Executive.

3.18 The health and safety team will continue to deliver training to both members and officers on Personal Safety and Breakaway Techniques. The health and safety team will also conduct a complete review of all eLearning training and continue to deliver the following face to face health and safety training:

- Manual handling of Objects
- Fire Warden Training
- Incident Investigation Training
- Evacuation Chair Training
- Personal Safety and Breakaway Techniques

3.19 Underpinning the procedures and training, as set out in the governance structure, are a series of audits that allow the Council to test compliance with health and safety good practice. These will continue to be delivered during the year, outcomes and actions tracked and used to shape future priorities.

3.20 To ensure transparency, the health and safety team also report on health and safety compliance on a quarterly basis to the following bodies:

- Directorates with Joint Consultation Committees.
- Trade Union representatives.
- The Directorate Management Teams.
- The Leadership Management Team.
- The Corporate Health and Safety Steering Group which comprises Members, Officers and Trade Union representatives.

4. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	There are no new direct financial considerations in relation to health and safety management as a result of this report. By having robust plans in place, the Council will mitigate the reputational and financial risks from health and safety incidents as far as reasonably practicable.
Legal	Health and safety management is a part of corporate governance, and the Council has a legal duty to ensure arrangements comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety Act 1974.
Risk	Health and safety management positively impacts on the following risks within the Council's risk registers that relate to the management of health and safety in the workplace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR-05 – Serious accident or death as a result of failure to comply with health and safety legislation and regulations. • HS01 – HS033 – Risks associated with the management of health, safety and fire within Middlesbrough Council.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	There are no direct implications from this report on human rights, equality and diversity.
Reducing poverty	Not applicable.
Climate Change / Environmental	Effective health and safety management for climate change and environmental initiatives plays a crucial role in risk mitigation. It ensures proactive measures are in place to address potential hazards, safeguard communities, and support regulatory compliance while promoting sustainable practices.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Robust health and safety management within the Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Health Integration directorates is essential to ensuring that Children, Young People, and Care Leavers receive the appropriate level of support.
Data Protection	Effective health and safety management arrangements are inherently reliant on the use of personal data to protect staff and others both within the workplace and those potentially affected by Council decisions and activity including use or mishandling of their data.

Appendices

1	None applicable
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Corporate Audit Committee	Health and Safety: Annual Assurance Report 2023	31 March 2024

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