

This report is public	
Health and Safety Report Quarter 1 2026/27	
Committee	Audit & Governance Committee
Date of Committee	30 September 2026
Portfolio Holder presenting the report	Portfolio Holder for Customers and Community Services, Councillor Nicola Borkmann
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report	03 September 2026
Report of	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 1 of 2026/27.

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 1 of the 2026/27 financial year. It demonstrates that Cherwell District Council shows strong commitment to the health and safety of its workforce of 626 employees 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 lower 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		Signed off on the basis there are no financial implications. Rachel Ainsworth, Finance Business Partner for Resources, 3 September 2026.		
Legal		There are no legal implications arising directly as a result of this report. The report notes that there have been no regulatory interventions taken during this period. Regular reporting and monitoring of incidents and absences helps to ensure that risks can be identified and managed effectively and helps to maintain a safe working environment for CDC staff. Denzil – John Turbervill, Head of Legal Services, 3 September 2026.		
Risk Management		Performance remains positive overall, with existing monitoring and controls helping to manage operational and compliance risks effectively. Ongoing oversight will support continued improvements and help maintain safe, resilient service delivery. These and any arising risks will be monitored and managed through the service risk register and the Corporate Risk Register. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader, 04 September 2026		
Impact Assessments		Positive	Neutral	Negative
Equality Impact				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with 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 across the Council and provides strategic leadership in setting corporate policy and direction. Executive Directors and Assistant Directors support the Chief Executive in this role and are responsible for ensuring that effective health and safety management systems, policies and procedures are implemented and maintained within their respective directorates.
- 3.3 To effectively manage occupational health and safety risks, the Council has established documented management arrangements, including a Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and a suite of supporting corporate health and safety arrangements. The Council employs a Health and Safety Manager and a Health and Safety Supervisor who provide competent advice, guidance, support and assistance on health and safety matters, enabling the Council to fulfil its duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 3.4 As a minimum, the Council has implemented the processes and procedures necessary to meet its statutory health and safety obligations. These include:
 - **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy** – The Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy was reviewed in March 2026 and approved by the Personnel Committee. Following the local elections, the policy was re-signed in June 2026 by Councillor McLean in their capacity as Leader of the Council, reaffirming the

Council's commitment to maintaining high standards of health, safety and wellbeing. A copy of the updated policy can be found in Appendix 1.

- **Risk Assessment Processes** – Managers are responsible for assessing risks arising from their activities that may affect employees, contractors, customers, service users, partners and members of the public. Risk assessments are required to be suitable and sufficient, identifying significant hazards and establishing appropriate control measures to reduce risk to as low as reasonably practicable.
- **Health and Safety Management Arrangements** – The Council has established arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures identified through risk assessment processes. These corporate arrangements expand upon the commitments contained within the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and provide the framework for the Council's health and safety management system.

- 3.5 The Council continues to review and develop its health and safety arrangements to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, promote best practice and support the wellbeing of employees, contractors, service users and residents. Health and safety performance is monitored through audits, inspections, incident reporting, training programmes and regular management review.
- 3.6 Through these arrangements, the Council seeks to foster a positive health and safety culture in which managers and employees understand their responsibilities, actively manage risks and contribute to the continuous improvement of health, safety and wellbeing across all services.

4. Details

Vehicle Incidents Quarter 4

- 4.1 Table 1 below provides details of vehicle incidents which have occurred during quarter 1 of 2026/27 all of which occurred within Environmental Services. In the year 2025-2026 there were 29 vehicle incidents and there have been 6 so far in Q1 of the year.

Table 1: Vehicle Incidents Quarter 1

Date	Type of Incident	Service Area	Description
24/04/2026	Collision	Waste Collection	Caught fibre glass roof of RCV on overhanging branch
07/05/2026	Collision	Street Cleansing	Clipped wing mirror on 3 rd party parked vehicle
08/05/2026	Collision	Waste Collection	Reversed into garage area and made contact with fence

14/05/2026	Collision	Street Cleansing	Failed to see a wooden post while manoeuvring out of Steeple Aston School entrance.
29/05/2026	Collision	Waste Collection	Made contact with parked vehicle whilst manoeuvring
09/06/2026	Collision	Waste Collection	Carrying out a reversing manoeuvre and made contact with a lamp post
22/06/2026	Collision	Street Cleansing	Made contact with garden fence whilst turning vehicle

Personnel Accidents Quarter 4

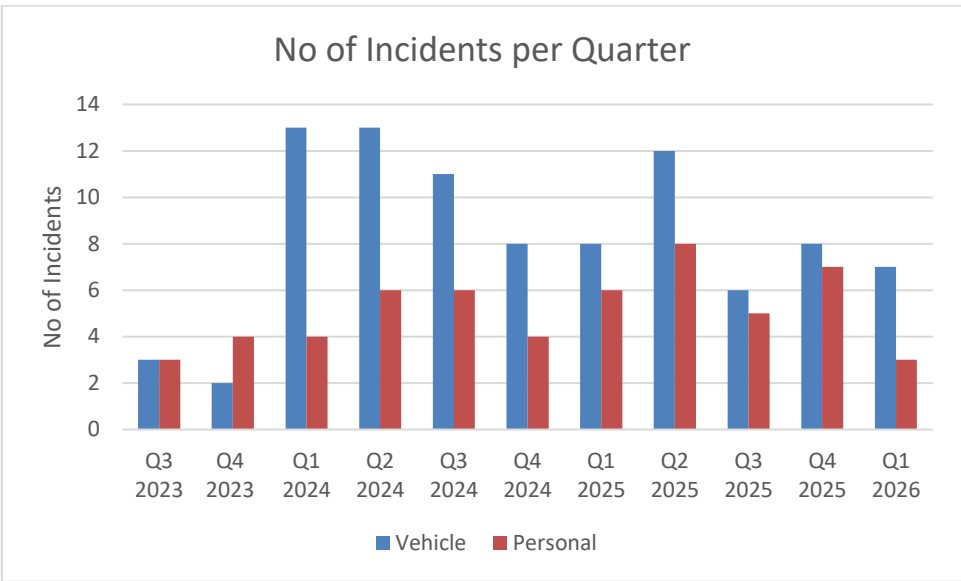
- 4.2 Table 2 provides details of personal incidents which have occurred during quarter 1 of 2026/27. There was a total of 22 incidents in the previous year. We do remind all staff to report any accidents and incidents to us wherever they occur in the business on a regular basis.

Table 2: Personnel Incidents Quarter 4

Date	Service Area	Description	Days Lost	RIDDOR Yes/No
01/04/2026	Vehicle Workshops	Cut finger whilst operating angle grinder	0	No
29/04/2026	Waste Collection	Pulled muscle in lower back whilst moving blue bin	7	Yes
08/05/2026	Waste Collection	Stepped in hole in grassed area	0	No

- 4.3 Graph 1 below provides history on the number of vehicle and personnel accidents since Q3 of 2023. It can be seen that the number of vehicle incidents in the first quarters of 2024-2026 have reduced in number, though over all there are still a large number of incidents occurring.

Graph 1 number of incidents by Quarter 2023-2026



Near Misses Quarter 1

- 4.4 19 June – One of our Community Wardens was walking along the High Street in Banbury, towards Banbury Cross, accompanied by a member of the public when a pane of glass fell from a window above and shattered on the pavement directly in front of them. Had the glass struck either individual, it could have resulted in very serious injuries. It was observed that the glass appeared to have been broken from the inside by a large plasterboard panel that had been pushed through the window, presumably during demolition works involving the removal of internal ceilings. A photograph of the scene was taken. The Community Warden made several attempts to attract the attention of the workers inside the premises, who appeared completely unaware that the incident had occurred. Eventually, two operatives came outside to investigate. Unfortunately, neither spoke English sufficiently to discuss the incident in detail; however, they were able to provide the name of the contractor along with the name and contact details of their manager. The operatives proceeded to clear the broken glass from the pavement before leaving the scene. The Community Warden subsequently contacted the site manager, who advised that he had not previously been informed of the incident. He stated that he had instructed his staff to board over the windows with hardboard to prevent any further incidents of a similar nature. The manager also apologised for the alarm caused and acknowledged the seriousness of the situation. This incident represents a significant near miss, with the potential for serious injury to members of the public using the busy pedestrian route below the works area.
- 4.5 This was a significant near-miss incident involving falling materials from a construction site onto a public highway. The circumstances indicate that controls to prevent materials and debris escaping the work area were either inadequate or ineffective at the time of the incident. Immediate remedial action was reportedly taken by the contractor following notification. This was reported to the HSE who have logged the incident, with no further development yet. It has been noted by the Community Warden that since the incident occurred proper sheeting has been

erected to prevent debris falling from the work area and that correct PPE is now being used.

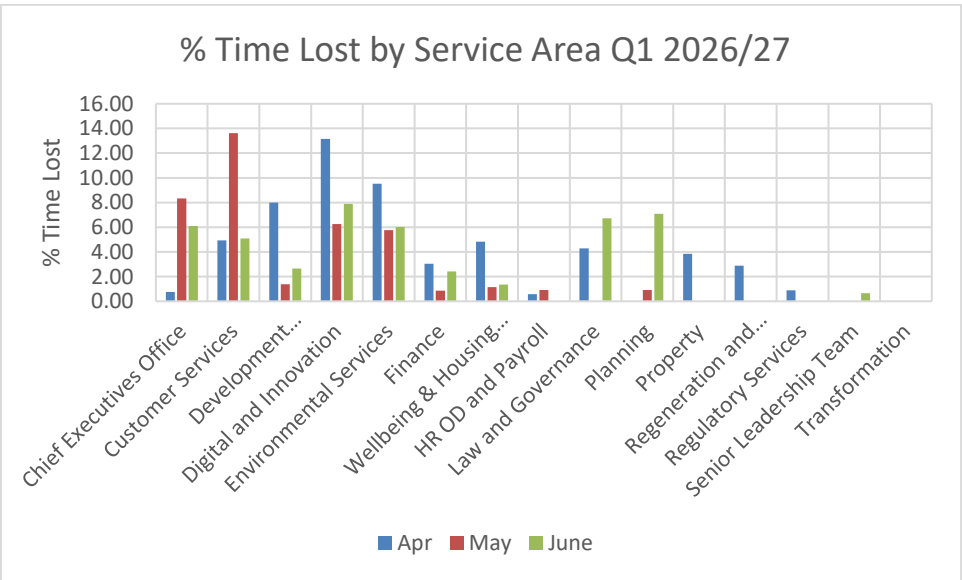
Physical and Verbal Abuse

- 4.6 There have been no reported cases of physical and verbal abuse reported in quarter 1 of 2026/27.

Sickness absence amongst staff

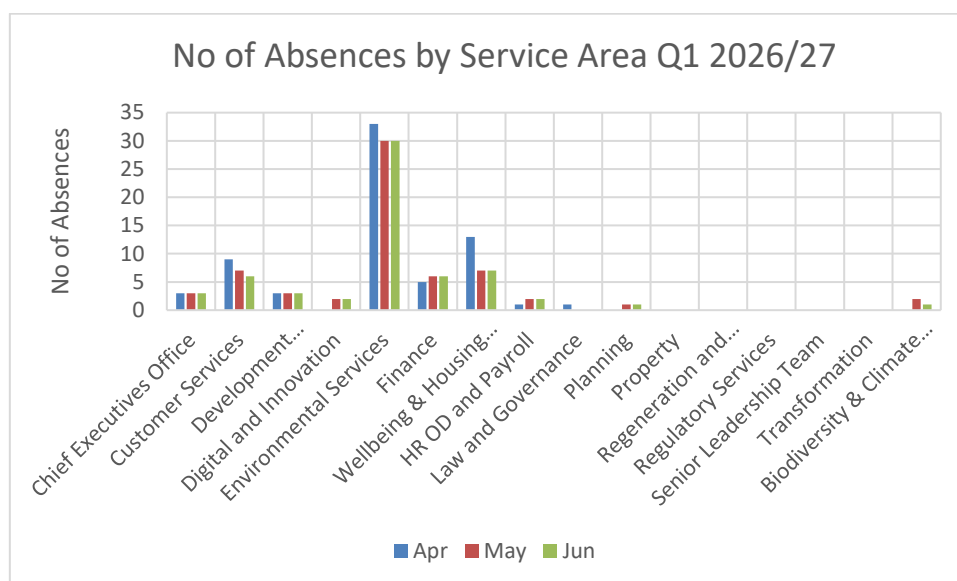
- 4.7 Graph 2 below shows the time lost due to sickness absence per service area by month for April to June 2026. Environmental Services has the largest percentage time lost partially due to the numbers of staff within the service. Within Customer Services and Housing there has been an increase in the levels of sickness during this quarter.
- 4.8 Comparative data for service areas is not available for the same period in 2025/26, as this was prior to the restructure. Quarter one for the period 2025/26 had fewer absences (161) than the same period of 2026/27 (201). However, Environmental Services recorded lower levels of sickness absence during the corresponding period, ranging between 6.2% and 7.3%, indicating an increase in absence levels this year.

Graph 2: Comparison of % Working time lost April to June 2026



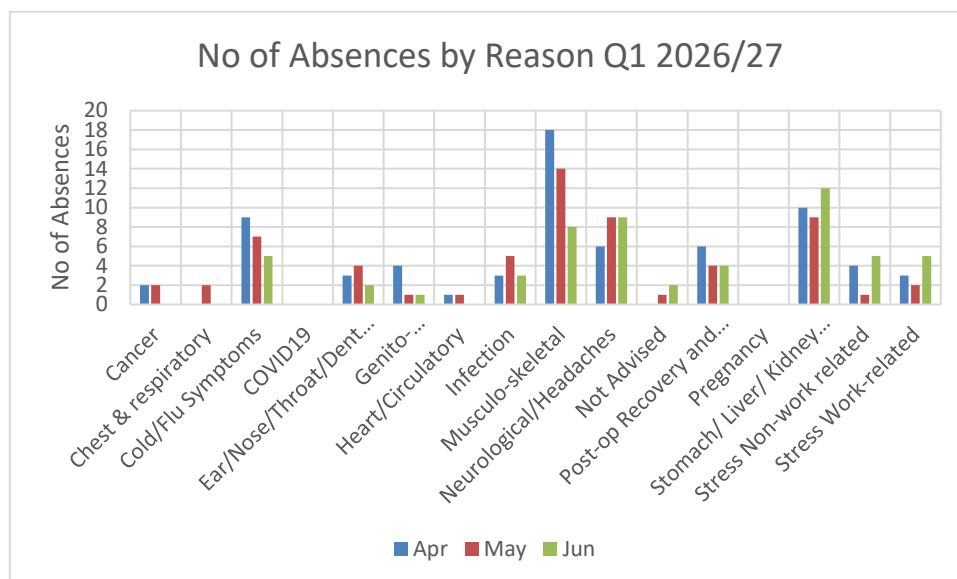
- 4.9 Graph 3 provides information on the number of sickness absence occurrences by service area for each month during Quarter 1. Sickness absence levels within both Environmental Services and Housing and Wellbeing have slightly elevated levels of sickness compared with the same period last year.

Graph 3: No of Sickness Absence by Service Area – April to June 2026



- 4.10 Graph 4 provides details of the reasons for sickness absence in each month, with categories taken from the HR information system. As the quarter has progressed, absence levels relating to colds and flu have continued to decrease, which is in line with seasonal expectations. Conversely, there has been an increase in absence attributed to musculoskeletal conditions, particularly within Environmental Services, reflecting the physical nature of the work undertaken within this service area.
- 4.11 The Environmental Services management team and the health and safety team are working closely to try and reduce the levels of absence including:
- Undertaking additional crew inspections around the district where any poor manual handling habits can be identified and dealt with at the time.
 - Providing additional training to staff on manual handling techniques where required.
 - Our manual handling provider (Pristine condition) are also coming in to do their maintenance visit in September.
 - A small gym has been set up on site for staff to use as they wish.
- 4.12 Though the number of Musculo-skeletal absences has increased it does not correlate with accident data so these absences could be related to non-work activities or long-term medical conditions. Not all musculoskeletal absences will be attributed to our manual workforce.
- 4.13 Both work-related and non-work-related stress absences have reduced when compared with the same period last year. Absence levels across the remaining categories remain broadly comparable with those reported during the corresponding period in 2025/26.

Graph 4: No of Absences by reason lost April to June 2026



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

- 4.14 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 19% 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 and that reduces to 12%, which is slightly lower than previous months but there is still some way to go. The senior leadership team are continuing to push on getting everyone to complete the mandatory training on IHASCO not just the health and safety element.

Internal Health and Safety Audits

- 4.15 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.
- 4.16 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.
- 4.17 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.
- 4.18 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.

- 4.19 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.
- 4.20 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 Q1

Month	AD Init.	Team/Area	No. actions identified	No. of actions completed	No. of actions outstanding	No. of actions overdue
April '26	NR	Longford Park Pavilion	8	8	0	0
May '26	NR	Cooper School Bicester	5	5	0	0
June '26	TH	Community Wardens	6	0	0	0

Month	AD Init.	Community Centre/Hall	No. Findings Identified	No. Findings Completed	No of Actions Outstanding
April '26	NR	Southwold Community Centre	14	9	5
April '26	NR	Chasewell Community Centre	11	2	9
June '26	NR	Hardwick Community Centre	16	0	16

Crew Inspections for both Depots

- 4.21 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.
- 4.22 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.

- 4.23 Any shortcomings are addressed at the time, and refresher training is arranged where necessary.
- 4.24 There were no adverse actions recorded in this quarter

Environmental Services - Health and Safety Support within Environmental Services

- 4.25 Since April 2024, the Health and Safety Supervisor has spent approximately one day per week working alongside the Environmental Services Management Team and operational staff. As a result of the positive impact this support has had on service delivery and safety performance, it was agreed in early 2026 that this presence would increase to three days per week at the depots to provide enhanced support for safe operations.
- 4.26 The additional health and safety resource has significantly improved engagement with Environmental Services supervisors and has helped ensure that key actions, such as accident and incident investigations, are completed within more realistic timescales. This arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future.
- 4.27 The work undertaken by the Health and Safety Supervisor has delivered benefits across the service and has contributed to improvements in the reporting and management of accidents and incidents, both internally and, where required, to the Council's insurance advisers. In addition, one of the Assistant Supervisors has been allocated specific health and safety responsibilities. It has also been reinforced that all Supervisors retain responsibility for managing health and safety as part of their day-to-day management duties.
- 4.28 Key activities undertaken in support of the service include:
- Supporting Supervisors in maintaining and updating accident and incident records to ensure information is accurate, complete, and recorded in a timely manner.
 - Undertaking crew inspections across both North and South operational areas. These inspections have increased supervisory focus on higher-risk activities, including manual handling operations and vehicle reversing. Feedback from crews has been positive, with employees recognising the organisation's visible commitment to their safety and wellbeing.
 - Assisting with accident and incident investigations through information gathering, report preparation, and ensuring statutory reporting requirements, including RIDDOR notifications, are met within the required timescales. Support is also provided through attendance at Environmental Services accident and incident review meetings, reinforcing the importance of timely and effective reporting.
 - Working with Supervisors to ensure all employees have access to relevant Safe Working Practice Notes, corporate health and safety arrangements, and risk assessments, while maintaining evidence that these documents have been read

and understood. This action was implemented in response to recommendations arising from the Veritau audit and has resulted in all operational employees formally acknowledging the relevant documentation.

- Supporting the Environmental Services Waste Resource Assistant Manager in developing a programme of additional monitoring, guidance, and mentoring for newly qualified LGV drivers. The programme is intended to improve driver awareness, competence, confidence, and overall safety performance.

4.29 Overall, the increased involvement of the Health and Safety Supervisor has strengthened health and safety management arrangements within Environmental Services, improved compliance with internal and statutory reporting requirements, increased supervisory engagement, and enhanced the visibility and profile of health and safety across the service. As a result, the department is better positioned to identify, manage, and reduce operational risks while maintaining a positive safety culture.

Health and Safety Compliance

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

4.31 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.

4.32 Whilst the working group is still relatively new and still getting established, they have met and agreed corporate arrangements and policies which have then been made available on the intranet.

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 AGC 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	Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy June 2026
Appendix 2	None
Appendix 2	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
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Executive Director Approval (unless Executive Director or Statutory Officer report)	Executive Director of Resources and Transformation, Stephen Hinds, 12 August 2026