

<b>This report is public</b>	
<b>Health and Safety Report Quarter 4 2025/26</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Audit & Governance Committee
<b>Date of Committee</b>	17 June 2026
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Law & Governance, Councillor Frank Ideh
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	3 June 2026
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director of Human Resources, Claire Cox

## Purpose of report

To provide the Audit and Governance Committee with the Council's Health and Safety performance for Quarter 4 of 2025/26.

### 1. Recommendations

The Audit and Governance 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 4 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.

Cherwell District Council

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			
<b>Finance</b>	Signed off on the basis that this will be carried out within current budgets. Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner for Resources, 22 May 2026			
<b>Legal</b>	This report is for information purposes only, there are no legal implications arising as a result of this report. The report notes that the Council is putting in place measures to meet its legal requirements and monitoring incidents in line with best practice. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 4 June 2026			
<b>Risk Management</b>	This is an information report, as such, there are no risks arising as a direct consequence of this report. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance & Insight Team Leader, 22 May 2026			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>				n/a
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				n/a
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				n/a
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>				n/a
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>				n/a
<b>Data Impact</b>				n/a

<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>				n/a
<b>Council Priorities</b>	n/a			
<b>Human Resources</b>	n/a			
<b>Property</b>	n/a			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	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 March 2026 and was signed off by Personnel Committee.
  - 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.

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## 4. Details

### Vehicle Incidents Quarter 4

- 4.1 Table 1 below provides details of vehicle incidents which have occurred during quarter 4 of 2025/26 all of which occurred within Environmental Services. This year there have been 27 vehicle incidents so far and in the same period last year there were a total of 20 vehicle incidents of a similar nature to those detailed below.

**Table 1: Vehicle Incidents Quarter 4**

Date	Type of Incident	Service Area	Description
13/01/2026	Collision	Environmental Services	reversed into parked vehicle in TLD
30/01/2026	Collision	Environmental Services	Hit third party car whilst passing at Baynards Green roundabout (3rd party is member of CDC staff)
06/02/2026	Collision	Environmental Services	Hit by third party while driving down Oxford rd. Kidlington, Third party pulled out into the side of the van at slow speed impact.
24/02/2026	Collision	Environmental Services	Hit third party car while driving into a cul-de-sac
24/02/2026	Collision	Environmental Services	Caught barrier surrounding fuel pump in Highfield depot, bending side rails on RCV
12/03/2026	Collision	Environmental Services	Hit customer wall
12/03/2026	Collision/Reverse	Environmental Services	Reversed into a parked car when trying to sweep around it on residential street.
19/03/2026	Collision	Environmental Services	Clipped bumper of 3 <sup>rd</sup> party vehicle

## Personnel Accidents Quarter 4

4.2 Table 2 provides details of personal incidents which have occurred during quarter 4 of 2025/26. Out of a total of 21 this year, all but two incidents 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.

**Table 2: Personnel Incidents Quarter 4**

Date	Service Area	Description	Days Lost	RIDDOR Yes/No
02/01/2026	Environmental Services	Slipped on pavement whilst walking to vehicle	0	No
03/01/2026	Environmental Services	Slipped on icy path twisting knee. Carried on working that day but then knee became swollen	4	No
24/02/2026	Environmental Services	Pulled a gate over the back of ankle causing bruising	0	No
17/02/2026	Environmental Services	Liquid content expelled from back of vehicle when bin was loaded into rear of RCV.	3	No
03/03/2026	Environmental Services	Hurt knee when exiting the cab	3	No
19/02/2026	Property Team	Strained back whilst lifting manhole covers in car park	0	No
21/03/2026	Environmental Services	Street scene team member bitten by dog	0	No

## Near Misses Quarter 4

4.3 There have been no reported near misses during quarter 4.

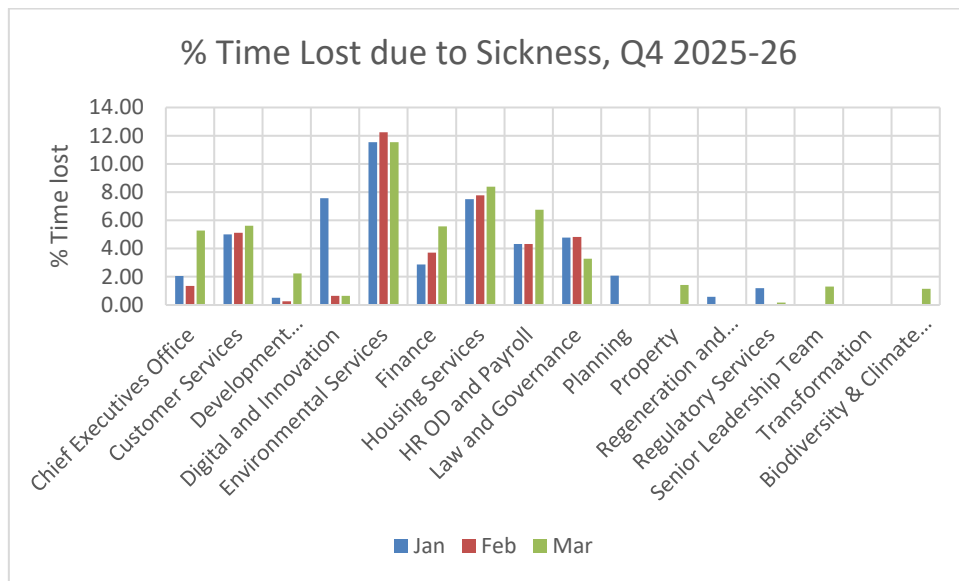
## Physical and Verbal Abuse

4.4 There have been no reported cases of physical and verbal abuse reported in quarter 4 of 2025/26.

**Sickness absence amongst staff**

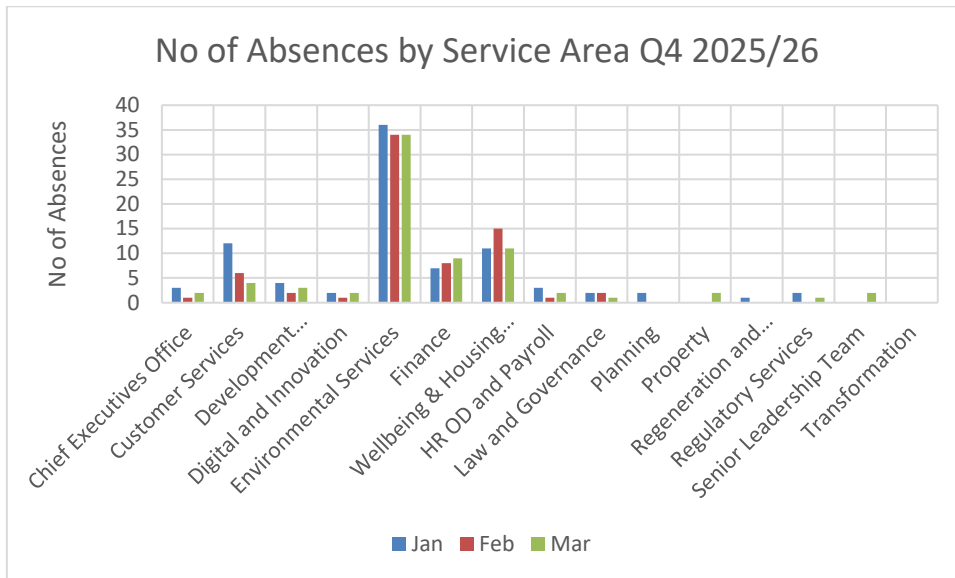
4.5 Graph 1 below shows the time lost due to sickness absence per service area by month for January to March 2026. Environmental Services has the largest percentage time lost partially due to the numbers of staff within the service. Within Customer Services and Housing there has been an increase in the levels of sickness during this quarter.

**Graph 1: Comparison of % Working time lost January to March 2026**



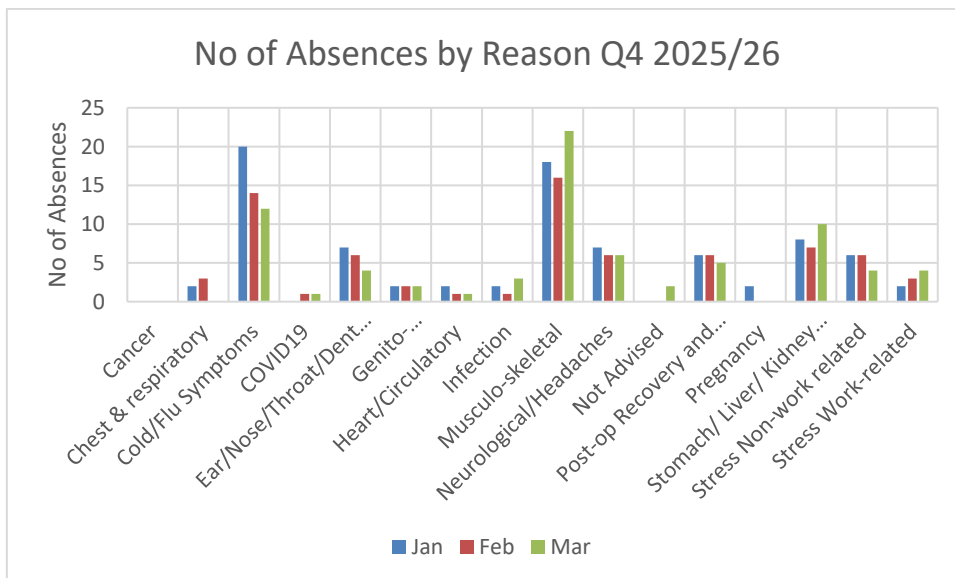
4.6 Graph 2 provides information on the number of instances of sickness by service area for each month in quarter three. Again, environmental services stands out due to the size of the service. Now that we are approaching the winter months, we would expect the levels to slightly increase in quarter three.

**Graph 2: No of Sickness Absence by Service Area – January to March 2026**



4.7 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 January to March 2026**



**Health and Safety Training: iHasco Training (E-Learning)**

4.8 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 18% 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.

- 4.9 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**

- 4.10 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 has since been rectified.
- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 The Leisure and Community Facilities Manager requested assistance with auditing all Community Centres (twelve) in the Q3 and was continued in Q4. This has come about because up until now it has not been definitively established where responsibilities lie for maintenance etc of these buildings.
- 4.13 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.
- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 Details of the audits and inspections and the number of outstanding actions can be found in Table 3 below. These are the only audits and inspections which have actions outstanding which have occurred so far in quarter one and two.

**Table 3 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

January '26	MW	Pioneer Square Block A	4	4	0	0
January '26	EP	Tove Depot MOT Station	4	4	0	0
February '26	MW	Franklins House	5	5	0	0
March '26	EP	Highfield Depot	13	7	6	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**

- 4.16 The Health and Safety Supervisor undertakes waste collection crew audits each month. In addition, Waste Supervisors also undertake their own crew audits.
- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 Any shortcomings are addressed at the time and refresher training is arranged where necessary.
- 4.19 There were no adverse actions recorded in this quarter

### **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 the 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.
- 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:

- Continuing to assist supervisors with updating accident and incident information.
- Crew inspections are carried out across both the North and South areas. These inspections aim to increase supervisory awareness and focus on higher risk activities, including manual handling and reversing operations. Crews also appreciate this on-site presence, as it demonstrates genuine interest and commitment to their safety and overall working environment.
- 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.
- Supporting the Environmental Services Waste Resource Assistant Manager to develop a programme so that newer LGV drivers receive further scrutiny and assistance with the aim of increasing driver awareness and support.

### **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 A procedure for out of hours meetings has been added to the policy. This will be discussed with the Assistant Director for Law and Governance and the Governance and Elections Manager following the local elections and is scheduled for early June 2026 due to availability. Training is programmed for staff, fire wardens and managers for May 2026.

4.25 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.

### **Health and Safety Compliance**

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

- 4.27 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.
- 4.28 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.
- 4.29 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.

## 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 The Audit and Governance Committee are invited to request any additional health and safety related information that they would like to be included in this report.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	N/A
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	N/A
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	N/A

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	None
<b>Background Papers</b>	None

<b>Reference Papers</b>	None
<b>Report Author</b>	Ruth Wooldridge, Health and Safety Manager
<b>Report Author contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:Ruth.wooldridge@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">Ruth.wooldridge@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Executive Director of Resources, Stephen Hinds, 2 June 2026