

Report to: **Personnel Committee**



Date of Meeting 10 September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## **Annual Health and Safety Report 2024/5 and Corporate Safety Workplan 2025/26**

### **Report summary:**

East Devon District Council has a moral and legal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its staff, members, customers and partners. For this reason, the Council employs specialist, qualified officers who are based in the Environmental Health Service, to advise the Council on health and safety matters and ensure compliance.

This report is review of the work carried out by the Corporate Health and Safety Team during 2024-25 and includes relevant examples and statistics. It also presents a work programme for 2025-26 and due to committee timings, an update from the first quarter of 2025/26.

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

### **Recommendation:**

- To note the work that has been achieved by the Corporate Safety Team in 2024/25.
- To review corporate safety performance.
- To note the work programme for 2025/26.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To ensure that the Council is compliant with Health and Safety law.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

## Climate change Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk; The risk related to this report is low. However, failure to deliver the action plan could potentially increase risk of accidents and/or enforcement action.

### Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ A supported and engaged community
  - ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
  - ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
  - ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services
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## Report in full

### 1. Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, imposes duties on employers for the health and safety of its employees and non-employees who are affected by the 'work activity'. These wide-ranging duties include:

- assess risks to employees, customers, partners and any other people who could be affected by their activities;
- arrange for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures;
- have a written health and safety policy if they employ five or more people;
- ensure they have access to competent health and safety advice;
- consult employees about their risks at work and current preventive and protective measures.

Failure to comply with these requirements can have serious consequences – for both organisations and individuals. Sanctions include fines, imprisonment and disqualification.

In order to assist EDDC to discharge its responsibilities as an employer it employs two health and safety officers who are based in the Commercial Premises Team in the Environmental Health Service and managed by a Principal Environmental Health Officer (PEHO). The Corporate Health and Safety Officer tends to focus on corporate policies and procedures whereas the Operational Health and Safety Officer focuses on Street Scene as this is the highest hazard area of work. However, under the management of the PEHO resilience across all services is assured.

The Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, require the Council to consult with employees' representatives on:

- the introduction of any measures that may substantially affect the health and safety of employees
- the arrangements for appointing "competent persons"
- any health and safety information that must by law be provided to employees
- the planning and organisation of health and safety training for employees
- the health and safety consequences of new technology to employees

In respect of this undertaking, meetings of the Central Joint Safety Panel, consist of equal numbers of representatives of Council employers and employees, are held. The purpose of

this committee will include monitoring safety matters affected by the Council's undertaking and as a consultee to matters that affect the health and safety of employees. The PEHO also attends regular HR/UNISON meetings to further support staff engagement and consultation.

## 2. Accidents

It is a requirement that all accidents, 'near-misses' and violent incidents are reported via a FirmStep form on the intranet. The Corporate Safety team review all reports and carry out further investigations where required. The team can also assess if there are any trends that need to be considered.

In total in 2024/25 there were 117 recorded accidents related to EDDC employment activities, the majority relating to Street Scene or members of the public. The total includes 16 near-miss reports which is part of our incident and injury requirement. Of the accidents reported, four were reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) with no follow-up by the HSE (these have been summarised below Table 1).

<b>Table 1. Accidents by Service</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Streetscene	36	63
Member of the general public	23	27
Housing	7	11
Environmental Health	2	4
Planning Strategy and Development	1	0
Councillor	1	0
Revenues and Benefits	1	0
Place, Assets, Commercialisation	1	3
Countryside	0	2
Finance	0	6
Contractor	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>117</b>

### 2024/25 RIDDOR reported accidents:

- Streetscene operative states that he locked the door coming out of the store cupboard in the toilet and slipped, tripped and fell coming out of the toilet and fell into the railing. The operative broke his right shin in the fall.
- Streetscene operative was hedge cutting an (approx.) 5ft hedge on a wet/drizzly morning and went to reach the last bit and stumbled/slipped, without letting go of the hedge trimmer, and sustained a cut to their left leg above the knee with hedge cutter blade. The injury prevented the employee working for more than 7 days.
- Streetscene operative was emptying the bin in Seaton Cemetery and upon returning to his vehicle he fell over his feet. The injury prevented the employee working for more than 7 days.
- Streetscene operative was putting away a pressure washer they had just finished using to clean the work vehicle and tripped up a curb/step. The injury prevented the employee working for more than 7 days.

For the same period in 2023/24 there were 72 recorded accidents. Again these were mainly relating to Streetscene or members of the public. Of these, only one was reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) due to the resulting period of absence being over 7 days (the accident was a fall that resulted in a damaged wrist).

For comparison, in 2022/33 there were 46 recorded accidents, the majority related to Streetscene (21) and members of the public (14).

Having reviewed the statistic it is thought that the increase in reported incidents is due to increased awareness of health and safety issues within Street Scene following the work of the Operational Health and Safety Officer. The number of near-misses is particularly relevant as this illustrates that employees are identifying hazardous situations that do not result in an accident and proactively reporting.

### Accidents (and incidents) by Type

Considering the types of accidents reported, slips and trips are the most common specified accident type and mainly affected members of the public. Damage to property and vehicles from strimmer's and mowers hitting stones and debris has been recorded. It is reassuring to note that the reporting of near misses is relatively high compared to other accident types as this reflects a solid awareness of health and safety in the organisation. Do note, however, that 'physical or verbal aggression' is more likely to be reported via the specific 'Employee Safety Database' – see Table 3.

**Table 2. Accidents by Type**

	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>
Other	21	25
Slip, trip or fall on same level	13	21
Near miss	10	16
Struck by moving object	6	8
Struck against something fixed	5	8
Physical or verbal aggression	4	9
Injured whilst lifting or carrying	4	7
Damage to vehicle, equipment or machinery	4	15
Exposure to fire	2	2
Exposure to electricity/harmful substance	1	1
Dealing with aggression	1	2
Fall from height	1	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>117</b>

As can be seen in Table 3, violent incidents continue to be closely monitored. In January a threat was received from someone who is registered on the employee safety database. The situation was managed in accordance with our processes with staff reminded of our procedures and a review of the risk assessment resulting in a security presence in BDH for 2-months. A security guard has remained at ETH all year, and this will be reviewed shortly. Although no major incidents have been reported the security guard does prevent cases escalating and provides staff reassurance. The ongoing risk staff handling violent incidents has resulted in the Corporate Safety Team arranging Conflict Management Training with 47 attendees attending a course last month. Further courses will be arranged throughout the year.

**Table(s) 3 Violent Incidents by Service, Type and Location**

Service	Team
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Contractor	1
Environmental Health	1
Finance	1
Housing	23
Regeneration and Property	1
Streetscene	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

<b>Type</b>	
Abusive on the phone	1
Abusive on the phone/intimidation or harassment/threatening behaviour	1
Abusive on the phone/intimidation or harassment/threatening behaviour/verbal abuse/violence	1
Animal related	1
Criminal damage, intimidation or harassment, verbal abuse	1
Damage to property	1
Drug or substance misuse or dealing	1
Drug or substance misuse/intimidating or harassment/threatening behaviour/violence	1
Drug or substance misuse or dealing/intimidation or harassment/nuisance behaviour/threatening behaviour	1
Drug or substance misuse or dealing/intimidation or harassment/sharps	1
Intimidation or harassment	3
Intimidation or harassment/neighbour dispute/noise/rowdy behaviour/threatening behaviour/verbal abuse /violence	1
Physical assault/verbal threat/threat with a weapon	1
Referred by outside agency	1
Threatening behaviour	4
Threatening behaviour/verbal abuse	2
Threatening behaviour, verbal abuse, nuisance behaviour	2
Threatening behaviour/verbal abuse/intimidation or harassment	1
Threatening behaviour/verbal abuse/street drinking	1
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour	1
Verbal threats	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

<b>Location/method</b>	
Axminster	3
BDH	1
Colyton	1
Email	1
ETH	7
Exmouth	5
Lympstone	1
Ottery St Mary	1
Report by partner agency	1
Sidbury	1
Sidford	1
Telephone	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

The number of violent incidents recorded for 2024/25 (**28**) is down from the 23/24 total of **53**. There has been a notable decrease in recorded incidents in Exmouth (**5**) and ETH (**7**) as opposed to **18** and **14** in the previous year. It is thought that the presence of the Security Guard ensures that incidents are being prevented.

In addition, the Corporate Safety Team manages the use of our Lone Worker App. Whilst we see good levels of usage (Table 4.), it can be seen from the data that some officers use it rarely and we know that there are lone workers who don't use it. However we are currently in the process of procuring a new solution, working in conjunction with Exeter and Teignbridge District Council, as there has been feedback that the system is not very user friendly. The scope of the project has been agreed and Strata will procure a solution that meets the business needs.

**Table 4. Lone Worker App Usage**

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total Uses	1686	1748	1629	1878	1801	1620	1698	1515	1261	1714	1631	1700
Total Users	118	118	116	127	127	125	137	121	111	121	117	120
Average Use	14.29	14.81	14.04	14.79	14.18	12.96	12.39	12.52	11.36	14.17	13.94	14.17

### 3. Training

During 24/25 the following training was provided or sourced by the Corporate Safety Team.

**Table 5. Corporate Health and Safety Training**

Course title	Date	Attendees
IOSH Managing Safety Training (3 days)	23-25 April & 13-15 November 2024	6
Director's Managing Safely Training	25 July & 23 October 2024	5
Risk Assessment for manager part 1	11 November 2024	6
Risk Assessment for managers part 2	12 December 2024	3
Risk Assessment for managers part 2	January 2025	3
Duty Manager training	04/06/11/13 February 2025	20
Conflict & de-escalation	19/20/21 March 2025	47
Manual handling	19/20/21 March 2025	27
Sharps /Needlestick	19/20/21 March 2025	44
Emergency first aid	04 April 2025	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>167</b>

In addition, the corporate H&S team have:

- Reviewed the induction process for Streetscene operatives
- Reviewed the Welcome morning presentation
- Completed face-fit testing training so that we can carry out in-house face fitting of respiratory protective equipment.
- Two members of the H&S corporate team are undertaking the NEBOSH Certificate in Fire Safety which, on completion, will enable us to carry out fire risk assessment and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) risk assessments.

- Two members of the H&S corporate team attended Counter Terrorism training pending the enactment of Martyns Law
- Completed toolbox talks for Street Scene Tool, with a new system in place for 2025.

#### 4. General Work and Auditing

**Table 5. Workplace inspections and audits carried out**

Site/Venue	Inspection date
Camperdown Depot (quarterly)	07/01/2025 - Due again April
Manstone Depot (quarterly)	04/02/2025 - Due again April
Withycombe Pitches and Changing Rooms	27/02/2025 - Due in May
Phear Park Work Base	27/02/2025 - Due in May
Manor Gardens Work Base	27/02/2025 - Due in May
Ottery St Mary Work Base	22/11/2024 - No Longer in use due to recommendations by O. Hodgson
Connaught Gardens Work Base	04/03/2025 - - Due in May
Blackmore Gardens Work Base	04/03/2025 - Due in May
Blackmore Gardens Bowling Club Work Base	04/03/2025 - Due in May
Honiton Work Base	22/05/24 & 11/03/2025 - Due in May
Sidford Changing Rooms and Playing Pitches	04/03/2025 - Due in May
Sidmouth Cemetery Work Base and Chapel (Storage Area)	04/03/2025 - Is now used to store equipment ready for auction.
Axminster Millway Rise Work Base	04/12/24 & 06/03/2025 - Due in May
Seaton Seafeld Gardens Work Base	06/03/2025 - Works due to commence June for a new work base, Properties, Streetscene and H&S have worked on this.
Thelma Hulbert Gallery	Scheduled for 24/04/25
Manor Pavilion Theatre	28/03/25
East Devon Business Centre	TBC
Seaton Wetlands – Discovery Hut	TBC

#### A summary of general work

- We have started recording damage caused by strimming mowers with approximately £4k window breakages reported over the year, working practices have been reviewed as a result.
- Over 150 Risk Assessments have been reviewed and updated for Street Scene.
- Over 120 tonnes of ash die back has been removed from an EDDC owned woodland at Trow Hill, Sidmouth. Owing to the woodland running alongside the A3052 work had to be carried out a night with a road closure in place. The risk assessment was reviewed with additional safety equipment purchased including head torches, headsets and completed the work with a specialist arborist.
- A small number of cases of Avian Influenza were reported across the district with teams reminded of the procedures for handling dead birds.



- A review of the designated smoking shelter at Camperdown was carried out following a staff complaint.
- A review of SWW tanking operations at the Maer Car Park was carried out to ensure adequate segregation of the public from vehicle operations.
- In relation to the storage of petrol in sheds and shipping containers used to refuel mowers and strimmer's, the lack of adequate ventilation and a DSEAR risk assessment was a concern and changes in working practices were introduced to relocated flammable liquids.
- Completed HAVS (Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome) and Audiometry Health Surveillance on Streetscene operatives who require it as part of our occupational risk matrix.
- Completed 95% of Hand Arm Vibration testing of mowers, strimmers, chainsaws and other equipment (600 pieces in total) withing Streetscene. We invested in our own equipment and staff training (£5,200) to carry this out rather than use the services of an external company who charge £4,800 to monitor 100 pieces of equipment. It is important that ensure our staff are not exposed to excessive levels and to prevent any enforcement action by the HSE, see [Plymouth City Council fined £200,000 over staff hand conditions - BBC News](#)
- A Streetscene Operative Uniform review was completed to ensure that staff are complying with Health & Safety standards and are comfortable and presentable when undertaking work out in the district.
- Assisted in a major Bollywood production on Beer beach that involved working with numerous departments and external contractors to ensure the safety of all, including shutting down production one day due to bad weather.
- Streetscene operational health and safety meetings are held quarterly with the aim of identifying health and safety concerns and raising standards.
- Ladder inspections continue to be carried out
- Monthly fire checks are completed at BDH and ETH with weekly fire alarm checks.
- The Duty Manager procedures were reviewed at BDH and training provided to all Duty Managers covering fire evacuation, responding to a blue light incident, bomb procedures, resetting the fire panel, etc.. This will become a regular occurrence.
- Introduced the new fire sweeper system into BDH with ETH to follow soon.
- Work continues procuring a Corporate Health and Safety Management Platform and a joint business case has been finalised by 3 Councils (EDDC, TDC, ECC) working on the project.
- The corporate health and safety team continue to provide oversight to risk assessments for the events team, and our venues.
- The corporate health and safety team continue to provide oversight to risk assessments and method statements provided by contractors for the engineers team.



**Table 6. Tests, Drills and Evacuations**

Site	Type of test / drill / evacuation	Date
BDH	Fire evacuation	01 April 2025
BDH	Fire & Intruder alarm test	22 November 2024
ETH	Fire evacuation	10 June 2024

## 5. Policies and Reports

During 2024/25 the following policies were reviewed:

- Blackdown House and Exmouth Town Hall Fire Procedures - a move to hybrid working arrangements and implementation of the approved fire sweeper evacuation procedure. New fire signage has gone up with additional safeguards included in relation to named sweepers on a duty rota accompanied by guidance and training in the new procedures.
- Driving at Work Policy – consultation has closed and the policy is due to go live shortly.

During 2024/25 the following reports were presented at ELT:

- Review of Fire Evacuation and First Aid Arrangements making recommendation in relation to the evacuation of disabled persons, first aid provision, Automated Electronic Defibrillators (AED), and fire evacuation.
- Corporate health and safety reports highlighting operation risks; January 2024; July 2024; and January 2025.

## 6. Matters of Ongoing Concern

In 2022/23, with new managers and officers in post, it became apparent that the system for recording, communicating and monitoring health and safety matters were very outdated and were a barrier to delivering a modern health and safety service. An opportunity arose in 2023 to jointly procure a system (Assure) with Torbay Council. This had the added benefit that Torbay had already carried out a lot of development work on the system and are happy to share their process, documents etc, making implementation easier.

Unfortunately, having carried out initial discussions, Torbay pulled their offer of joint procurement. However, the decision was made to continue with procurement, Strata have received our approval to the agreed business case working in conjunction with Teignbridge, Exeter (and South Hams and West Devon) Council's. It is hoped that the system can be purchased and implemented within the 25/26 service period.

Violence at work continues to be a high-risk area and will be a focus going forward, providing further conflict management training and procuring a mobile worker solution working with Teignbridge and Exeter City Council. The scope of the business case has been agreed and it is hoped that the system can be procured and implemented within the 25/26 service period.

Hand-Arm Vibration testing of equipment has been nearly (95%) completed across Streetscene. A focus on Countryside is now required with an action plan needed to deliver this.

We are now counting and recording window breakages and damages caused to vehicles associated with Street Scene equipment such as strimmers and mowing equipment hitting

stones/pebbles or other hard detritus. £4000 in damages was reported last year, procedures have been reviewed as a result.

The Place, Assets and Commercialisation Service currently arrange for fire risk assessments to be carried out in key corporate building (such as Blackdown House, Exmouth Town Hall etc). It has been identified that some smaller storage units have not had an assessment. The Corporate Safety Team are currently undergoing training that will allow them to deliver this work and save the Council considerable budget (approx. £500-£1000pa per site).

A review of EDDC owned sewage treatment works (15 in total) was carried out and problems with access, drops, lack of fencing and maintenance responsibilities noted. A report is currently being compiled to address these concerns.

The Supported Defibrillator Package Memorandum of Understanding provided by SW Ambulance Trust is ending on 01/09/25. If we intend to keep the defibrillator/s registered on the 999 system (allocated in an emergency) we will need to go online and 'claim' the defibrillator/s via [www.thecircuit.uk](http://www.thecircuit.uk) and arrange for a suitable guardian to regularly inspect and report them.

## **7. Work Programme 2025/26**

A work programme for 2025/26 has been produced covering key areas of business:

- Effective H&S Policies and Procedures
- Organising for H & S (develop the H & S culture)
- Secure competence of employees
- Planning & implementing
- Measuring Performance
- Performance Review

A copy of the programme is attached as Appendix 1. It will be extremely challenging to achieve all aspects identified within the financial year 2025/26. The priority will be to introduce the new Corporate Health and Safety and Lone Worker Systems and ensure that routine tests, audits, training and monitoring are maintained. An update from the first quarter of 2025/26 is attached as Appendix 2.

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### **Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implication arising from this report.

### **Legal implications:**

The legal issues are covered in the report