

Audit and Standards Committee

Tuesday 1 November 2022

10:00am

Oak Room, County Buildings, Stafford

The meeting will be webcast live which can be viewed at any time here:

<https://staffordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

John Tradewell
Director of Corporate Services
24 October 2022

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022** (Pages 1 - 4)
- 4. National Fraud Initiative – Update** (Pages 5 - 10)
- 5. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance Annual Report 2021/22** (Pages 11 - 26)
- 6. Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee** (Pages 27 - 34)
- 7. Exclusion of the Public**

The Chairman to move:-

“That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated below”.

PART TWO **(reports in this section are exempt)**

- 8. Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022 (exemption paragraph 3)** (Pages 35 - 38)

9. **SEND Accelerated Progress Plan Six Month Review
(exemption paragraph 3)**

(Pages 39 - 44)

Membership

Carolyn Trowbridge (Vice-Chair)	Bernard Peters
Ross Ward	James Salisbury
Bernard Williams	Janice Silvester-Hall
Ann Edgeller	Ian Wilkes
Richard Ford	Mike Worthington (Chair)
Philippa Haden	Arshad Afsar
Phil Hewitt	Keith Flunder
Graham Hutton	

Notes for Members of the Press and Public

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Recording by Press and Public

Recording (including by the use of social media) by the Press and Public is permitted from the public seating area provided it does not, in the opinion of the chairman, disrupt the meeting.

Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee Meeting held on 20 September 2022

Present: Mike Worthington (Chair)

Attendance

Carolyn Trowbridge (Vice-Chair)	Graham Hutton
Bernard Williams	Bernard Peters
Ann Edgeller	Janice Silvester-Hall
Philippa Haden	Keith Flunder

Also in attendance:

Debbie Harris – for all items

Ian Parry and Sarah Getley - for item no. 20

Hassan Rohimun (Ernst Young (external auditors)- for item nos 21 and 22

Scott Denny and Matthew Thomas – for item no. 26

Cherie Cuthbertson, Sarah Getley and Paul Timmins – for item no. 27.

Apologies: Ross Ward, Richard Ford, Phil Hewitt, James Salisbury, Ian Wilkes and Arshad Afsar

PART ONE

17. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

18. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 July 2022

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated.

The Committee proceeded to consider the following item:

20. Settlement Agreements (exemption paragraph 3)

FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE ITEM THE PUBLIC WERE RE-ADMITTED TO THE BUILDING.

21. Update on Annual Audit 2020/21

Hassan Rohimun of Ernst Young (External Auditors) presented this item.

The Committee had previously made representations to Ernst Young regarding the delay in completing their audit of the County Council's accounts for 2020/21.

Hassan Rohimun reported on the progress of the audit referring to the need to complete sample testing on the approximate 20% of the Council's Other Services Expenditure yet to be audited, a review of the Going Concern Assessment and the Whole of Governance Accounts procedures, guidance on which was awaited.

Local Authority accounting practices for Highways Infrastructure Assets was being reviewed nationally with final guidance being prepared by CIPFA, the effect of which on individual audits was not yet known.

Responding to a request to submit a final audit letter to the December 2022 meeting of this Committee and provide a timescale for the work to meet that date, Hassan agreed to do so but stressed that any timetable might be affected by the guidance referred to above.

Resolved – That a final audit letter be requested for the December 2022 Committee meeting and a timetable for completion of the audit be provided by Ernst Young.

22. Staffordshire Pensions Fund 2021/22-Audit Plan

Hassan Rohimun of Ernst Young (external auditors) presented this item.

Details were submitted of the proposed audit plan for the Staffordshire Pension Fund 2021/22.

Members queried the additional costs of the audit, over and above the Scale of Fees' rate. Hassan Rohimun explained the need to involve expert advisers in the audit of Pensions matters particularly for higher risk categories of investment such as Private Equity as more complex procedures had to be followed in order to determine the level of assurance that could be given.

Resolved – That the Audit Plan for the Staffordshire Pension Fund 2021/22 be approved.

23. Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee 2022/23

The County Treasurer submitted the Forward Plan setting out this Committee's meeting schedule and provisional agenda contents for 2022/23.

Resolved – That with updates resulting from decisions at this meeting together with the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan being brought forward to the next meeting, the Forward Plan be approved.

24. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved – That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as indicated.

The Committee proceeded to consider the following items:

25. Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 (exemption paragraph 3)

26. Infrastructure+ Asset Data Management (exemption paragraph 3)

27. Agency Staffing Contracts Audit Review - progress on Implementation of Recommendations (exemption paragraph 3)

Chairman

Local Members Interest
N/A

Audit and Standards Committee – Tuesday 01 November 2022

Cabinet Office – National Fraud Initiative 2022 Update

Recommendation

I recommend that:

- a. The Audit and Standards Committee receive the report on the requirements of the Cabinet Office's National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2022.

Report of the County Treasurer / Section 151 Officer

Report

Background

1. The NFI is a data matching exercise conducted by the Cabinet Office under its data matching powers set out in the Local Accountability and Audit Act 2014. The NFI which started in 1996 continues to prove an effective tool for detecting and preventing fraud and error across the UK. The Cabinet Office have not released detailed outcomes from the 2020 NFI exercise, however, at Staffordshire county Council it identified £20,597 of fraud or error. Since its inception in 1996 the NFI has identified over £2billion in fraud and error across public sector bodies.
2. The NFI matches data provided by approximately 1,200 participating organisations from across the public and private sectors against data provided by other participants and key data sets provided by government departments and other national agencies to help prevent and detect fraud.
3. The NFI 2022 exercise will involve the County Council submitting payroll (and pension payroll) and other relevant data to the Cabinet Office on behalf of the County Council. Potential matches are then referred back to authorities for investigation.
4. The remainder of this committee report provides details of Internal Audit's work in relation to the notification and data extraction processes that underpin the latest NFI 2022 exercise.

Notification

5. Participants in the data matching exercise are required to inform individuals that their data will be processed; as required by Part 6 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, which is referred to as the 'fair processing' notice. For the NFI 2022 exercise, the fair processing notice for employees is 'layered', which comprised of 3 layers of notices as follows:
- a. **Summary Notice** – to provide individuals whose data is to be matched, with the minimum of information but with links to where more detailed information can be found. Employees have been notified of our participation in the NFI via "The Knot" email news bulletin and a news story on the Council's intranet homepage. School employees were notified via the "School Bag" in September 2022. Pensioners were notified in the spring "In-Contact Magazine" distributed to all Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) members in Spring 2022. Notice for Blue Badge holders and Travel Pass holders is incorporated into the application processes
 - b. **Condensed Text** - A summary of the Cabinet Office's data matching exercise is located on the County Council's intranet and website (links/references to these are given in the summary notices) as well as in hard copy on request; and
 - c. **Full Text** – is on the Cabinet Office's website and includes an explanation of the legal basis for the data matching exercise. Condensed text directs readers to the Full Text source.
6. The benefit of applying the layered approach is to provide different audiences with appropriate fair processing information, for example individuals who require more than the summary explanations can access the 'condensed text' notices' or full details as required.

Data Submission

7. The Cabinet Office released guidance / instructions for the NFI 2022 data matching exercise and required submission of the following data from the County Council to perform the NFI exercise:
- a. Payroll (which includes members' allowances and expenses).
 - b. Pension payroll.
 - c. Trade creditor's payment history and standing data; and
 - d. Transport passes & permits (Blue Badges).
8. In March 2020, the Cabinet Office identified an update to the NHS Act in 2006 which meant that the Direct Payment and Residential Care Home data sets now fall into the definition of patient data. There are restrictions on the NFI matching of patient data in the Local Audit and

Accountability Act 2014. The Cabinet Office NFI team are currently working with the Department of Health and Social Care to change the legislation to enable this data match going forwards. Whilst it is anticipated that this issue will be resolved to allow the re-inclusion of this data in future years, Direct Payment and Residential Care Home data will not be included in the 2022 exercise.

9. The principal benefit to the Council from these data sets was the identification of deceased persons who are still associated with direct payments/care home fees. To mitigate this loss, in March 2022 an internal data matching exercise was carried out between 'tell us once' deceased person data and direct payment/care home resident records, identifying a total of £124,576 in payments relating to deceased residents. As a result, this exercise will be repeated in 2022/23.
10. Both the payroll and pension data is being collated for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.
11. The payroll data will be used to identify individuals who may be committing employment fraud by failing to work their contracted hours because they are employed elsewhere or are taking long-term sickness absence from one employer and working at another employer at the same time. Payroll data will also be matched against visitors with UK Visas. The aim of this match is to identify any instances of overseas persons working in this country where the UK visa has expired or does not permit them to be in employment.
12. The pension data will be used to identify instances where an occupational pensioner has died but the pension is still being paid.
13. Transport pass data will be collected as of 30 September 2022 from the County Council's Smartcitizen System. The data will be used to identify instances where the pass/permit holder has died to allow data cleansing and identification of potential misuse.
14. Blue Badge holder data will be submitted directly to the Cabinet Office by the badge issuing supplier, Valtech. The Blue Badge holder data will be matched against DWP records to identify blue badge holders who have died, and to other organisations to identify individuals who hold more than one Blue Badge.
15. Trade Creditors data will be collected from the Council's Financial Information System, My Finance for the three-year period 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2022. The data will be checked to identify instances of duplicate payments being made, duplicate creditor records and VAT overpayments. This data is also checked against payroll data to identify employees who have interests in businesses which may cause a conflict of interest.
16. Following completion of each data extraction, the data files will be uploaded to the Cabinet Office via a secure link by a suggested deadline

of 21 October 2022 (additional time is available in the event of complications to the data collection/submission process).

17. It is envisaged that the output will be returned to the County Council for filtering and examination on 26 January 2023 via the secure NFI software. Detailed enquiries on the matches identified will be undertaken by the County Council's staff. This work will be monitored on an on-going basis and progress reports will be presented to the Audit and Standards Committee at regular intervals.

Equalities Implications

18. There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

19. Participation in the 2022 data matching exercise is mandatory under Part 6 of the Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

20. The Cabinet Office fee for participating in the exercise is £3,705, excluding VAT (a minor decrease on previous editions). This will be billed in one instalment in February 2023. To encourage organisations to submit data promptly a penalty fee system has been implemented that will result in addition costs for late or incomplete data. If applied to a County Council, this would represent a further cost of £185. We do not anticipate this applying to Staffordshire County Council. Internal Audit has allocated 8 days within the Council's counter fraud work plan 2022/23 for the facilitation of fair processing notices and data uploads prior to the data being submitted as well as commencing the review of potential matches towards the latter part of 2022/23.

Risk Implications

21. This work supports the Council's risk management processes.

Climate Change Implications

22. There are no recognised climate change impacts from the Council's Participation in the NFI.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

1. Code of data matching practice for the National Fraud Initiative
2. Proposed Work Programme and Scale of Fees, including Covid-19 Counter Fraud Measures
3. Cabinet Office Report – 25 Years of the NFI – August 2021

Contact Details

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Audit and Standards Committee - Tuesday 01 November 2022

Annual Health, Safety & Wellbeing Performance Report 2021/22

Recommendation(s)

I recommend that the committee:

- a. Review the findings and management information detailed in this report.
- b. Consider key actions identified for 2022/23 and decide if any further actions are required.
- c. Recognise the work that has been achieved to improve the council's management of health, safety, and wellbeing risks.

Local Member Interest: N/A

Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Report

Background

1. Attached report provides an overview on the health, safety, and wellbeing performance of the council during 2021/22. Key achievements and significant findings during this period along with performance data and outcomes. Also outlines the 2022/23 work programme and key priorities.

Equalities Implications

2. None applicable

Legal Implications

3. Report outlines performance for the organisation and show effective levels of compliance and areas for focus and continuous improvement.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

4. No resources requested. Report outlines key activities for improvement during 2022/23.

Risk Implications

5. Report provides overview of the risk work plan to minimise and respond to emerging trends, themes, and risks.

Climate Change Implications

6. None applicable

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Annual Report on Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance 2021/22

Contact Details

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Staffordshire County Council
Annual Report on Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance 2021/22

1. Action Required

1.1 The County Council's Senior Managers need to: -

- Review the findings and management information detailed in this report.
- Analyse this year's performance and identify action to ensure continuous improvement;
- Consider key actions identified for 2022/23 and decide if any further actions are required;
- Share and communicate the report to SLT, WLT and OMT; and
- Recognise the work that has been achieved to improve the council's management of health, safety, and wellbeing risks.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This report covers the period from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. The aim is to provide the council's senior management, stakeholders, public of Staffordshire and others interested in health, safety, and wellbeing with information about what the county council is doing to protect its employees, volunteers, contractors, service users, pupils, and members of the public.
- 2.2 Health, safety and employee wellbeing in the county council is part of the overall risk management strategy, which aims to identify and manage risks to the county council and its services to the public. Health, safety, and employee wellbeing focuses on the risks of injury and ill health that can arise from the wide range of activities necessary to deliver the services to the people of Staffordshire.
- 2.3 This report identifies progress against the key action points outlined in the action plan for 2021/22 and identifies key priorities for 2022/23.

3. Background

3.1 The type of health and safety risks involved are varied, but include: -

- Work related ill health including stress at work
- Manual handling
- Lone working
- Violence and aggression
- Transport and road risks
- Slips, trips, and falls

- 3.2 An organisation with such a broad range of activities as Staffordshire County Council has a wide variety of risks to manage and the above list represents only some of the most common risks across the council. To ensure that all risks are identified, the council has a risk assessment process for use by managers and staff.
- 3.3 Our services are often delivered via partnership arrangements. These include a wide range of external organisations such as the NHS, charities, contractors, and volunteers. By focusing on co-operation, communication, and co-ordination with our partners, we aim to ensure that these operations are also effectively managed as safely as is reasonably practicable.
- 3.4 To support the management of health, safety, and employee wellbeing the council employs several specialists, including health and safety specialists; occupational health specialists who provide support for employees, property management specialists etc. In the workplace there are trained safety representatives nominated by trade unions who help to monitor health, safety and wellbeing as well as represent employees during consultation.

4. Action taken during 2021/22 to improve Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

4.1 Key Successes

- 4.1.1 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service continue to support Covid 19 response during 2021/22 in terms of ensuring local outbreak advice for Council Services and education and early year settings. Emergency Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) services also continued throughout this period. Nearly 9 million items of emergency PPE had been distributed by the end March 2022. In addition to responding to Covid the HSW Service also developed plans and arrangements around lifting lockdown and returning to pre covid arrangements.
- 4.1.2 Implemented new Occupational Health Referral and Management System (MY OH) in December 2021. The system has been implemented across both Council business areas and external Occupational Health customers. The system provides digital platform that allows each referring manager access to own dashboard for their referrals and reports. Employees also provide consent and can view their reports within the system. The system also improves clinical time management.
- 4.1.3 Completed preparation works to safely return the Household Waste Recycling Centres to council management. Developed risk assessments and safe working practices along with implementation plan ready for end March 2022. Also supported return of Assets management activities within Highways.
- 4.1.4 Revised our Wellbeing Strategy now called WellMe to expand on and further develop our excellent wellbeing offer to colleagues. The new strategy has four pillars 1) Physical Health 2) Mental Health 3) Financial Wellbeing and 4) Social Wellbeing which builds on our existing work on Physical and Mental Health. The Strategy has an underpinning framework which ensures that prevention and early intervention is at the heart of all activity. Strategy aims to foster positive behaviours, improved access to advice and signposting, nudging employees towards behaviour change and new habits. The new strategy encourages a personalised journey, allowing colleagues to choose what is right for their wellbeing at the right time for them, promoting personal responsibility.



- 4.1.5 November and December 2021 launched Financial Wellbeing offer to employees. This consists of a new benefits and wellbeing platform “VIVUP” that holds in one place a wide range of lifestyle savings, our payroll offer and support and wellbeing content. The platform also holds a range of cost of living offers to support employees. By March 2021 over 50% of the workforce have accessed and used the support. In addition, we worked with Salary Finance to set up a financial education platform to help make money simple. Platform offered advice and support which has been used by 20% of the workforce. Regular topical guidance and webinars are held to support colleagues including a wealth of information to support cost of living impacts. In addition, this partnership allows our employees to access savings and loans through their pay to help them manage finances effectively.
- 4.1.6 Commenced work towards the end of the year on domestic abuse and loneliness experienced by our people in preparation for work in 2022/23 where we will have a focus on loneliness as part of Mental Health Week and will launch new Domestic Abuse Management Arrangements and supporting plans.
- 4.1.7 Created a series of Wellbeing Webinars which has been very popular. Programmed a wide range of health and wellbeing topics to assist individuals and nudge behaviour change. This will be enhanced further next year with a wider range of webinars, blogs (wellbeing words) and new Yammer groups. Also developed an annual health and wellbeing calendar so have targeted and planned approach to raising awareness and signposting on key topics each month. This proved popular and will be further enhanced next year.
- 4.1.8 New Lone Worker Management System business case was developed, and approach then launch in January 2022. This will see our 1000 plus lone workers have either an

app or device to help improve governance and management of lone working activities and improve our response in emergency situations. To support this, we also revised our Lone Worker Management Arrangements and supporting guidance.

- 4.1.9 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service maintained its diverse training programme to meet the organisation's statutory training needs. Implemented a Net Promoter Score (NPS) from training participant feedback and as of March 2022 achieved a NPS score of 74 which is excellent. 98% of participants also stated that they found the skills helpful in completion of their job role. Mixture of online and in person training was delivered.
- 4.1.10 Held regular meetings with Trade Unions to ensure effective communication and consultation whilst we lifted Covid restrictions and to support new wellbeing strategy development.
- 4.1.11 Maintained and improved management arrangements, guidance, and tools to support line managers.
- 4.1.12 Reviewed and retendered our Physiotherapy wellbeing support and our Occupational Health Doctor Services.
- 4.1.13 Revised all our fire safety training materials and completed an extended programme to refresh premises managers and fire wardens. Working on Fire Safety Awareness module for the Learning Hub to launch next year.
- 4.1.14 During this period 43 School and 4 Core Council audits were undertaken to review their health and safety management arrangements and develop improvement plans. Full audit programme will recommence in 22/23 now that Covid response activities have decreased significantly.
- 4.1.15 Completed 120 (62 in maintained schools) health and safety planning meetings with schools who purchased the Enhanced Service Level Agreement to allow them to identify key risk gaps and develop management plans to improve their health, safety, and wellbeing performance.
- 4.1.16 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service has also responded to and managed several emergency situations and serious incidents during 2020/21.

4.2 Service Level Agreements (SLA)

- 4.2.1 99% of maintained schools purchased the health and safety service during 2021/22 with just 2 schools seeking alternative provision. 62 maintained schools purchased the enhanced service level agreement. The Headteacher briefings have moved online, this has had a positive impact on attendance with between 100-150 delegates per session. Headteachers have indicated that these briefings help them to understand their accountabilities and develop further their learning and skills to manage health, safety, and wellbeing effectively in school environments. WellMe wellbeing approach is being rolled out as part of our SLA to Schools in 2022/23.

4.3 Improving the Health of the Workforce

- 4.3.1 Absences decreased significantly during 2020/21 as a result of ongoing impact of Covid-19 and lockdown restrictions. Therefore, a more accurate comparison of the impact of absence in 2021/22 is achieved by comparing to the levels in 2019/20.
- 4.3.2 Comparing 2019/20 to 2021/22 shows a 3% increase in overall sickness absence, from 11.80 to 12.14 days per person. If we excluding Covid-19 absences from this, we see a 10% reduction in absence levels.
- 4.3.3 Musculoskeletal skeletal absences are 5% higher than in 2019/20, and psychological absences are 14% higher, but given the reduction in absences logged as 'Other' or just left blank (2.89 days to 1.33 days) it is likely that these increases are a result of improved recording.
- 4.3.4 At 31st March 2022, absence within core county council is now at 12.13 days per employee which is an increase of 29% from last year. This level of absence is higher than the national average for local government which was benchmarked in 2020 at 8.0 days. Suspected/confirmed cases of Covid-19 accounted for 1.56 days, but the leading causes of absence remain psychological ill health and musculoskeletal conditions.



- 4.3.5 Between 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, 363 employees had been referred to the physiotherapy service to prevent absence and where they are absent to support early return to work. We improved the exercise treatment plans and introduced follow up telephone appointments to support employees. The service continued to receive excellent feedback from employees.

- 4.3.6 Between 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, 338 employees had been referred to ThinkWell. The clinical assessment scores clearly show that colleagues have benefited from the services they received. Manager and colleague feedback remain extremely positive.
- 4.3.7 Colleagues supported by ThinkWell showed after treatment a 94% improvement/recovery. 96% of colleagues accessing the service described the support as helpful or extremely helpful and would recommend it to other colleagues. 78% received triage within 48 hours and 97% within a week. The average time to first session was 8 days. 55% of the referrals received were preventative (colleagues in work) and of these 86% remain in work during the support.
- 4.3.8 MindKind self help support materials remain well used by colleagues and significant additional materials have been created and added to the offer to help support employees. Engagement levels have been very positive, and feedback received to date is that managers and colleagues are finding the training and MindKind information and toolkits extremely valuable.
- 4.3.9 Occupational Health received 1342 referrals showing an increase from previous year. 607 (increase from 553 in the previous year) of the referrals were from Core Council Services, 289 from maintained schools and remaining from other customers. The People Services continues to work with managers to ensure early referral to Occupational Health. New guidance and support materials to assist managers in getting the most from their referrals have been developed and launched. New clinical arrangements have been implemented to improve service delivery which includes case reviews and regular meetings with People Service colleagues.
- 4.3.10 Flu vaccination was offered to colleagues in line with the Public Health and NHS flu vaccination campaign. Vaccination is an essential part of the overall infection prevention and control arrangements. 765 vouchers were supplied to core council colleagues and over 1000 to school colleagues.

4.4 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

- 4.4.1 The council has agreed a range of key performance indicators for health and safety against which the council can monitor progress and performance. The outcomes of these are detailed in Appendix 1 and are benchmarked against previous years. These key performance indicators demonstrate that the council is maintaining performance and key actions are being undertaken by managers in the workplace. It is important that the council continues to monitor these indicators to identify further scope for improvement and to maintain the gains already made. The year 2020/21 must also be seen slightly separate from other years as Covid has impacted on performance indicators. Therefore, we will continue to monitor key performance indicators over a 4-year timeframe.
- 4.4.2 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service is contacting all maintained schools who have not confirmed that they have reviewed their fire risk assessment (82% confirmed reviewed Fire Risk Assessment) to ensure that they understand the importance of having an effective and adequate fire risk assessment in place and to offer support where required.

5. Health and Safety Audit and Evaluation Process

5.1 Outcomes of Internal Health and Safety Audits

5.1.1 During 2020/22 47 health and safety audits were completed by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.

5.1.2 The outcome of these audits identifies the operating maturity level of the service/establishment audited. The frequency at which the service/establishment will be re-audited is based on the level of maturity achieved. This allows investment of resources where most benefit may be achieved. The management information from these audits demonstrates high levels of schools and council service both maintaining and improving audit maturity scores.

5.1.3 Management standards surveys within core county and self-assessments in schools are part of the audit and evaluation process and provide management teams with an opportunity to reflect on their health and safety management against set standards. Good response levels were achieved from this year's assessments. 82% from maintained schools, 100% completion by EIS, Corporate Services and H&C and 67% completion by C&F. The C&F transformation impacted on managers ability to complete the assessments and the HSW Service will work with the business area to improve performance in 2022/23.

6. Accident and Incident Data

6.1 Accidents and Violence Statistics

6.1.1 Appendix 1 details our key performance data for incidents reported. Accidents and violent incident levels in SCC and schools have increased compared with last year but this must be seen in context of the impact of Covid-19 on ways of working both for council services and maintained schools' activities.

6.1.2 RIDDOR reportable incidents have also increased in line with total number of incidents. However, they remain inline with 2019/20 performance.

6.1.3 As schools convert to academies the profile of incidents will keep changing.

7. Health and Safety Investigations

7.1 The Health and Safety Advisors have continued to investigate the more serious accidents and encourage Operational Managers to investigate all accidents. This approach is monitored and chased within the My Health and Safety system. Managers have been encouraged to establish both the immediate and root cause of accidents to manage the potential for reoccurrence.

7.2 There have been several accidents and incidents in schools and core council activities which could have had more serious outcomes. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service has investigated these incidents and helped the services and schools implement improved control measures.

- 7.3 The HSE has requested information and investigation reports on some of the RIDDOR reportable accidents, and no further action has been taken as they have been satisfied with our investigations.
- 7.5 In October 2019 we had a significant incident in which a member of the public was fatally injured by a tree falling on the Isabel Trail. HSE prosecution action was taken against the council for failure under Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. A fine of £300,000 and £13,164 in legal costs was received following an early guilty plea. Learning from this incident has been taken forward by Highways Service. A working group has been established to consider the development of a Tree Strategy for the council and the HSW Service has taken the lead on development.
- 7.6 In April 2012 the HSE launched “Fee for Intervention”. 2021/22 has seen fee for intervention costs received by the council in relation to the HSE investigation for the Isabel Trail incident these concluded in Dec 2021.

8. Joint Consultation

- 8.1 The council has held health and safety committees and forums in accordance with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Consultation forum meetings are planned for 2022/23.

9. Occupational Health Unit (OHU)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Ill Health Referrals	1120	1156	951	898	1342
Ill Health Retirement Requests	22	27	19	18	17
Ill Health Retirements Approved	20	13	12	11	7

- 9.1 Occupational Health management referrals have increased significantly in line with increased absence levels compared to last year. Nearly half of the 607 referrals being from the Core Council and 289 from maintained schools the rest are from other customers.
- 9.2 The number of ill-health retirements being granted (meeting the qualifying criteria) is lower than average this year.

10. Liability Claims

- 10.1 There have been no significant developments in terms of claim numbers, although early indication is that claim frequency for policy year 2019 is declining. It should be noted that claimants have up to 3 years after the accident within which to claim.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
No. of Claims Occurred	55	37	31	24	9	16	11
Estimated Cost of payments	£773,377	£342,868	£182,851	£113,156	£64,905	£136,790	£86,159

10.2 Background Information on Claims / Legal Developments

Estimated Cost of Payments includes reserves. This represents insurers “best estimate” of final settlement.

10.3 While claimants generally have 3 years post incident to pursue a claim without an action becoming statute barred (3 years after 18th birthday in the case of minors). As a result of the Jackson reforms the indications are that claims are being submitted more quickly.

11. New Legislation & Key Topics for 2022/23

11.1 HSE will carry out a programme of inspections in schools from September 2022 onwards. These inspections will be assessing how schools are managing the risks from asbestos within the school estate and meeting the duty to manage requirements under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

11.2 HSE during 2023 will have a programme of inspection of waste and recycling sector sites and have provided guidance on the key areas of focus.

11.3 HSE will have a campaign during 2022/23 focussing on reducing work related ill health with a specific focus on mental health and stress. This is to help businesses learn to tackle and reverse the increasing trend of ill health related to stress, anxiety and depression.

11.4 In April 2022 government remove all Covid 19 restrictions and need for a dedicated risk assessment. However, the HSE ventilation guidance remains in place.

11.5 Fire Safety Regulations will be updated in 2022 to implement findings from Grenfell Tower investigations. This will place new duties under the Fire safety Order.

12. Key Actions for 2022/23

12.1 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service will have the following key priorities during this period.

Supporting Covid-19 - Living with Covid

- Implementation and embedding Living with Covid-19, ensuring all guidance and response and recovery activities completed in line with H&S legislation and best practice guidance.
- Support safe transition of Local Outbreak Education and Early Years Cell to Public Health for ongoing support.

- Provide technical support from HSW & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) perspective to Public Health.
- Support Premises Managers with Living with Lockdown response and recovery.
- Ongoing management of Emergency PPE until July 2022 and then implementation of 28-day stock and Emergency PPE close down.
- Support any public enquiry requests.
- Maintain effective consultation with Trade Unions on the council's response and recovery arrangements.
- Maintain Occupational Health knowledge on Long Covid and implementing effective management responses and support.

Business Change Support

- Ensure effective implementation of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing management arrangements across Waste Services and set up a programme of health surveillance for employees. Completing annual inspection programme and investigations.
- Support change in CDM Management for Highways with the return of asset management services.
- Support Families and Communities to maximise wellbeing support across transformation areas to improve outcomes.
- Work with other business areas on the significant levels of upcoming change and transformation activities.

Project Development Activities

- Manage the Entrust SDA changes and impact on HSW Service design and delivery. Developing contingency plans to minimise potential impact of any change in management of traded activities; whilst reviewing growth opportunities to offset any impact on traded services.
- Embed the new Lone Worker Management System to maximise support and engagement.
- Launch new domestic abuse management arrangements, network of champions, and implement support plan.
- Develop a Tree Management Strategy to support effective tree planting and ongoing tree management and maintenance.
- Research new digital approach to the management of DSE and ergonomic assessments to better support SMART Working.
- Complete procurement review of Display Screen Equipment eyesight voucher scheme.
- Launch WellMe, Financial Wellbeing and Vivup to Schools and Vivup elements to foster carers and Commissioned Services/volunteers.

- Occupational Health to support complex case review process with People Services in line with refreshed People Policy roll out.
- Work with Occupational Health to improve perception of service and look for improvement opportunities.
- Revised customer survey and service insight data collection to maximise outcomes and identify areas for improvement.
- Complete benchmarking data exercise for H&S Incident data national/regional.

Health & Wellbeing of the Workforce

- Embed and promote the WellMe strategy and build on current performance.
- Embed Financial Wellbeing engagement and learning
- Implement the 2022/23 health and wellbeing calendar supported by webinars and other engagement activities.
- Support the social care commissioned workforce health and wellbeing through the Workforce Capacity Grant funding.
- Enhance Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) skills through provision of refresher training and CPD.
- Work with Principal Social Worker to deliver Looking After Yourself in Professional Practice Resilience Training.
- Develop working with cancer wellbeing offering and support tools.
- Implement group bereavement sessions building on the pilot study.

Maintain Business as Usual Activities

- Maintain business as usual support for the council and traded school customers.
- Review and resume H&S Audit Program focusing on high-risk services following halt due to pandemic.
- Complete a campaign of getting back to the basics of H&S to ensure Managers and Employees following H&S standards, balancing the back from the Covid-19 response and recovery efforts.
- Respond to and investigate accident and incidents to ensure effective learning taken forward.
- Complete and ensure effective implementation of actions for ongoing investigations.
- Review HSW arrangements to ensure they support SMART working and new ways working across the business.
- Maintain an effective health, safety, and wellbeing training programme.

- Maintain health, safety and wellbeing Management Arrangements and Guidance Documents in line with best practice and legislation.

Stakeholder and Network Engagement

- Maintain strong positive relationships with all health, safety and wellbeing stakeholders and maximising the benefits from professional networks.
- Maintain effective relationships with enforcement bodies and demonstrate our organisational commitment to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce and protecting the public in the delivery of our services.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 This report provides an indication that health and safety performance was maintained and continued to be managed whilst also responding to the risks and challenges that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic presented. Good progress was made in development and projects whilst resources for activities such as audits remained impacted.
- 13.2 The work completed during 2022/23 will continue to focus on post Covid-19 recovery, and colleague wellbeing.
- 13.3 Learning from the serious incident at the Isabel Trail has been taken forward into Highway maintenance planning and practice. A wider council Tree Strategy is being developed.

14. Contacts

Rebecca Lee – Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing. 01785 355777

Appendix 1 - Key Performance Indicators

	Indicator	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
1.	Number of Incidents by Type	<p>SCC – Accidents 398 of which 120 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 28 SCC – Environmental 5 SCC - Road Traffic 12</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 1237 of which 347 were employees School - Near Miss 4 School – Environmental 10 School Road Traffic 3</p>	<p>SCC – Accidents 404 of which 116 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 35 SCC – Environmental 3 SCC - Road Traffic 15</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 762 of which 228 were employees School - Near Miss 14 School – Environmental 0 School Road Traffic 3</p>	<p>SCC – Accidents 272 of which 57 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 5 SCC – Environmental 1 SCC - Road Traffic 2</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 448 of which 145 were employees School - Near Miss 8 School – Environmental 1 School Road Traffic 1</p>	<p>SCC – Accidents 300 of which 87 were to employees SCC - Near Miss 20 SCC Disease 3 SCC – Environmental 0 SCC - Road Traffic 9</p> <p>Schools - Accidents 857 of which 238 were employees School - Near Miss 22 School – Environmental 2 School Road Traffic 2</p>
2.	Violence and Aggression	<p>SCC total violence 333 which 230 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 329 of which 243 were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence 500 which 243 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 268 of which 201 were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence 329 which 172 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 73 of which 59 were towards employees.</p>	<p>SCC total violence 389 which 235 were towards employees.</p> <p>Schools total violence 205 of which 167 were towards employees</p>
3.	Number of RIDDOR reportable incidents	<p>SCC 5 Schools 35 Total 40</p>	<p>SCC 13 Schools 25 Total 38</p>	<p>SCC 8 Schools 15 Total 23</p>	<p>SCC 15 Schools 19 Total 34</p>
4.	Number of Civil Claims (Excluding highways)	24	9	16	11
5.	Cost of Liability Claims	£113,156	£64,905	£136,790	£86,159
6.	% Of Management Standards surveys returned by corporate services and Self Audits completed by schools	<p>Schools 90% Families & Communities 70% Economy, Infrastructure & Skills 100% Corporate Services 74% Health & Care 100%</p>	<p>Schools 78% SCC Not completed due to COVID-19 Resources</p>	<p>Schools 79% SCC Not completed due to COVID-19 Resources</p>	<p>Schools 82% Families & Communities 67% Economy, Infrastructure & Skills 100% Corporate Services 100% Health & Care 100%</p>

7.	% Of Internal Health and Safety Audits completed to programme	Schools 96% SCC 100%	Schools 74% SCC 50% Impacted by Covid -19	Audit Programme Suspended due to Covid -19. 16 schools and 1 core council audit were completed provide support – remote auditing approach was designed towards the end of the year to assist continued auditing.	Reduced audit programme. 47 audits completed to plan with the resources available due to Covid support continuing during 2021/22. Over 20 schools cancelled their planned audit at short notice due to staffing issues. 13 cancelled in core council due to C&F Transformation and Covid impacts.
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Council Incidents by Service Area

	Accidents	Near Miss	Road Traffic	Environmental	Violence and Aggression	Disease
Council Overall	300	20	9	0	389	3
Families & Communities	145	12	7	0	319	2
Health & Care	132	4	1	0	68	1
Economy Infrastructure & Skills	15	1	1	0	0	0
Corporate Services	8	3	0	0	2	0

Schools Overview

	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Special	PRU	Totals
Accident	603	31	141	48	34	857
Near miss	9	1	6	0	6	22
Environmental	0	0	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Collision	0	0	2	0	0	2
Violence and Aggression	128	4	7	33	33	205

Audit and Standards Committee Forward Plan 2022/2023

If you would like to know more about our work programme, please get in touch with Lisa Andrews, Head of Audit & Financial Services, 01785 276402 or Lisa.Andrews@Staffordshire.gov.uk

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Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
26 April 2022				
Annual Report on Information Governance Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Tracy Thorley/Natalie Morrissey				
Internal Audit Plan 2022/23 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (Part 2 items).	As required			
Special Guardianship Payments Arrangements – progress report				

Agenda Item 6

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Lead Officer – Nicola Hope				
Review of Joint Funding & Billing CCG's Continuing Healthcare - Progress Report Lead Officer – Karen Webb	Deferred to July 2022			
SEND Services – Further Progress Report. Lead Officer – Tim Moss				
05 July 2022				
Appointment of Members to Standards Panel 2022/23. Lead Officer: Chris Ebberley				
Annual Report of the work of the Audit & Standards Committee. Report of the Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
External Audit Plan 2021/22 Report of Ernst & Young	Moved from February 2022			
Staffordshire Pension Fund Audit Plan 2021/22 Report of Ernst & Young	Moved from February 2022			
Code of Corporate Governance –2022 Update Report of the Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
Internal Audit Outturn Report 2021/22 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Code of Conduct for Members – Annual Report on the Management of Complaints Report of Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Julie Plant				
Proposed changes to the Constitution - Procurement Regulations – Proposed	As required			

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Addition. Lead Officer: Julie Plant				
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>).	As required	As required		
Appendix 2 – Counter Fraud Outturn Report 2021/22 Lead Officers: Debbie Harris & Dave Fletcher				
Joint Funding & Billing CCG's Continuing Healthcare - Progress Report on the Implementation of previous audit recommendations Lead Officer – Karen Webb	Moved from April 2022			
20 September 2022				
Annual Audit Letter – 2020/21 Lead Officer: External Auditor (EY)	EY to provide update			
Future Local Public Audit Arrangements – Update. Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews	Deferred to December 2022 meeting			
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>).	As required			

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Agency Staffing Contracts Audit Review - Progress Report on the implementation of Recommendations Lead Officers: Sarah Getley/ Cherie Cuthbertson & Paul Timmins				
01 November 2022				
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance Annual Report Report of Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Becky Lee	B/fwd from December 2022 meeting			
National Fraud Initiative - Update Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required (KL to advise)			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>).	As required			
Accelerated Progress Plan – Progress Report Lead Officer: Halit Hulusi				
13 December 2022				
Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 Report of the Director of Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
Training on Statement of Accounts Lead Officer: Rachel Spain				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Statement of Accounts 2021/22 Presentation and Report of County Treasurer Lead Officer: Rachel Spain				
Report to those charged with Governance (ISA 260) a) Staffordshire County Council Report of Ernst & Young				
Report to those charged with Governance (ISA 260) b) Staffordshire Pension Fund Report of Ernst & Young				
Future Local Public Audit Arrangements – Update. Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews	Moved from September 2022 meeting			
Internal Audit Plan 2022/23 – Update Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required (KL to advise)			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (Part 2 items).				
21 February 2023				
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required (KL to advise)			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>).				
21 March 2023				
External Audit Plan 2022/23 Report of Ernst & Young				
Staffordshire Pension Fund Audit Planning Report 2022/23 Report of Ernst & Young				
Review of the Effectiveness of the Audit & Standards Committee. Report of the Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
Internal Audit Charter 2023/24 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer Lisa Andrews				
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required (KL to advise)			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>).				
24 April 2023				
Annual Report of the work of the Audit & Standards Committee Report of the Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				

Item and lead officer	Date of meeting	Links with Council strategic commissioning priorities	Detail	Action/Outcome
Strategic Risk Management - Risk Management Policy Statement & Strategy. Report of the Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
Annual Report on Information Governance Report of the Director for Corporate Services Lead Officer: Tracy Thorley/ Natalie Morrisey				
Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 Report of the County Treasurer Lead Officer: Debbie Harris				
Proposed changes to the Constitution	As required (KL to advise)			
Forward Plan for the Audit and Standards Committee Lead Officer: Lisa Andrews				
PART TWO EXEMPT Internal Audit Special Investigation/limited/ Top Risk Areas reports (<i>Part 2 items</i>).				
Infrastructure+ Asset Data Management – Progress report on implementation of Internal Audit recommendations. Lead Officers: David Walters/Scott Denny				
Settlement Agreements - Progress report on implementation of Internal Audit recommendations Lead Officer: Sarah Getley				

Membership

Mike Worthington Bernard Peters
(Chair) James Salisbury
Carolyn Trowbridge Janice Silvester-Hill
(Vice Chair) Conor Wileman
Arshad Afsar Ian Wilkes
Richard Ford Graham Hutton
Ross Ward Ann Edgeller
Bernard Williams
Philippa Haden
Phil Hewitt

**Calendar of Future Committee Meetings
(All meetings at 10.00 a.m. unless otherwise stated)****26 April 2022**

05 July 2022
20 September 2022
01 November 2022
13 December 2022
21 February 2023
21 March 2023
24 April 2023

Meetings usually take place at County Buildings, Martin Street, Stafford ST16 2LH

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