

This report is public	
Health and Safety Report Quarter 2 2025/25	
Committee	Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date of Committee	19 November 2025
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	4 November 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 2 of the 2025/26 year.

1. Recommendations

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To review and note the content of the report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report is a statement of Cherwell District Council's health and safety performance for quarter 2 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.
- 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 (H&S) 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 a little higher than 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 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 its release, the H&S 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 October 2025.			
Legal	There are no legal implications resulting from this report. Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services 28 October 2025			
Risk Management	There are no risks arising as a direct consequence of this report; the report itself mitigates the risk of not being compliant with Health and Safety regulations. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 28 October 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. Executive 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 as Chief Executive 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 There are two actions outstanding which the Assistant Director for Environmental Services needs to complete which are detailed in table one.

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	<i>Signed off by Veritau August 2025.</i>
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. this has been signed off apart from an Action on Ed Potter: <i>With the support of HR and the Learning & Development Manager, the training provision for manual staff will be reviewed and updated, with additional training provided as needed. Procedures to ensure that training records are kept for manual staff, regularly updated and monitored will be developed.</i>
4. Incident Reporting	<i>Signed off by Veritau August 2025.</i>
5. Signature Sheets	<i>Signed off 08 September 2025.</i>
6. Availability of Docs at Depots	Completed and signed off by Veritau on 24 February 2025. <i>However: An action was left with the AD of ES: Options for the use of electronic alternatives to printed documents to be stored in crew vehicles will be considered.</i>
7. Reviewing and updating policies and procedures	<i>Signed off by Veritau August 2025.</i>
8. Environmental Services Action Plan	<i>Signed off by Veritau August 2025.</i>

Vehicle Incidents Quarter 2

- 4.2 Table 2 below provides details of vehicle incidents which have occurred during quarter 2 of 2025/26 all of which occurred within Environmental Services. This year

there have been 17 vehicle incidents so far and in the same period last year there were a total of 13 vehicle incidents of a similar nature to those detailed below.

Table 2: Vehicle Incidents Quarter 2

Date	Service Area	Description
09/07/2025	Environmental Services	Driver caught barrier at depot damaging cage
11/07/2025	Environmental Services	Hit parked car cracking lens cover
08/08/2025	Environmental Services	clipped wing mirror while driving forward
08/08/2025	Environmental Services	collided with parked car whilst reversing
15/08/2025	Environmental Services	Caught garden fence whilst manoeuvring around parked cars
02/09/2025	Environmental Services	reversed over houseowners step in the front of the property
05/09/2025	Environmental Services	Reversed into parked car damaging wheel arch
18/09/2025	Environmental Services	Clipped wall with rear light of RCV
23/09/2025	Environmental Services	Number plate damage whilst reversing
22/09/2025	Environmental Services	Clipped bollard whilst leaving the area
23/09/2025	Environmental Services	Third party vehicle failed to give way at a junction colliding with our vehicle.
04/09/2025	Regulatory Services	Scraped third party vehicle

Personnel Accidents Quarter 2

- 4.3 Table 3 provides details of personal incidents which have occurred during quarter 2 of 2025/26. Out of a total of 15 this quarter, all but one incident 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 4 personal accidents of a similar nature to those detailed below. This an increase of 7 for the same quarter across the 2 years.

Table 3: Personnel Incidents Quarter 2

Date	Service Area	Description	Days Lost	RIDDOR Yes/No
05/07/2025	Environmental Services	Market stall tipped over in Banbury hitting two members of the public	0	No
07/07/2025	Environmental Services	Strained lower back whilst lifting bag into street scene vehicle	0	No
15/07/2025	Environmental Services	While emptying garden bin something went in operatives' eye	0	No
22/07/2025	Environmental Services	Mechanic banged head on pit cover in Workshops	0	No
13/08/2025	Environmental Services	Grazed elbow when they slipped whilst handling a 1100L wheeled bin	2	No
02/09/2025	Environmental Services	Jarred knee whilst walking along uneven surface	0	No
28/08/2025	Resettlement Team	Staff member passed out due to low blood pressure	1.5	No

Near Misses Quarter 2

- 4.4 Table 4 contains information regarding near misses which have occurred during the second quarter of 2025/26. It was at the request of the AARC Committee that near misses be formally reported on, so as Health and Safety information has only recently been presented to this Committee, we do not currently have any

comparable data but will routinely collect and report on this going forward. It should also be noted that though we do remind people about the importance of reporting near misses as well as accidents there is some risk of under reporting.

Table 4: Near Misses Quarter 2

Date	Service Area	Description
03/07/2025	Environmental Services	Two children at TLD stepped out from behind a barrier at Reception.
07/08/2025	Regulatory Services	Working with Youth Activators and slipped jarring back and neck

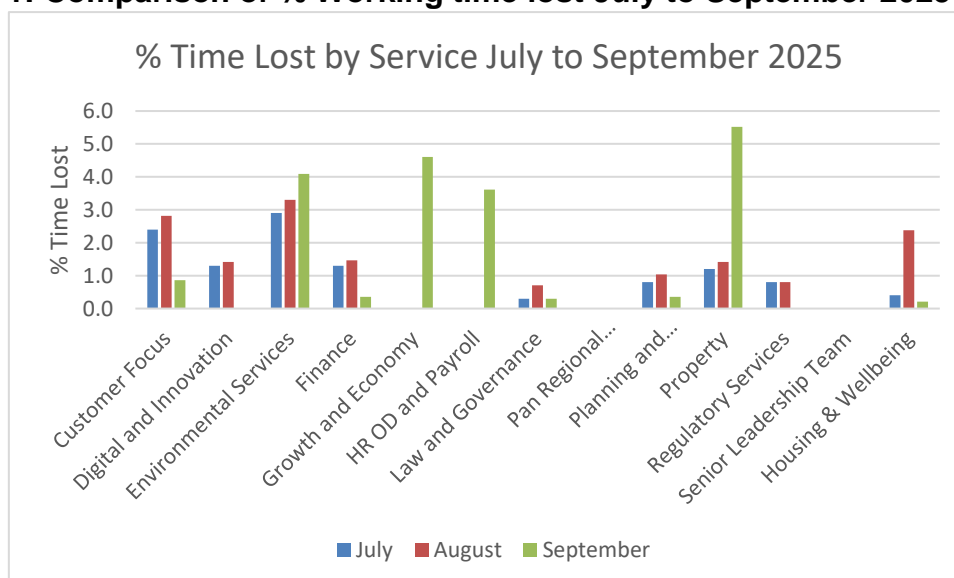
Physical and Verbal Abuse

- 4.5 There have been no reported cases of physical and verbal abuse reported in quarter 2 of 2025/26.

Sickness absence amongst staff

- 4.6 Graph 1 below shows the time lost due to sickness absence per service area by month for July to September 2025. Environmental Services has the largest percentage time lost partially due to the numbers of staff within the service. Within Growth and Economy and also Human Resources there was a long period of absence from one member of staff in each area, but this has now been concluded.

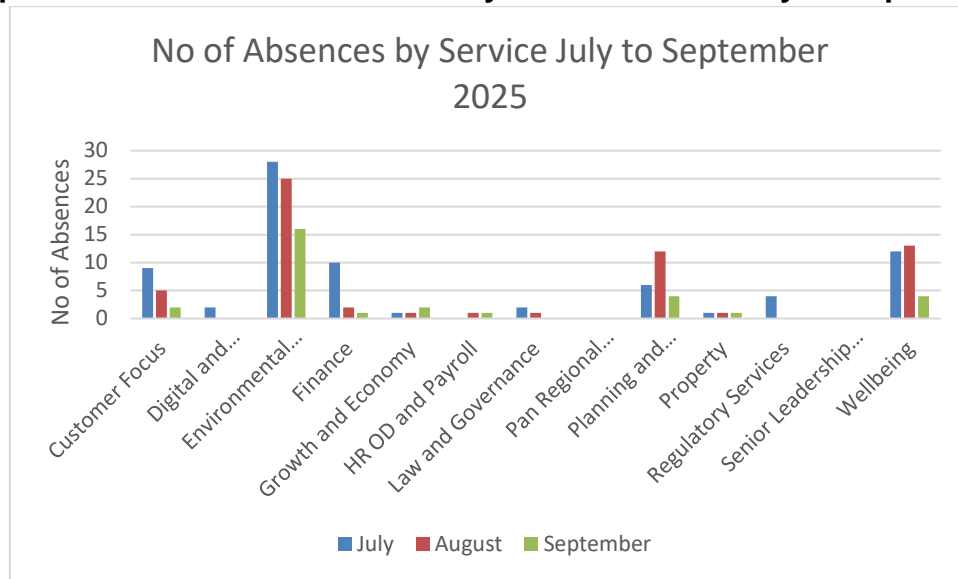
Graph 1: Comparison of % Working time lost July to September 2025



- 4.7 Graph 2 provides information on the number of instances of sickness by service area for each month in quarter two. Again, environmental services stands out due to

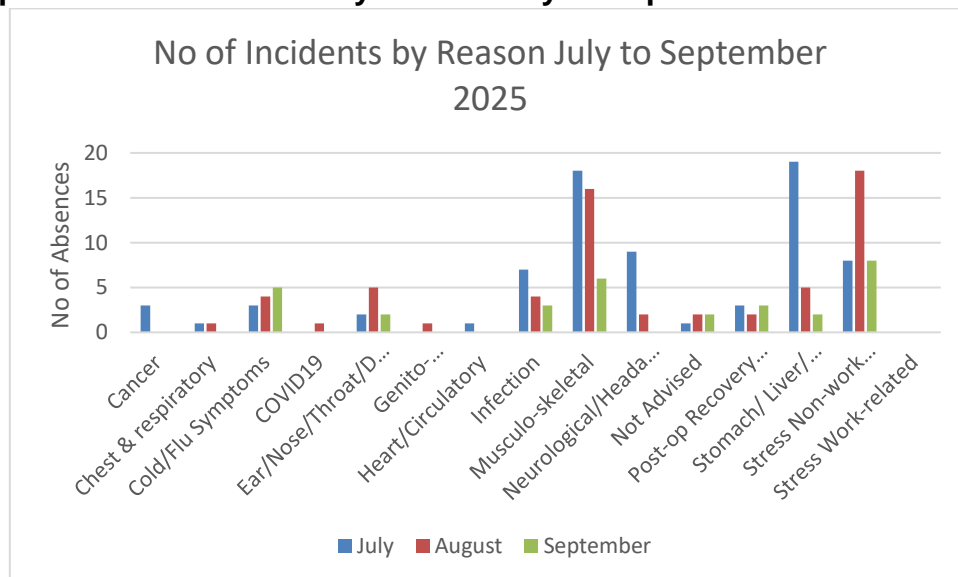
the size of the service. Now that we are approaching the winter months, we would expect the levels to slightly increase in quarter three.

Graph 2: No of Sickness Absence by Service Area - July to September 2025



4.8 Graph 3 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. There has been an increase in absence due to muscular-skeletal problems particularly within Environmental Services due to the nature of the work that they undertake. This is being investigated with the HR Team currently to look at what can be done corporately to reduce these numbers and also their sickness absence levels in general.

Graph 3: No of Absences by reason July to September 2025



Health and Safety Training

iHasco Training (E-Learning)

- 4.9 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, the figures remain unchanged at 22.1% (100) 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.
- 4.10 The HR Team have provided further data to Executive 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.

Internal Health and Safety Audits

- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 At the start of each financial year, 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.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 The Leisure and Community Facilities Manager has requested assistance with auditing all Community Centres (twelve) over the next three months. This has come about because up until now it has not been definitively established where responsibilities lie for maintenance etc of these buildings.
- 4.15 With these audits it is hoped to build a clear picture of the status of these centres. The aim is to evaluate compliance levels and identify any issues across various operational areas within these buildings. Kingsmere Community Centre was audited in September (see Table 2 below), and although several issues were identified, none were significant.
- 4.16 These will be addressed once a comprehensive overview of the status of all Centres has been established. The Community Facilities Manager wants to build a picture of all of the issues at the Community centres before committing to any remedial works that could be required. It will also need to be established at each centre where the responsibilities sit before anything is decided. Any serious safety concerns will be addressed immediately but it is expected that most of the findings will be relatively minor in nature. It is hoped that most of the centres will be audited by the end of the Year.

- 4.17 Details of the audits and inspections and the number of outstanding actions can be found in Table 5 below. These are the only audits and inspections which have actions outstanding which have occurred so far in quarter one and two.

Table 5 Internal Health and Safety Audits Q2

Month	AD Init.	Team/Area	No. actions identified	No. of actions completed	No. of actions outstanding	No. of actions overdue
July '25	EP	Vehicle Workshop & MOT Station	11	11	0	0
August '25	NR	NOA Pavilion	8	4	4	0
September	NR	Kingsmere Community Centre	26	n/a	n/a	n/a

Crew Inspections for both Depots

- 4.18 The Health and Safety Supervisor undertakes waste collection crew audits each month. The Waste Supervisors also undertake their own crew audits in addition to this.
- 4.19 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
 - 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

- 4.20 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.
- 4.21 The work that Health and Safety Supervisor has undertaken has benefited the service as a whole and has definitely contributed the improved reporting of incidents both to us and our insurance advisor where necessary. 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.

4.22 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.
- 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)

4.23 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.

4.24 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.

Compliance

4.25 Work is ongoing to centralise records regarding compliance with all of our properties with regard to Fire, Asbestos, Legionella, Gas and electrical safety.

4.26 The Health and Safety Manager has begun work on developing a process for recording these checks with the assistance of Property and Housing teams which is hoped to fully roll out in early quarter 3 and we will report at the next meeting.

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	n/a
If not, why not subject to call in	n/a
Ward(s) Affected	n/a

Document Information

Appendices	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
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Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)	Corporate Director of Resources and Transformation, Stephen Hinds 5 November 2025