

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Open Spaces and City Gardens	4 December 2017
<b>Subject:</b> Health & Safety in the Open Spaces Department	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summary</b></p> <p>There was an overall increase in the numbers of accidents and incidents reported in the Open Spaces Department in 2016. This was largely due to better reporting of minor injuries and near misses. There was a decrease in accidents which were reportable to the Health &amp; Safety Executive compared to the previous year.</p> <p>Officers continue to seek to reduce accidents through a variety of measures including collaborative working and an annual H&amp;S audit.</p> <p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note this report</li> </ul>	

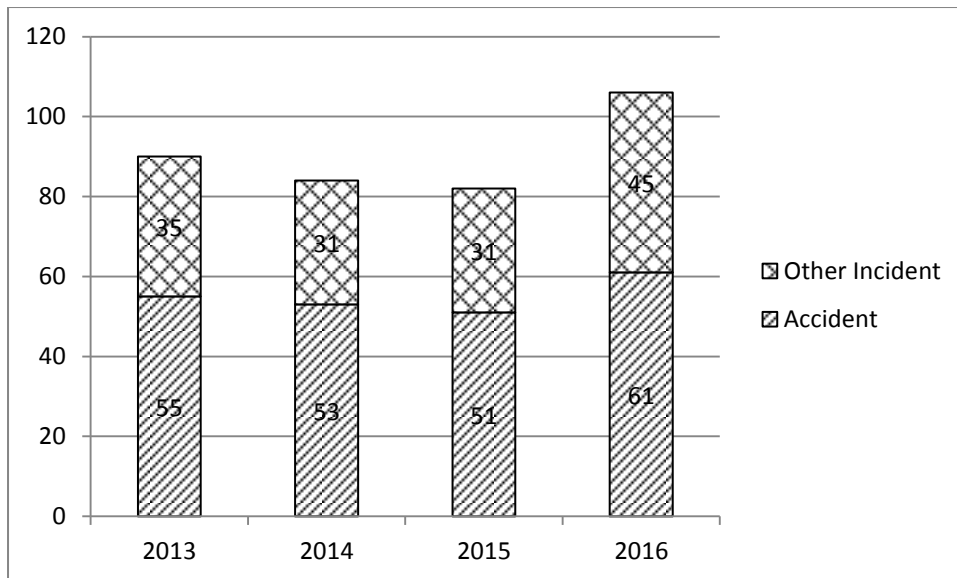
## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Health and Safety (H&S) in the Open Spaces and Heritage Department is managed through the OS H&S Improvement Group which is chaired by the Director and is attended by senior representatives of all the Divisions. Risk Management of H&S is a key focus for this group and is monitored through an annual audit as well as scrutiny of accident and incident records.
2. In accordance with Health & Safety legislation, all accidents, incidents and near misses in the workplace must be recorded and investigations carried out where necessary.

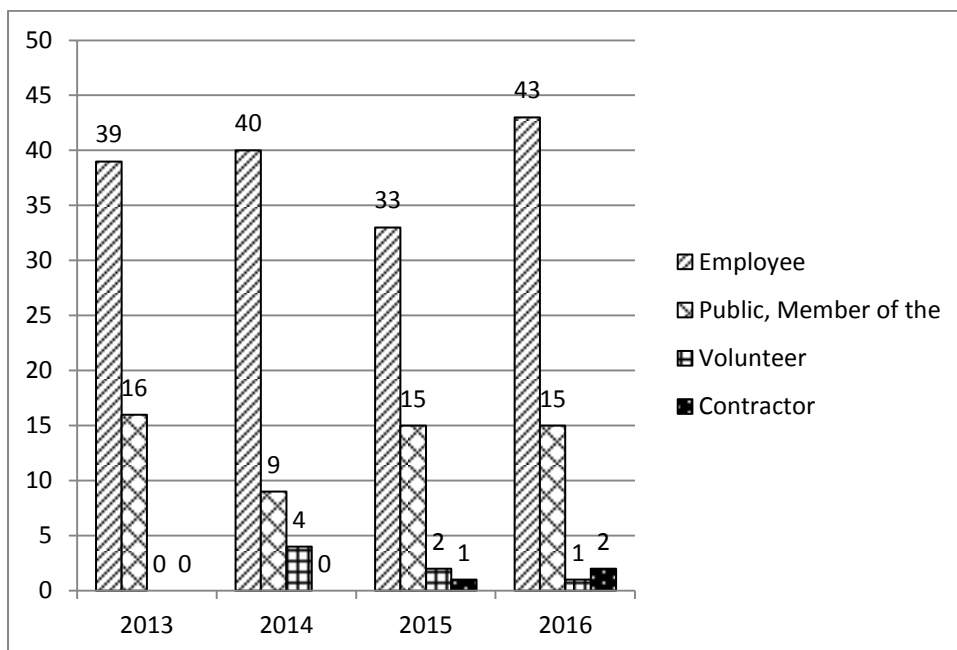
### **Accidents and Incidents**

3. There were 106 accidents and incidents recorded in the calendar year 2016 of which 61 resulted in injury. The graph at Figure 1 shows this in relation to the three previous years and it can be seen that the figures are relatively higher than in the previous years. There is significantly better reporting of incidents which did not result in injuries but there was an increase in injuries reported from 51 in 2015 to 61 in 2016.



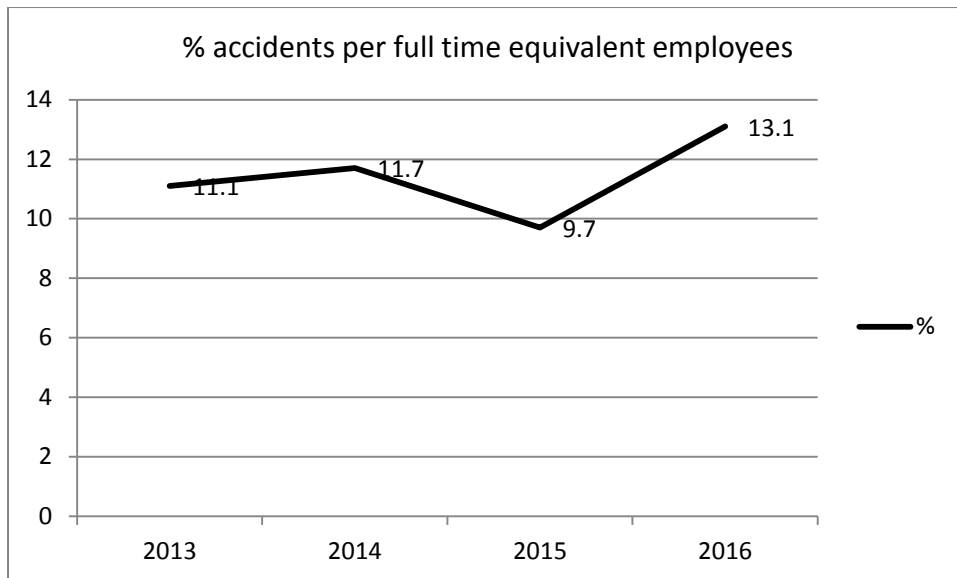
**Figure 1** Accidents (resulting in injuries) and Other Incidents (no personal injury).

4. This increase in the number of accidents resulting in injuries between 2016 and 2015 occurs specifically among employees rather than other groups, as can be seen in Figure 2. It is noted that the figure for employee accidents in 2015 was particularly low when considered over the last four years.



**Figure 2** Accidents (resulting in injuries) to Employees, Volunteers, Contractors and Members of the Public.

5. The rise in employee accidents is still apparent when expressed as the number of accidents per one hundred employees, to compensate for changes in numbers of employees between one year and the next. (See Figure 3)



**Figure 3** Employee accidents per 100 full time equivalent employees by year.

### Severity of accidents

6. The majority of accidents in 2016 involved minor injuries (53 minor injuries), see Table 1 of Appendix 1. In line with the better reporting of near misses, it is possible that the increase in staff accidents reported in 2016 is in part due to better reporting of minor injuries.
7. Six members of staff had injuries arising from work activities which necessitated taking significant time off work: severe back pain, a cut to a hand with a chisel, two cases of fractures to arms, a broken ankle and a broken finger.
8. Two accidents involved members of the public being taken directly from site to a hospital for further treatment; a swimmer receiving a cut to the ankle and a child falling from play equipment.
9. There was a reduction in the more severe accidents which are reportable to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), from nine in 2015 to seven in 2016. These are outlined in Table 2 of Appendix 1.

### Types of Accidents and Incidents

10. The types of accidents and incidents vary greatly and the numbers in any one category are low. Table 3 (in Appendix 1) broadly summarises the types of accidents which occur repeatedly across all groups in 2016. The highest frequency categories were incidents where there were 'Inappropriate procedures or action' and 'Poor maintenance/installation/faulty equipment'.
11. Recording and understanding incidents where injury did not occur is an important part of accident reduction. These events (Table 4 in Appendix 1) include outcomes where there was damage to property, near misses and other incidents such as verbal abuse. There was a record number, 29, near miss incidents recorded in 2016. This may reflect good and open reporting of

incidents and accidents overall, partly explaining the increase in minor injuries reported above. Incidents which do not result in injury are investigated along with those which do, to determine if there were lessons to be learnt from the event and information to be shared across the department.

### **Performance Indicator (PI)**

12. The PI is based on investigation of accidents within 14 days. For the calendar year 2016 this worked out as 60% for Open Spaces. Although investigations were generally carried out to a high standard, and almost all accident investigations were eventually completed, the promptness of completing investigations fell below the target of 80% of accidents to be investigated within 14 days for 2016. Whilst this is lower than the performance in other departments it is recognised that the accidents in Open Spaces can often be more complex in nature and other factors like shift patterns can influence the response performance for this indicator.

### **Preventative action**

13. There are procedures in place to reduce risk and avoid chronic issues, such as hand arm vibration and noise related conditions. Driver assessment and training are being carried out in line with driver management guidance and the corporate driving policy. Officers in Open Spaces work routinely with colleagues in other departments to provide a safe working environment and safe working procedures, such as H&S teams in the Town Clerk's and Surveyors departments, including Occupation Health, the Fire Officer and other specialist advisors.
14. The CityWell initiative launched in April 2016 continues to promote wellbeing among staff by targeting mental health, physical activity and social wellbeing. There is evidence of a link between poor mental health and higher rates of accidents in the workplace and prolonged absence following an accident may also hide underlying poor mental wellbeing. The initiative has provided practical support such as an Employee Guide to Mental Health, activities such as organised walks and mobile self-service health assessment kiosks which visited various City of London sites including Epping Forest, West Ham Park, Hampstead Heath and other sites.
15. The annual audit of H&S procedures and practices across the department provides assurance and an opportunity to share good safety practice and expertise. Self-assessments are carried out in each division and these are validated by peer visits between all divisions on a two year cycle. A summary of the results of the audit is submitted by the Director in consultation with the unions, to the Town Clerk each year to provide an Annual Certificate of Assurance. A copy of the 2016 audit summary is attached as Appendix 2.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

16. Managing Risk and reducing our accident rates is driven by three of our departmental values of 'Quality', 'Inclusion' and 'People' as expressed in the Open Spaces Business Plan. Accident reduction is a key part of the Open Spaces H&S Plan as part of the Corporate H&S Policy.

## **Conclusion**

17. 2016 saw an overall increase in accident numbers in the Open Spaces Department. However the level of accidents resulting in injuries in Open Spaces is consistent with a large department with high numbers of visitors and a high proportion of manual staff working in the natural environment. The record high number of near miss incidents reported in 2016 and the high frequency of minor injuries suggests that in part the increase in accidents may be due to better and more open reporting by employees. The majority of accidents across all groups resulted in minor injuries however seven incidents warranted reporting to the Health & Safety Executive under RIDDOR. Accidents and incidents where no injury has occurred are investigated and the lessons learned are shared across the department.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Tables 1 to 4
- Appendix 2 – 2016 Open Spaces H&S Annual Certificate of Assurance Summary

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