

This report is public	
Health and Safety Report Quarter 1 2025/25	
Committee	Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date of Committee	24 September 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	1 September 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 for Quarter 1 of the 2025/26 financial 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.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report is a statement of Cherwell District Council's health and safety performance for Quarter one of the 2025/26 financial year. 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 are comparable with the same period last year. Work is ongoing to identify causes and look at actions required where necessary in a bid to reduce the rate.

- 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 resulting from this report. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 21 August 2025.			
Legal	The report sets out in detail the Council's various legislative obligations and discusses the steps which the Council is taking to satisfy these. The recommendations for this report are to review the content and provide feedback if further detail or additional information is required. As such there are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report. Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law and Governance, Legal and Democratic Services 27 August 2025.			
Risk Management	This is an information report, as such there are no risk implications as a direct consequence of it. However, the report provides mitigation, through enhanced transparency and compliance. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 27 August 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				n/a

protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
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.
- 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

Veritau Audit

- 4.1 Work is progressing with the actions from the Veritau audit which was finalised and published on 16 December 2024. The Health and Safety Supervisor has supported Environmental Services teams with all of their actions that we can assist with. Table 1 provides an update on progress.

Table 1

Action	Update
1. Member oversight of health and safety	This has now been closed down by Veritau in April 2025.
2. Insufficient Incident investigation	Ongoing project with Action 4 incident reporting. Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors have now attended the Accident Investigation training. All future reports submitted if they have not been completed using the correct paperwork this will be highlighted to those concerned that the correct paperwork needs to be completed. Evidence has been provided to Veritau awaiting confirmation that the action is closed.
3. Training records and completion	Work is ongoing across the business. Line Managers have access to their immediate reports within I-HASCO. On a quarterly basis data is sent to ELT, Corporate Directors and the Chief Executive for information and action. HR, L&D and IT are working on a Dashboard for training completion, this will provide data on all mandatory training required.
4. Incident Reporting	Ongoing project with <i>Insufficient Incident Investigation</i> action above around incident investigations. Evidence has been provided to Veritau awaiting confirmation that the action is closed.

5. Signature Sheets	All managers have been advised of the requirement to get staff to sign for having read and understood all documents and procedures. Assistant Directors have been reporting back to Veritau on progress. We are still awaiting confirmation this action and action 7 have been closed.
6. Availability of Docs at Depots	Completed and signed off by Veritau on 24 February 2025.
7. Reviewing and updating policies and procedures	All managers have been advised of the requirement to get staff to sign for having read and understood all documents and procedures, corporate arrangements etc. This will be monitored among teams over the next few months across the business. Assistant Directors have been reporting back to Veritau on progress. We are still awaiting confirmation this action and action 5 have been closed.
8. Environmental Services Action Plan	This is being completed within Environmental services independently. They have updated the Action plan. This is outside the scope of health and safety team and the service are working on this. We have now been provided with a copy which we are now reviewing.

- 4.2 As can be seen in the table above, two actions have now been closed down with two further ones which we are waiting further confirmation that they have been closed.

Vehicle Incidents Quarter 1

- 4.3 In table two below are details of vehicle incidents which have occurred during quarter one of 2025/26 all of which occurred within environmental services. In the same period last year there were a total of thirteen vehicle incidents of a similar nature to those detailed below.

Table 2: Vehicle Incidents Quarter 1

Date	Service Area	Description
02/04/2025	Environmental Services	Clipped metal fence when turning out of school entrance, light protector damaged. Bure Park School
09/04/2025	Environmental Services	Food vehicle collecting on narrow street, Church Lane, Islip. Third party vehicle reversed hitting FW vehicle with front of car while FW stationary

11/04/2025	Environmental Services	Drove vehicle into grass verge, cracking bumper and surround
21/05/2025	Environmental Services	Was stationary and about to reverse when the front tyre scuffed third party bumper as the wheel was turned
12/06/2025	Environmental Services	Whilst manoeuvring vehicle around parked van, struck ladder on the roof
19/06/2025	Environmental Services	RCV passing crop sprayer when arm came out and struck our RCV
09/06/2025	Environmental Services	Vehicle rear door came open hitting hut at tipping station

Personnel Accidents Quarter 1

- 4.4 In table three below are details of personal incidents which have occurred during quarter one of 2025/26 all but one occurred within environmental services. We do remind all staff to report any accidents and incidents to us wherever they occur in the business on a regular basis. In the same period last year there were a total of four personal accidents of a similar nature to those detailed below.

Table 3: Personnel Incidents Quarter 1

Date	Service Area	Description	Days Lost	RIDDOR
09/04/2025	Planning & Development	Slipped on public footpath and fell	0	No
14/04/2025	Environmental Services	Felt something scratch his hand, looked down and saw a rat	0	No
09/05/2025	Environmental Services (Agency Worker)	Stepping out of the cab backwards and fell over when knee gave way	7	Yes
11/06/2025	Environmental Services	Bin came off lifter and hit him on side of head	0	No
18/06/2025	Environmental Services	Whilst handling bin dislocated finger	0	No
21/06/2025	Environmental Services	Whilst slamming toilet door caught leg causing cut above ankle	0	No

Near Misses Quarter 1

- 4.5 Table 4 below contains information regarding near misses which have occurred during the first quarter of 2025/26. These have not formally been reported on before, so we don't currently have any comparable data. It should also be noted that though we do remind people about the importance of reporting near misses as well as accidents there is no doubt some under reporting.

Table 4: Near Misses Quarter 1

Date	Service Area	Description
06/05/2025	Digital & Innovation	Employee was leaving a meeting room at Castle Quay when a piece of wood fell off the wall
06/05/2025	CLT Member	Employee rushed past another employee in the corridor and tripped over their foot
02/04/2025	Wellbeing	Employee lost their balance and fell over on leaving the storeroom at CQ
20/05/2025	Environmental Services	Walked backwards and touched member of public's car with back of knees
06/05/2025	Environmental Services	Driver caught entering depot without wearing seatbelt

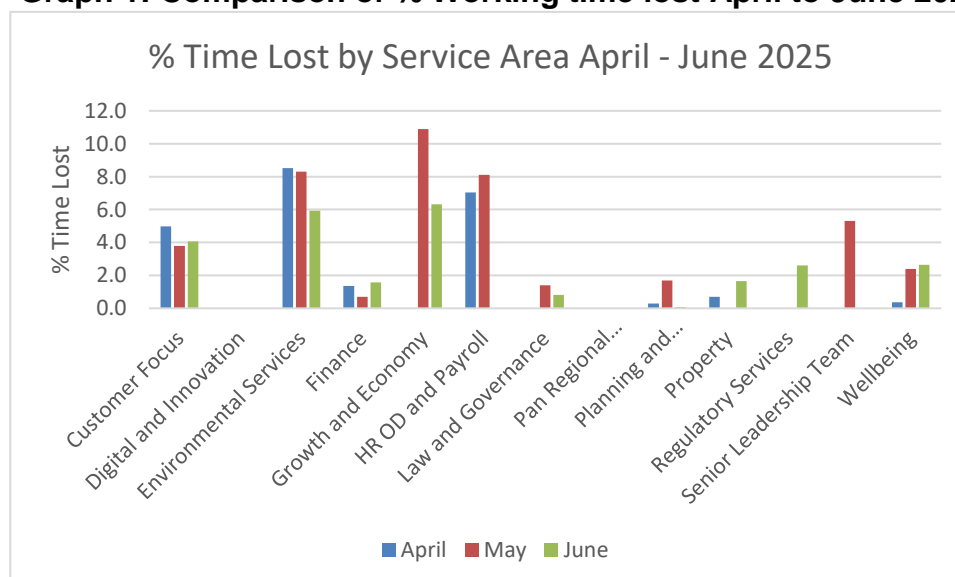
Physical and Verbal Abuse

- 4.6 There have been no reported cases of physical and verbal abuse reported in Quarter one.

Sickness absence amongst staff

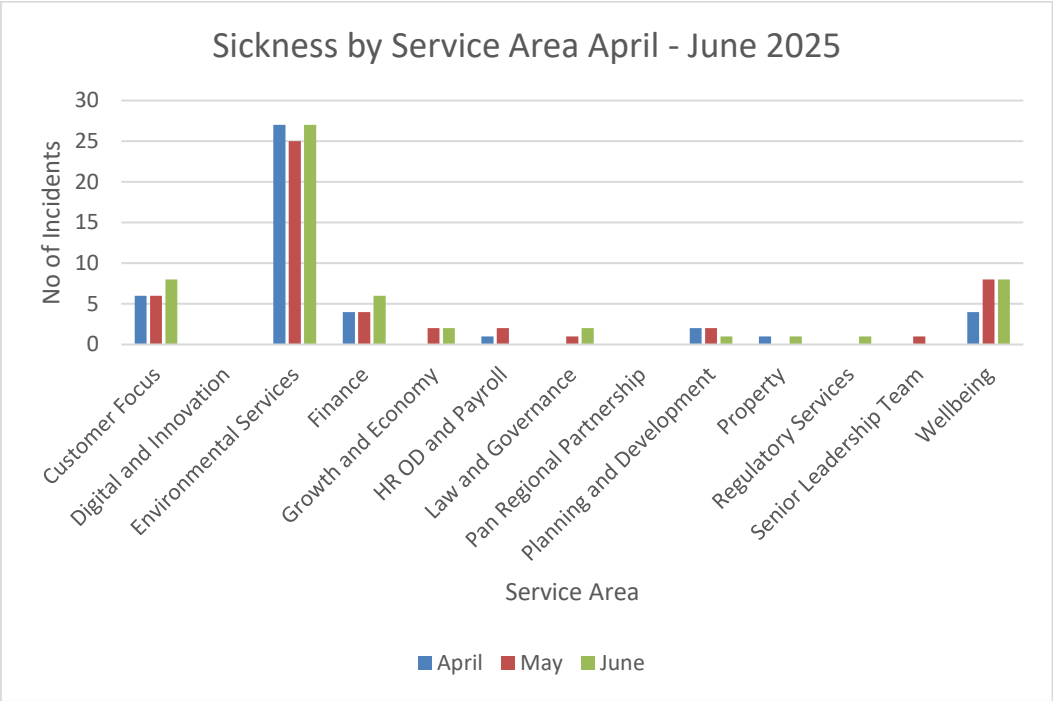
- 4.7 Graph 1 below shows the time lost per service area by month for April to June 2025. Environmental Services has the largest percentage time lost partially due to the numbers of staff within the service.

Graph 1: Comparison of % Working time lost April to June 2025



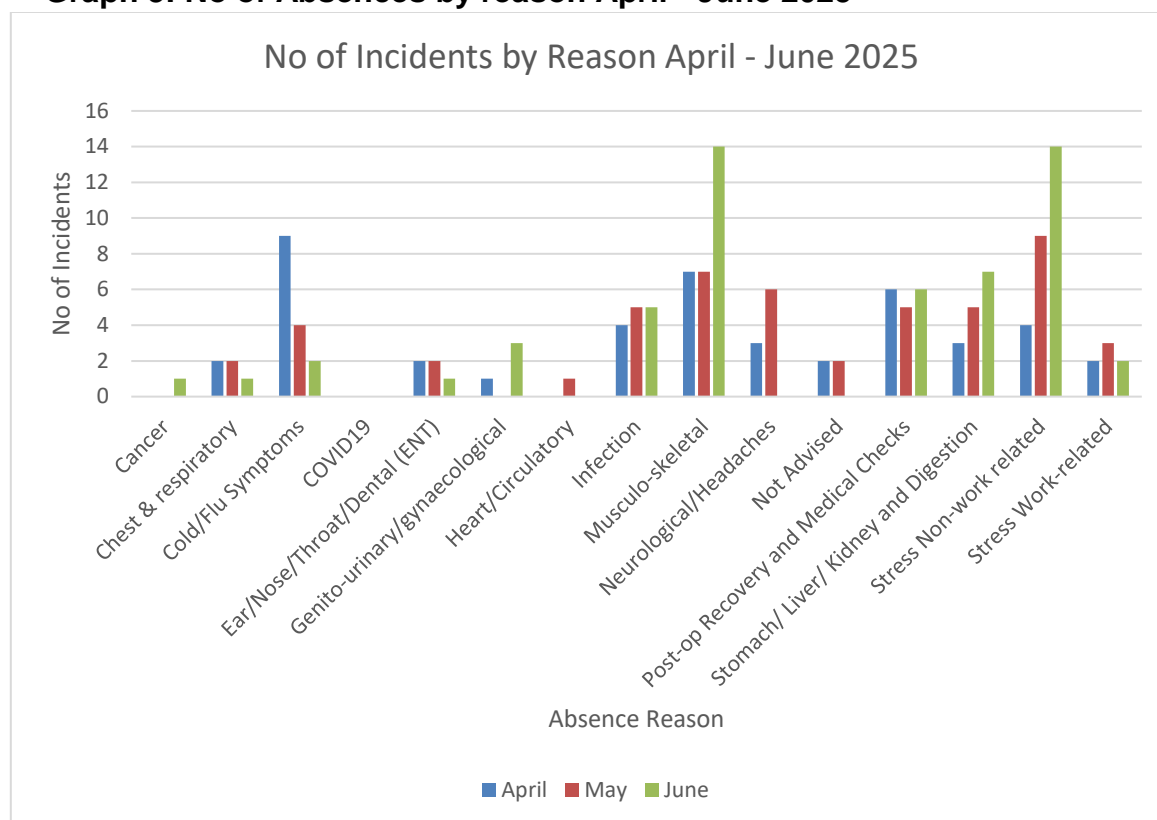
4.8 Graph 2 below provides information on the number of instances of sickness by service area for each month in quarter one. Again, environmental services stands out due to the size of the service. Now that we are approaching the summer months we would expect the levels of sickness to drop.

Graph 2: No of Sickness Absence by Service Area April - June 2025



4.9 Graph 3 below provides details of the reasons for sickness in each month. The categories are taken from the HR information system. It can be seen that as the quarter has progressed that absence for colds and flu are dropping as would be expected.

Graph 3: No of Absences by reason April - June 2025



Health and Safety Training

iHasco Training (E-Learning)

- 4.10 All employees are required to complete e-learning training on health and safety matters. Line managers have access to training completion data for their direct reports, and data from February was shared with both CLT and ELT for information and follow-up. In this last round of data at the end of May 2025, the figures remain unchanged at 22.03% (106) of staff required to complete the essential health and safety module within iHasco, which is slightly lower than previous months but there is still some way to go.
- 4.11 The HR Team have provided further data to Corporate Directors and Assistant Directors regarding the completion rates of all mandatory training and are in the process of working with ICT to develop a report using Power BI that will be accessible to managers on a more regular basis and will require less data manipulation than the current reporting. This is still a work in progress, but we hope to report as soon as possible by service area as requested in October's CLT.

Accident Investigation training

- 4.12 The Health and Safety Supervisor has now run three sessions of Accident Investigation training for all Supervisors, Assistant Supervisors and Managers within Environmental services.
- 4.13 This training has reinforced to the supervisors and managers in Environmental Services the importance of data gathering for accidents and incidents and provided greater awareness of the requirements in any accident investigation.

- 4.14 This is all part of Actions 2 and 4 of the Veritau audit. Evidence has been provided to Veritau to enable the actions to be closed down, and we are awaiting confirmation from them in due course.

Internal Health and Safety Audits

- 4.15 The health and safety function has a KPI in place which relates to the conducting and reporting on the completion of internal health and safety audits and any actions.
- 4.16 A timetable of audits and inspections is programmed for the year. The team undertakes two comprehensive workplace audits per year usually in June and December.
- 4.17 Any corrective actions following an audit are kept in a log held by the Health and Safety Team who check in with those responsible for completing actions identified on a regular basis and monitor progress. Some of the actions are low priority but still require completion. Currently there are no overdue actions.
Details of the audits and inspections and the number of outstanding actions can be found in Table 2 below. These are the only audits and inspections which have actions outstanding.

Table 5 Internal Health and Safety Audits Q1

Month	AD Init.	Team/Area	No. actions identified	No. of actions completed	No. of actions outstanding	No. of actions overdue
April '25	NR	Longford Park Pavilion	6	4	2	0
May '25	EP	Highfield Depot	14	12	2	0
June '25		Elections	4	0	4	0

Audit of Elections

- 4.18 As part of the audit schedule the team undertook a health and safety audit of the Elections aspects of the Democratic and Elections team and its operations leading up to the recent elections in May 2025.
- 4.19 The purpose of the audit was to ascertain whether we are meeting requirements for maintaining compliance. The audit concentrated around Election duties.
- 4.20 This involved visiting six polling stations in and around the Bicester area. At each of the polling stations we examined Signage, building access, internal and external areas and facilities to ensure that they were safe and compliant for both Polling staff and members of the public coming to vote. Good practice was evidenced throughout the election process. Each station has a risk assessment which was undertaken during COVID and we have recommended that these are reviewed and updated where necessary before the next elections.
- 4.21 There were no significant findings, and the main actions centred around ensuring risk assessments are reviewed before the next election.

Crew Inspections for both Depots

- 4.22 The Health and Safety Supervisor undertakes waste collection crew audits each month. The Supervisors also undertake their own crew audits in addition to this.
- 4.23 The purpose of the crew inspections is to meet with the crews with emphasis placed on the following main themes, working on the highway, manual handling and reversing assistants assessing their working practices and correcting where necessary. Any shortcomings are addressed at the time and refresher training is arranged where necessary.

Environmental Services

- 4.24 The Health and Safety Supervisor has been spending approximately 1 day per week with the Environmental Services Management team and staff since April 2024. This extra resource with Health and Safety Supervisor has helped engage the Environmental Services supervisors and has ensured that actions such as accident investigation have been undertaken within more realistic timescales. This will continue for the foreseeable future and will also support the completion of the Veritau audit actions.
- 4.25 The work that Health and Safety Supervisor has undertaken has benefited the service as a whole and has definitely contributed to a reduction in the number of incidents and also improved reporting of incidents both to us and our insurance advisor where necessary.
- 4.26 One of the Assistant Supervisors has also been assigned H&S responsibilities. It has also been reiterated to all the Supervisors that they still have their own health and safety responsibilities as part of their day-to-day role.
- 4.27 Time spent with this team has consisted of:
- Collaborating with supervisors and updating accident and incident information.
 - Crew audit inspections – North & South. These inspections raise supervisory awareness and concentrate on the more hazardous areas such as manual handling and reversing.
 - Involvement in incident investigations, supporting with reports, gathering information for, and ensuring that, timeframes are met for RIDDOR reports. Also input into accident and incident meetings with ES team members. This has further ensured that reporting of accidents and incidents is a high priority, and that information is provided promptly.
 - Assisting in the development and eventual production of a new training film for waste collection. This will ensure that new collection methods are captured, for example food waste, and that the film is CDC centric. The existing material is current.
 - Working with Supervisors to ensure that all staff have access to safe working practice notes, corporate arrangements, and risk assessments and to evidence that they have been viewed and understood. This was an action from the Veritau audit and has meant that all operational staff have signed for and understood the content of these documents.

- Providing training to the different teams including accident investigation training for all supervisors.

Legislation Update

Martyn's Law (Terrorism Bill)

- 4.28 This law came about following the Manchester Arena bombings and it highlighted the need to protect members of the public at events where large numbers of people are in one area/building. Martyn's Law received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025 and is now the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025. The implementation period for this act is expected to be two years but anyone responsible for qualifying premises and events are urged to get preparations underway now.
- 4.29 An initial meeting was held in early June with key colleagues from Property, Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Finance to ensure the impact of the law is considered in all of our settings. Work has now begun looking at the different properties within the Portfolio of the Council including leisure centres, community centres and premises that we have lease agreements with to establish whether the Terrorism Bill will have an impact on each property. This is a lengthy process and there is another meeting scheduled for September 2025.

Compliance

- 4.30 Work is ongoing to ensure that all of Cherwell District Council premises including housing stock are compliant with regard to Fire, Asbestos, Legionella, Gas and Electrical safety going forward.
- 4.31 The Health and Safety Manager has begun work on developing a system with the assistance of Property and Housing which is hoped to fully roll out towards the end of the Summer.

Use of Fleet Vehicles Policy

- 4.33 Following a recent Veritau audit a Fleet Policy has been written and is currently waiting sign off.

5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

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

Option 1: As this report is for information and follow up there are no alternative options. It is important that Health and Safety information is recorded and reported on a regular basis in order to monitor overall compliance and ensure good practice.

6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 AARC are invited to request any additional health and safety related information that they would like to be included in this report.

Decision Information

Key Decision	n/a
Subject to Call in	No
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
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Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Corporate Director of Resources and Transformation, Stephen Hinds, 19 August 2025.