

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Open Spaces, City Gardens and West Ham Park Committee	4th February 2013	
Subject: Open Spaces Health & Safety Audit	Public	
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information	
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>The annual audit of Health and Safety (H&amp;S) in the Open Spaces Department was carried out in the second half of 2012 and found overall improvements in the management of H&amp;S. Whilst there is good safety practice evident throughout the Department, actions have been identified for continued improvements over the next twelve months and beyond.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>That Members receive this report.</p>		

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Annual H&S audits are carried out across the Open Spaces Department to monitor existing arrangements under twelve H&S indicators which are described in Appendix 1. The aims of the process are to assure the effectiveness of our H&S management system and support managers in carrying out their H&S roles.
2. During the summer and autumn of 2012 self-assessments were carried out across the Department. Five divisions were then selected to have their self-assessments fully validated, as shown in Table 1. (The divisions are validated in alternate years and the other three sites were visited in 2011.) This involved visits by staff from other Divisions to look at management practices, procedures and the safety culture on the ground. This report is a summary of points which arose through the process and reports significant developments in H&S management across the Department in 2012.

### **Findings of the 2012 Audit**

3. H&S continues to have a high priority at all levels of the Department and there was continued improvement overall in the management of H&S.
4. Some examples of good practice identified across the Department include:
  - Very good operational guidance on H&S which is well communicated through site manuals at West Ham Park;
  - Good system for recording and acting on near miss incidents at Burnham Beeches;

- Clearer and more robust processes for the control of contractors following a review of local procedures and roles at City Commons;
  - Excellent procedures in place for inspection and assessment of monuments at the Cemetery and Crematorium;
  - Comprehensive equipment inspection regime in place at West Ham Park;
  - Very good recording and analysis of training needs for staff at City Commons.
5. This was the first year that the Cemetery & Crematorium had been subject to this audit and the process assisted in the Cemetery's further integration into the Department. Staff found it a useful experience and it identified where we can assist one another through, for example, providing advice on tree risk management to the Cemetery or Cemetery staff advising on managing the safety of memorials in Bunhill Fields.
  6. Overall the audit showed improvement in H&S (Table 1). There are an increased number of ticks representing a 'Good to Very Good' performance and there are no sites falling into the lowest category 'Needs Developing'.
  7. Each division has a H&S improvement plan to carry out actions identified in the audit. These tasks are integrated in work programmes and Superintendents are responsible for developing and delivering the action plans.
  8. The 'Top X' risks, i.e. the most significant H&S risks in the Open Spaces Department, receive a particular focus at departmental level. These risks and plans to mitigate them are reported to the Town Clerk's Department at six monthly intervals. The Top X risks are currently identified as:
    - Working near underground services
    - Managing contractors and other third parties on site
    - Working at height;
    - Working with the public;
    - Working near to the Roadside;
    - Controlled use of firearms;
    - Unsafe memorials.

### **Improvements during 2012**

9. A group of Open Spaces staff, representing all divisions, have been developing generic risk assessments and safe systems of work for operations carried out in the department to improve quality and consistency in this area. The group have produced over fifty standardised documents to date and these have been made available through new H&S pages on the

Open Spaces section of the corporate intranet along with many other H&S guidance documents.

10. The appointment of a Technical Officer at Epping Forest with a H&S remit has been a positive contribution to H&S at Epping and across the Department as he has provided additional expertise through active participation in cross-divisional work.
11. Particular focus has been given during the last year, in the City Gardens Section, to the risks associated with safe working on raised beds in areas such as the Barbican. Issues had been identified to do with the inspection and operational procedures associated with fall arrest equipment. A detailed investigation identified improvements to be put in place, such as improved testing regimes for the fixings, emergency procedures and training.
12. During the year analysis of accidents and near misses has helped identify underlying causes and trends. A new performance indicator has been added to the Open Spaces Business Plan to reduce the number of accidents resulting in injuries by 5% in 2012/13 and we are on target to achieve this.
13. We have continued to receive much support from the City's central H&S services. The corporate HR Manager for H&S and representatives of the City Surveyor's Department attended Departmental and Divisional H&S meetings on a regular basis. The Occupational Health Section continued to provide a health referral service and guidance as well as assisting in the monitoring of staff health in relation to occupational risks.
14. There have been significant improvements in access to H&S information through the improved corporate H&S intranet pages with ready access to high quality guidance. In addition the corporate Safety Managers Forum meets on a quarterly basis and continues to aid communication between lead safety personnel across the City of London. The central H&S Committee, chaired by the Deputy Town Clerk, also meets twice a year to provide strategic management of H&S. The Open Spaces Department actively participates in both these groups.
15. The City Surveyor continues to play a significant H&S role through the maintenance and development of buildings and infrastructure to ensure safe conditions on our sites. Open Spaces staff and senior managers have worked to integrate the new Mitie repairs and maintenance contract and to maintain a high level of service.
16. Challenges for the year ahead include:
  - Continued efforts to ensure the new repairs and maintenance contract provides the required level of service;

- Further work on common standards of risk assessments and safe systems of work;
  - Updating Fire Risk Assessments;
  - Developing a consistent approach to controlling employee exposure to harmful level of vibration when using plant and equipment;
17. The Audit fulfils the performance and legal obligations of the Director and the City of London Corporation to monitor H&S in the Department through an Annual Certificate of Assurance to the Town Clerk for Health and Safety in the Open Spaces Department.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

18. The audit supports Strategic Aims 2 and 3.
- SA2 Provide modern, efficient and high quality local services and policing within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors with a view to delivering sustainable outcomes.
  - SA3 Provide valued services to London and the nation.
19. The Audit also links to the Departmental Business Plan through Departmental Objective 5 which seeks to “manage, develop and empower a capable and motivated work force to achieve high standards of safety and performance”.

### **Conclusion**

20. The Audit supports the Department’s H&S policy and measures performance against it, while supporting Managers in maintaining a positive safety culture in the Department.
21. There is a high level of commitment to good H&S practice in the Department and whilst there is an overall improvement we are not complacent and have identified appropriate actions throughout the Department to ensure a balance is made between taking the precautions required and providing accessible and enjoyable open spaces.

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## Appendix 1

### The Open Spaces H&S Audit Indicators

**Indicator 1: Organisation, Implementation and Communication.** Each Division must have a local Health & Safety Plan and statement, and ensure that is regularly updated, clearly communicated and understood by all staff.

**Indicator 2: Risk Management.** Each Division should have Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work in place that cover all activities, operations and premises and adhere to current legislation and City Codes of Practice.

**Indicator 3: Training.** All staff shall receive a thorough health & safety induction followed by regular recorded and evaluated training determined by legislation, risk assessments and duties.

**Indicator 4: Volunteers, Contractors and Suppliers.** Each Division should have local arrangements to ensure that all third parties are working in accordance with health & safety legislation.

**Indicator 5: Accident and Near Miss Reporting.** Each Division must have procedures to ensure the reporting, investigation and analysis of accidents, incidents and near misses in accordance with City and Departmental Codes of Practice.

**Indicator 6: Central Support.** Each Division should have arrangements in place with the City Surveyors Department, the Occupational Health Section and the central Health and Safety Section to ensure central support according to the schedules defined in the Open Spaces Health & Safety Policy.

**Indicator 7: Checklists, Inspections and Maintenance Records.** Each Division should ensure that all statutory tests and inspections are undertaken in accordance with current legislation and that infrastructure is regularly inspected according to an accurate asset inventory.

**Indicator 8: Policies.** Based on Departmental guidance, each Division should define site specific policies (as applicable) on Water Safety, Tree Safety, Play Equipment, Vehicle Safety, Events and Lone Working.

**Indicator 9: First Aid.** Each Division should have appropriate first aid arrangements relating to training and provision according to current legislation and local risk assessments.

**Indicator 10: Emergency Action Plans.** Each Division should have plans and procedures to deal with emergencies and disasters.

**Indicator 11: Fire Safety.** Each Division should have appropriate fire safety equipment, training and procedures based on local fire risk assessments.

**Indicator 12: Monitoring and Review.** Each Division should review their local Health & Safety Plan on an annual basis, advising the Open Spaces Health & Safety Committee of any key issues arising from this process.