

This report is public	
Annual Health and Safety Report 2024-25	
Committee	Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date of Committee	28 May 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chirs Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	13 May 2025
Report of	Assistant Director of Human Resources, Claire Cox

Purpose of report

To provide the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee with the Council's Health and Safety performance over the 2024-25 year and its plan for the current year.

1. Recommendations

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To review the content of the report.
- 1.2 To provide feedback if any further detail or additional information is required in future reports which will be submitted quarterly.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report is a statement of Cherwell District Council's health and safety performance to the end of the financial year 2024/2025. It demonstrates that Cherwell District Council shows strong commitment to the health and safety of its workforce of 626 employees (full and part-time, as of 31 March 2025) and to others who may be affected by its activities. Environmental Services teams are our highest risk area due to the nature of the work undertaken.
- 2.2 There have been no regulatory interventions or enforcement action taken against the council during this reporting period.
- 2.3 The Corporate health and safety team continue to provide professional health and safety support and guidance to the council fulfilling the role of health and safety competent assistance as required by statutory health and safety legislation.
- 2.4 The number of reported accidents/incidents in council services have increased over the past 12 months possibly due to improved reporting measures being implemented. Work is ongoing to identify causes and look at actions required where necessary in a bid to reduce the rate.

Cherwell District Council

- 2.5 The Corporate Health and Safety (H&S) Team were subject to an Audit by Veritau in the Summer of 2024. The final report was released on 16 December 2024. Since then, the team have been working through the actions with the service areas affected. Detailed in this report is progress so far.
- 2.6 Staff are continuing to work in an agile way with a mix of office and home working. Staff are required to undertake a DSE (Display Screen Equipment) Assessment for home as well as the office which should be undertaken annually, where they work in both locations.
- 2.7 The H&S Team will continue to report monthly to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and attend Directorate Leadership Teams (DLT) where possible across all areas of the business.

Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary			
Finance	There are no financial implications arising from this report Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 29 April 2025.			
Legal	There are no legal implications arising from this report Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 7 May 2025			
Risk Management	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report Shona Ware, Assistant Director of Customer Focus, 6 May 2025.			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				N/A
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				N/A
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				N/A
Climate & Environmental Impact				N/A
ICT & Digital Impact				N/A

Data Impact				N/A
Procurement & subsidy				N/A
Council Priorities	N/A			
Human Resources	N/A			
Property	N/A			
Consultation & Engagement	N/A			

Supporting Information

3. Background

- 3.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places a legal duty on the Council as an employer to take all reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work and other persons affected by their activities.
- 3.2 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for health and safety within the Council and leads in setting corporate policy and direction. Corporate Directors and Assistant Directors support the Chief Executive; however, they are also responsible for ensuring that robust health and safety management systems exist in their respective directorates.
- 3.3 To manage occupational health and safety risks, the Council has documented management arrangements, including a Corporate Health and Safety Policy and a range of supporting corporate arrangements. The Council has a Health, Safety Manager and a Health and Safety Supervisor to provide competent advice, guidance, support and assistance to the workforce on all health and safety related matters, fulfilling their employer responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.
- 3.4 As a minimum, the Council has put in place processes and procedures required to meet the legal requirements, including:
 - The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy which was reviewed in May 2024 following the arrival of Gordon Stewart and the change in administration and will be reviewed over the next 12 months as per the schedule.
 - Managers assessing the risks to employees, contractors, customers, partners, and any other people who could be affected by their activities. Risk assessments must be “suitable and sufficient” and record significant risks.
 - Arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring, and review of the preventive and protective measures that come from risk assessment. The Corporate arrangements expand on the health and safety

arrangements outlined in the council's health and safety policies and provide the framework for the council's health and safety management system.

4. Details

Risk Management

- 4.1 All employees working at home have been asked to complete a DSE/homeworking risk assessment and, where needs have been identified, have been provided with appropriate equipment to allow them to work safely. Any such additional equipment has to be funded from the service budget.
- 4.2 Each service area is responsible for ensuring that all activities that their team undertake is appropriately risk assessed, and suitable control measures are put in place. The Corporate Health and Safety team are available to assist and advise where necessary.
- 4.3 The Health and Safety Team continue to work with the Performance team to ensure that all services have suitable and sufficient "Risk Registers" in place which address all the risks that are posed including health and safety. This had previously been highlighted as a deficiency.
- 4.4 The Health and Safety Team have reviewed and continue to review the corporate arrangements to ensure they are in line with current best practice. This is an ongoing piece of work to ensure that we as an employer continue to remain compliant with health and safety legislation and guidance.

Legislation Changes

- 4.5 No changes of legislation have been made in the last year that affect our services.

HSE Intervention

- 4.6 There have been no HSE interventions during 2024/25.

Policy & Procedure Update

- 4.7 The H&S Team maintains a large number of corporate arrangements which can all be found in an accessible format on the council's intranet. All Corporate Arrangements are available for staff to access on the Intranet and are subject to review every 2-3 years or if new or revised legislation is put in place.

Health and Safety Communications

- 4.8 The following Health and Safety Communications have been released during 2024-2025 via Chief Executive weekly updates, scrolling news on our intranet, all staff briefings and quarterly managers briefings:
 - Lone workers and the Peoplesafe App
 - Health & Wellbeing Day promotion event for employees to attend

- DSE Assessments for home and office working following the release of the new form.
- Reminder of the need to report accidents, incidents etc at work.
- A contribution in all Managers briefings on the latest news and updates on health and safety

4.9 The team continue to report monthly to CLT and to the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) and DLT meetings as required.

The Lone Worker App

4.10 Peoplesafe, the lone worker app, has been available for staff who complete lone working to use for a number of years. Currently approx. 110 employees have access to the app. Access to and usage of the app costs approximately £5 per month per person whether they use it or not. This is paid for out of the central health and safety budget and is not charged back to service areas.

Health and Safety Training

4.11 Most of the H&S training is provided through the i-HASCO online training portal. This portal provides an array of training packages not just for health and safety. Each member of staff is allocated a standard package of courses to complete with Managers having additional ones to staff, depending on their role and additional courses can be added as and when required.

4.12 However, Environmental Services staff are unable to access these training courses, so they continue to receive face to face training as required from their own Training Supervisor with the support of the Corporate Health and Safety team as necessary.

4.13 Following an update to iHASCO, Managers can now access the system and see if their direct reports have completed the training for themselves.

4.14 Table 1 shows the percentage of people who have completed the mandatory modules in iHASCO as of 31 March 2025. This does not include operational staff. They are given more specialist training particularly in manual handling, accident reporting and health and safety at work. We are working with managers to ensure that staff complete the training within a reasonable timeframe, but this continues to be a challenge for staff to complete.

Course	% Completed	Course	% completed
Accident Reporting	83.8	H&S Essentials	76
DSE	65.5	Lone working	68.1
First Aid & RIDDOR	79.5	Manual Handling	81.8
Fire Awareness	82.2	Risk Assessment	79.1

Table 1: Completion Rates on 6 April 2025 of iHASCO Mandatory Training

First Aid and Training

4.15 The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

- 4.16 As part of this requirement, the Council provides two levels of first aid trained staff in its buildings. The numbers of first aid trained staff is set out at Table 2.
- 4.17 Employees have been identified and trained across the organisation in emergency first aid and first aid at work by an external training provider sourced by our Learning and Development Manager.
- 4.18 Environmental Services LGV Drivers also have an element of first aid training as part of their CPC training that they are required to complete 5 days over a 5-year period to maintain their LGV licence.
- 4.19 Following a review of the numbers of first aiders within the organisation we will be recruiting additional staff over the next few months.
- 4.20 The numbers have been assessed through a First Aid Risk Assessment for each of the premises. For example, Bodicote House is identified as low risk but the Depots, due to the nature of the work is identified as higher risk. The new offices at Castle Quay will remain the same as Bodicote House and there will be a second defibrillator available in the Council Chamber part of the offices.
- 4.21 All first aid staff have been defib trained. We have defibs readily available at Bodicote House and the depots. Maintenance and upkeep of the equipment is managed by the facilities management team.

Table 2: Numbers of First Aid Trained Staff

Location	First Aider Qualified	Emergency First Aid at Work Qualified
Bodicote House	4	7
Thorpe Lane Depot	3	3
Highfield Depot	3	0

Fire Safety and Fire Warden Training

- 4.22 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires employers to have a strategy to evacuate all occupants within a building. As part of the Council's fire safety arrangements nominated staff are trained either as Fire Wardens or in the use of fire extinguishers. They perform essentially two roles, ongoing assessment of fire hazards and risks during their normal daily work tasks, and in the event of an evacuation conduct a sweep of their allocated fire zone to ensure all persons have safely evacuated.
- 4.23 All Council occupied buildings undergo a six-monthly no-notice fire evacuation drill to test response and procedures.
- 4.24 Fire Wardens have been identified for all of our buildings and have been provided with suitable E-Learning training. Their main purpose is to ensure that if there is an incident all members of staff and visitors can be safely evacuated from the premises

in question. The numbers have been assessed through looking at the layout and distribution of staff across each site and their availability. This is under constant review by the team and certainly following any fire evacuations. The current number of Fire Wardens is set out at Table 3.

- 4.25 In addition, at Bodicote House due to its size we have five “Fire Brigade Liaison Officers (FBLO)” who will coordinate an incident on site and liaise with the emergency services where appropriate.

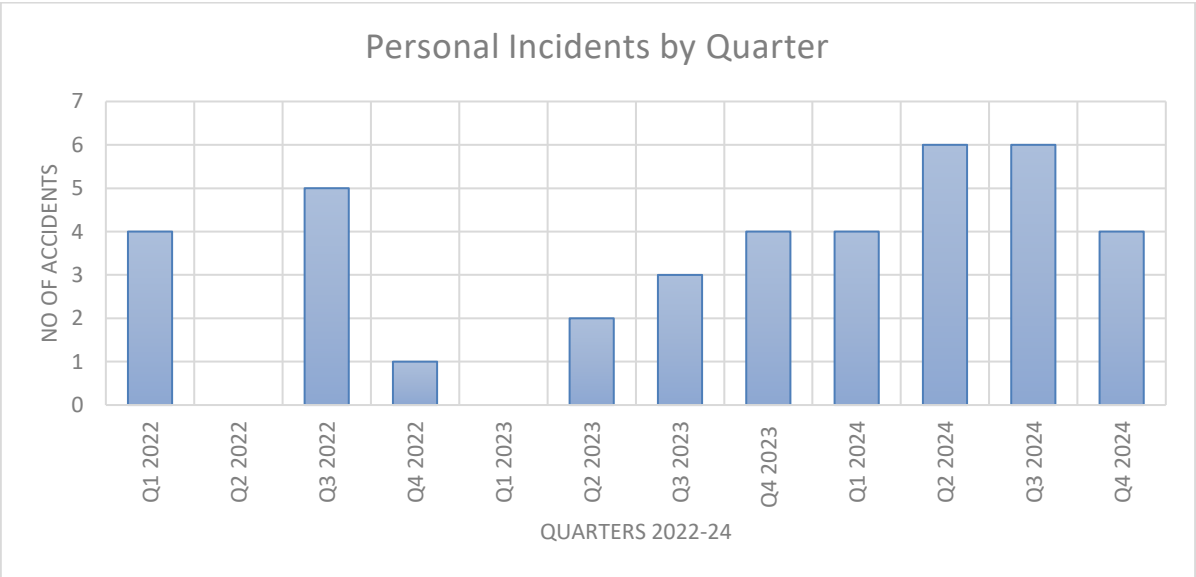
Table 3: Fire Wardens

Location	Fire Wardens	Fire Brigade Liaison Officer
Bodicote House	12	4
Thorpe Lane Depot	7	Not required
Highfield Depot	4	Not required

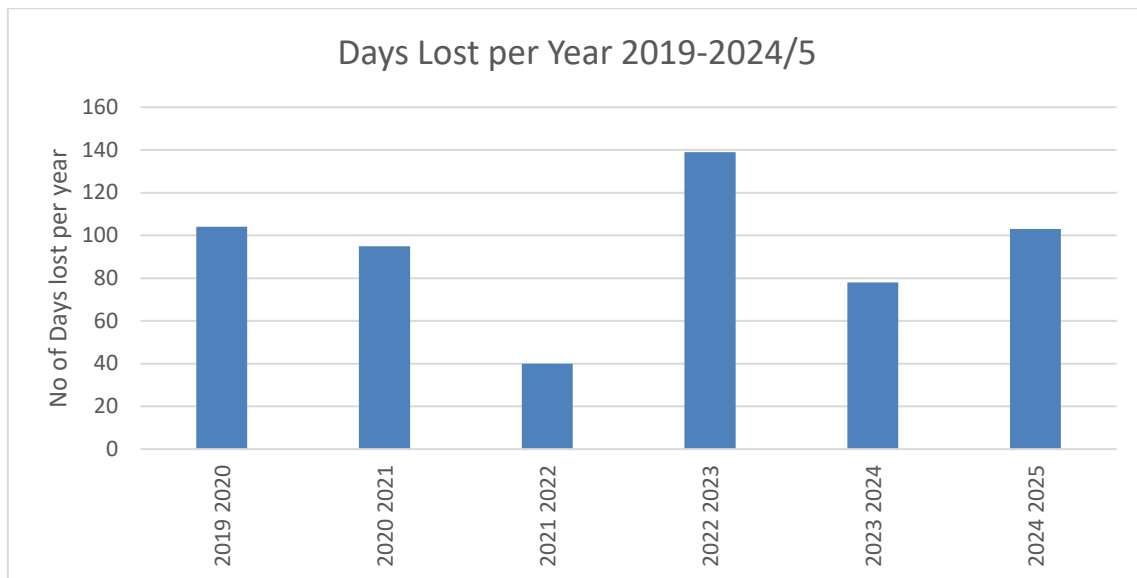
- 4.26 Following the move to Castle Quay these numbers are being reviewed to ensure sufficient coverage each workday.

Safety Event Statistics

- 4.27 Due to the size of the organisation the number of accidents and incidents remains low in comparison with other local authorities. This could be for any number of reasons but if they are not reported they cannot be investigated. There has been an effort to raise the profile of health and safety within Environmental Services though due to the nature of their work activities. As expected, most of the accidents are involving members of staff from Environmental Services due to the nature of their roles.



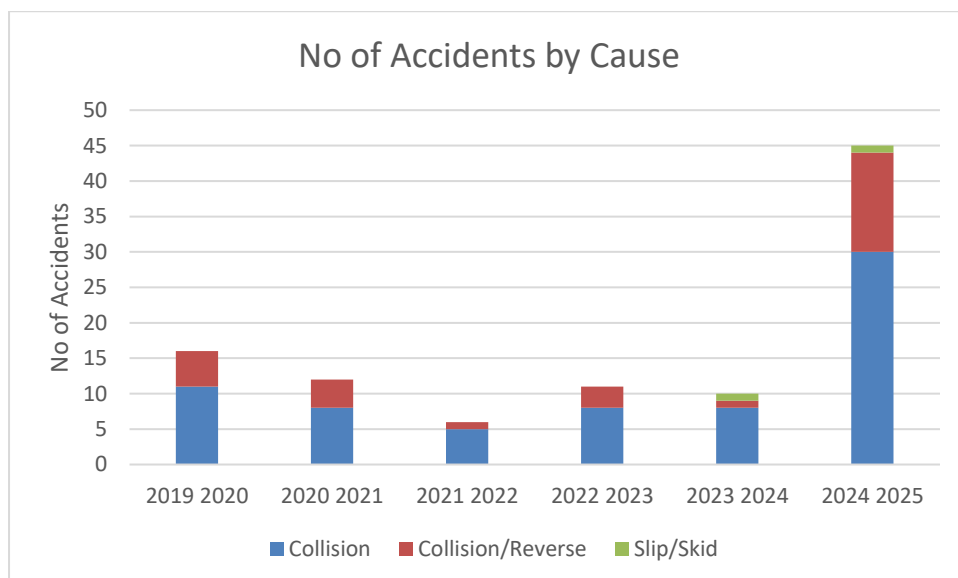
Graph 1: Number of Accidents involving staff per Quarter 2022-24



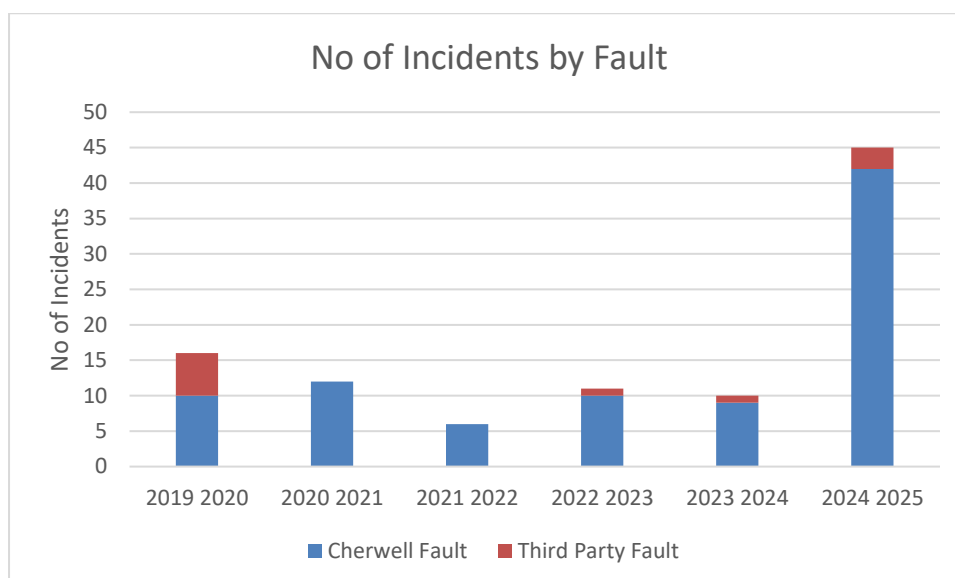
Graph 2: Numbers of Days lost following accidents at work by year.

Vehicle Accidents

- 4.28 As can be seen in the graph below, there has been a downward trend in the number of vehicle accidents reported irrespective of who is at fault. The Pandemic has had an effect on these figures also so we shall see going forward if there is a trend in the other direction.



Graph 3: Number of Vehicle Accidents by Cause per Year



Graph 4: Number of at fault incidents per Year

- 4.29 Vehicle incidents predominantly occur within the Environmental Services area due to the nature of their work. During the period 2024-25 a comparison has been made as to the number of miles driven against the number of vehicle and person incidents reported. This can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Number of Incidents compared to miles driven⁴

Month	No Days	Mileage	Vehicle Incidents	Personal Accidents
April	17	42500	3	1
May	19	47500	6	2
June	16	40000	4	1
July	18	45000	5	1
August	18	45000	4	3
September	16	40000	4	2
October	19	47500	5	1
November	18	45000	4	4
December	17	42500	2	1
January	19	47500	5	0
February	20	50000	1	1
March	21	52500	2	0

- 4.30 During the first two quarters of this reporting year, it can be seen that there were a large number of incidents as the average mileage remains fairly consistent. However, over the last quarter there has been a significant drop in the number of incidents hence the larger numbers of miles driven per incident.

RIDDOR Reports

- 4.31 There have been three RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013) reports over the past 12 months all of which have involved Environmental Services. These are set out in Table 5.

- 4.32 It is vital that reports are completed and filed as soon as possible after the event. This is so that we can keep accurate records and report to the authorities where necessary within required timescales. This has been brought to the attention of staff and management at staff briefings and all staff emails over the past few months.
- 4.33 It also helps in the event of an investigation being required so this can be completed while events are still fresh in people's minds.

Table 5: RIDDOR Accidents 2023-2024

Job Title	Submission of RIDDOR Date	Incident	Days lost due to sickness absence
Driver	May 2024	Driver stepped out of the vehicle and lost his footing in a pothole causing discomfort.	7
Loader	August 2024	Caught hand between two wheelie bins, carried on working for the day and then hand swelled up	7
Loader	September 2024	Two loaders were operating at the back of a lorry, one was operating the tail-lift and the other bent down to pick up rubbish and the bin was lowered on top of him	9
Loader	September 2024	Slipped on a patch of grass whilst handling a garden waste bin causing an ankle sprain.	30
Loader	November 2024	The IP was having pain in his shoulder prior to incident (cause unknown). As a bin was being lowered off the tail-lift the vehicle pulled away causing a pull to the shoulder, exacerbating the injury.	14
Loader	March 2024	The IP failed to report an incident in February until March 2024 whereby he twisted his ankle carried on working and then at a later date went off sick.	24

Occupational Health

- 4.34 The external Occupational Health provider has continued to meet the organisation's requirements for dealing with and promoting health at work issues. The core functions of Occupational Health are work-health assessment screening, sickness absence management and health promotion.
- 4.35 We work closely with the Occupational Health Advisor to provide a proactive health surveillance programme to required staff following the risk assessment process. This is based on a two-yearly programme of health surveillance checks, consisting of skin surveillance, hand-arm vibration, audiometry, vision screening and general life-style well-being checks. The services that are part of the health surveillance checks are set out at Table 6.

Table 6: Occupational Health Surveillance

Team	Number of Staff Assessed	
	Completed	Due at a future date
Environmental Services (drivers)	17	32
Environmental Services (Loaders	25	21
Street Cleansing & Street Scene	20	15
Vehicle Workshop	6	5

Looking forward to 2025-2026

4.36 Over the next 12 months we will also be focusing on the following:

- Completing the outstanding actions from the Veritau health and safety audit.
- Updating corporate arrangements to ensure that they reflect best practice.
- Continuing with the annual audit and inspection schedule as programmed under our key performance indicators.
- Ensuring that the council maintains compliance against health and safety legislation.
- Ensuring that the move to Castle Quay runs smoothly and all appropriate documents etc are updated accordingly.
- Providing support and assistance across the organisation where required.
- Working with Environmental Services to ensure that they maintain compliance with the Health & Safety Supervisor spending one day per week with the service.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: This report is provided for information only. There are no other options required as CDC must ensure compliance with Health and Safety Legislation

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

This report is a statement of Cherwell District Council's health and safety performance to the end of the financial year 2024/2025. The Committee is requested to consider the report and provide any feedback on the content of the future quarterly reports. The quarterly progress reports and include updates on the Veritau audit actions.

Decision Information

Key Decision	N/A
Subject to Call in	N/A

If not, why not subject to call in	N/A
Ward(s) Affected	N/A

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Ruth Wooldridge, Health and Safety Manager
Report Author contact details	Ruth.wooldridge@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Corporate Director for Resources and Transformation, Stephen Hinds approved 16 April 2025