This report is public	
Health and Safety Report Quarter 3 2025/26	
Committee	Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee
Date of Committee	18 March 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor Chris Brant
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	3 March 2026
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 3 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 3 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 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 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.

2.6 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	This is an information report with no financial implications. Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 25 February 2026
Legal	The report notes that the Council has put in place procedures to meet its legal requirements. There are no legal implications arising directly as a result of this report. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services. 3/03/2026
Risk Management	The Quarter 3 report reflects a broadly strong health and safety position, with continued commitment across the organisation to maintaining safe and compliant operations. While some incident levels have risen, this has led to improved reporting habits and greater visibility, enabling teams, particularly within Environmental Services, to take more proactive action. Ongoing audit activity, closer management engagement, and increased support from the Health and Safety team are already strengthening assurance. Continued focus on training completion, open reporting, and consistent safe working practices will help build on this positive progress and further reduce future risk. Related risks are being managed and monitored through each service operational risk register, and they will be escalated to the leadership risk register as and when deemed necessary. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 2 March 2026.

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				N/A

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. 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

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

4.1 The council’s health, safety and wellbeing policy was subject to periodic review in February 2026. This has been updated and was approved at Personnel Committee on the 4 March 2026. Now that this has been approved the council’s webpages will be updated accordingly.

Vehicle Incidents Quarter 3

4.2 Table 2 below provides details of vehicle incidents which have occurred during quarter 3 of 2025/26 all of which occurred within Environmental Services. This year there have been 22 vehicle incidents so far and in the same period last year there were a total of 17 vehicle incidents of a similar nature to those detailed below.

Table 2: Vehicle Incidents Quarter 3

Date	Type of Incident	Service Area	Description
16 Oct 2025	Collision	Waste Collection	Manoeuvring around parked cars and caught fence with rear of vehicle
15 Oct 2025	Collision/Reverse	Waste Collection	Broken front offside bumper after reversing into a lamp post vehicle CCTV unavailable
10 Nov 2025	Collision/Reverse	Waste Collection	Reversed into parked car
26 Nov 2025	Collision/Reverse	Waste Collection	Reversed into metal fence
10 Dec 2025	Collision/Reverse	Waste Collection	Reversing into a cul-de-sac caught the wing mirror of a 3rd party vehicle.
17 Dec 2025	Collision	Waste Collection	Loader opened door onto a car. Food waste

			vehicle on wrong side of the road

Personnel Accidents Quarter 3

4.3 Table 3 provides details of personal incidents which have occurred during quarter 3 of 2025/26. Out of a total of 18 this year, 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 5 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 3

Date	Service Area	Description	Days Lost	RIDDOR Yes/No
01/10/2025	Street Cleansing	Twisted ankle whilst litter picking due to uneven pavement	3	No
07/10/2025	Waste Collection	Pinched Thumb when manoeuvring a sofa on the 7.5 box van	0	No
17/10/2025	Street Cleansing	Whilst lifting a small fridge, a sharp corner cut through the work clothing and made a small cut to the stomach	0	No
27/10/2025	Waste Collection	Twisted ankle in pothole	Still absent	No
11/12/2025	Waste Collection	Driver braked and Grant hit windscreen injured neck	1	No

Near Misses Quarter 3

4.4 Table 4 contains information regarding near misses which have occurred during the third 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
18/11/2025	Waste Collection	Crew reacted and tipped load in fire bay at Grundons preventing damage to vehicle.
04/12/2025	Housing Grants & Standards	Concern over the PACE room at the Town Hall for staff if someone being interviewed becomes aggressive and staff could be quite vulnerable.

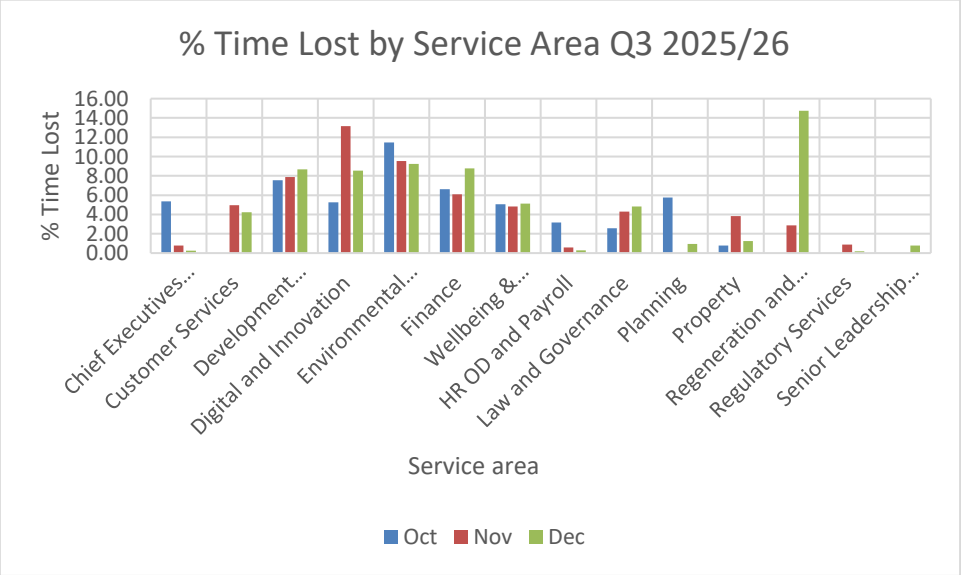
Physical and Verbal Abuse

4.5 There have been no reported cases of physical and verbal abuse reported in quarter 3 of 2025/26.

Sickness absence amongst staff

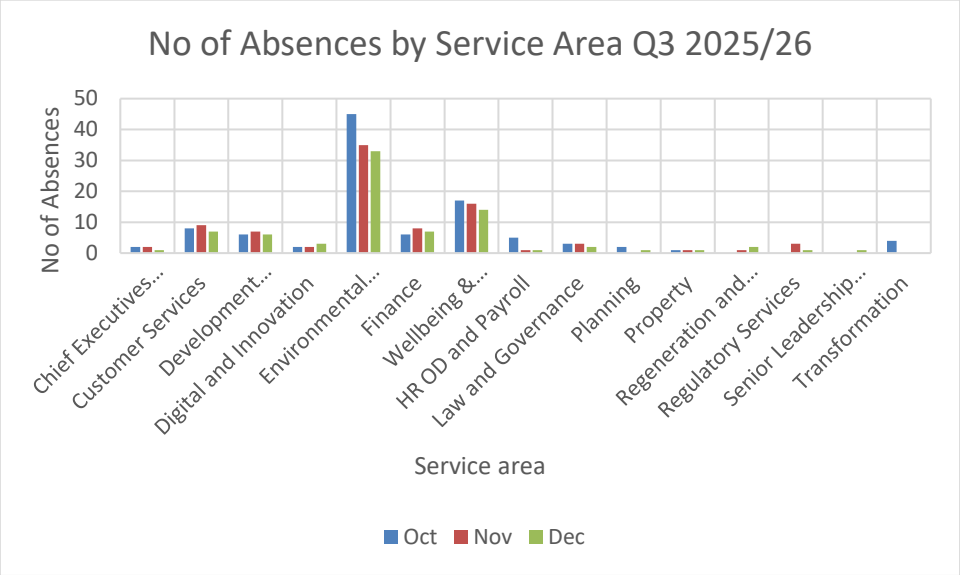
4.6 Graph 1 below shows the time lost due to sickness absence per service area by month for October to December 2025. Environmental Services has the largest percentage time lost partially due to the numbers of staff within the service. Within Growth and Economy and also Human Resources there was a long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

Graph 1: Comparison of % Working time lost October to December 2025



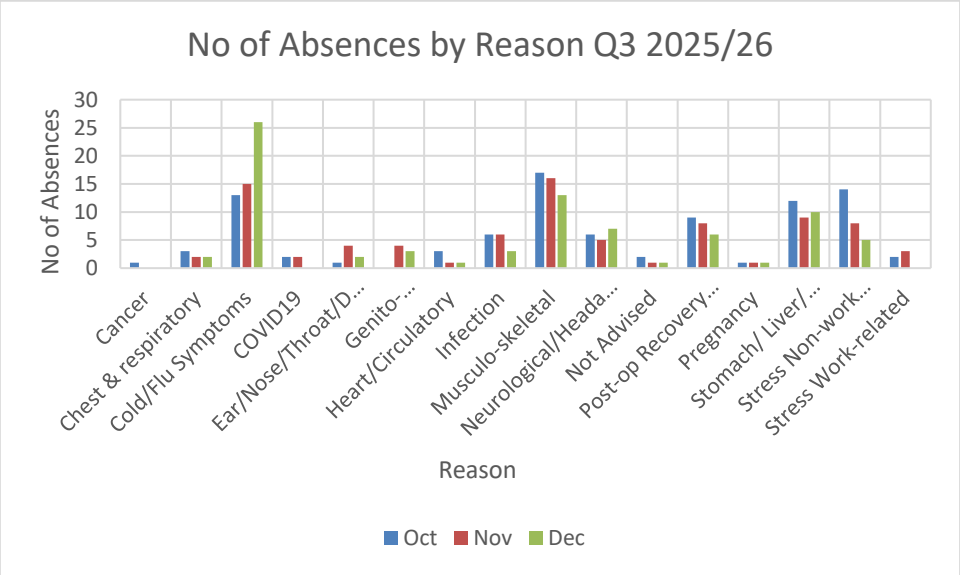
4.7 Graph 2 provides information on the number of instances of sickness by service area for each month in quarter three. Again, environmental services stands out due to the size of the service. Now that we are approaching the winter months, we would expect the levels to slightly increase in quarter three.

Graph 2: No of Sickness Absence by Service Area – October to December 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 October to December 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 21.8% of staff required to complete the essential health and safety module within iHasco though some of these are new starters within the first 6 months of employment, which is slightly lower than previous months but there is still some way to go. The senior leadership team are now doing a push on getting everyone to complete the mandatory training on IHASCO not just the health and safety element.

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 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. In December 2026 the health and safety team audited the Customer Services area with one observation made which we are waiting for a response.

4.12 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.

4.13 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.

4.14 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.

4.15 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.

4.16 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 Q3

Month	AD Init.	Team/Area	No. actions identified	No. of actions completed	No. of actions outstanding	No. of actions overdue
October '25	NR	Thorpe Lane Depot	7	2	5	0
November	CC	CQ Offices	11	3	8	0
December '25		Customer Services	1	0	1	0

Month	AD Init.	Community Centre/Hall	No. Findings identified
September '25	NR	Kingsmere Community Centre	26
October '25	NR	Grimsbury Community Hall	19
October '25	NR	Longford Park Community Hall	13
November '25	NR	West Bicester Community Centre	16
November	NR	Langford Village Community Centre	3
November	NR	Bicester East Community Centre	10
December	NR	Ruscote Community Centre	9
December	NR	Hanwell Fields Community Centre	24

Crew Inspections for both Depots

4.17 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.

4.18 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.

4.19 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. In early 2026 it has been agreed that the team will be spending three days per week at the depots to support their safe operations. 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 has recently been increased to offer more support for the Environmental Services teams.

4.21 The work that the 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.

4.23 A draft Security policy has been written by the Health and Safety Team and the Facilities Management Team for the Castle Quay offices. This includes protecting staff in customer services area as well as general security of the council offices. This was provided to CLT for review 16 December and was then presented to AARC in January 2026. There is a minor adjustment to be made regarding the inclusion of evening meetings which is currently being worked on.

4.24 Training is due to commence shortly for all staff. Once this has been completed we will take the opportunity to test the process with an exercise. There will also be a security policy developed for both depots over the coming months.

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 now brought together a Health and Safety Compliance Working Group, consisting of members of staff from Housing, Leisure, Environmental Services, and Facilities Management to work on ensuring maintaining compliance across all areas working collaboratively.

4.27 A set of Terms of Reference have been developed for the group. Their tasking will include oversight of accidents, incidents, trends, audits, inspections, policies, and procedures going forward.

4.28 The Health and Safety Manager is acting as Chair, and the Senior Responsible Officer position will be held jointly by Claire Cox, Assistant Director for HR and Mona Walsh, Assistant Director for Property.

4.29 On 24 October a HSE Inspector visited the Castle Quay offices to look at how we manage asbestos in council buildings. This is a UK wide initiative with HSE Inspectors visiting local authorities across the country as there is concern about the amount of asbestos present in public buildings.

4.30 The Corporate Health and Safety Team and Facilities Management team met with the Inspector. As part of the visit, they were required to visit establishments where asbestos is present. Site visits took place at Bodicote House, Thorpe Lane & Highfields and Stratfield Brake. Following the visits recommendations were made for improvements on Policy, Surveys and Asbestos Management plans for all four buildings.

4.31 Actions were completed promptly and submitted to the HSE in January 2026. On 18 February 2026 we had email confirmation that they were content with the actions we had taken following the visit.

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: As this report is for information and follow up there are no alternative options. It is important that Health and Safety information in 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	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
Report Author	Ruth Wooldridge, Health and Safety Manager
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Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Executive Director of Resources, Stephen Hinds, 24 February 2026