

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Open Spaces & City Gardens	2 February 2015
Subject: Open Spaces Health & Safety Audit 2014	Public
Report of: Director of Open Spaces	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>The annual Open Spaces audit of Health and Safety (H&S) across the Department was carried out in the second half of 2014 and a new corporate H&S audit was introduced which sampled H&S in the City Gardens and Ashted Commons sections. These found much good safety practice evident throughout the Department and Action Plans are in place to address any issues which arose.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive this report. 	

Main Report

Background

1. A H&S audit is carried out across the Open Spaces Department annually to monitor arrangements under twelve H&S indicators which are described in Appendix 1. The twin aims of the process are to provide assurance as to the effectiveness of our management of H&S and support managers in carrying out their H&S roles.
2. The audit consists of lead H&S managers carrying out divisional self-assessments each year followed by validation visits to half the divisions in alternate years by staff from other divisions.
3. During the summer and autumn of 2014 self-assessments were carried out across the Department. West Ham Park, the Cemetery & Crematorium, City Commons and Burnham Beeches were then selected to have their self-assessments validated through site visits to look at management practices, procedures and the safety culture on the ground against the twelve H&S indicators.
4. As an innovation during 2014, the H&S Team within the Town Clerk's Department carried out an audit which followed on from a review of the corporate H&S Management System in 2013. This audit was carried out over a sample of departments, including Open Spaces, comprising interviews with the Director and senior management and the assessment of two sections, City Gardens and Ashted Common.

5. This report is a summary of points which arose through both audit processes and more generally reports significant developments in H&S management across the Department in 2014.

Findings of the Open Spaces Departmental Audit 2014

6. The self-assessments were completed to a good standard and were found to present an open and honest reflection of H&S in the divisions. As in previous years the assessments reflected the diversity of the sites and the range of activities taking place.
7. The system we have developed for H&S auditing in Open Spaces has been largely adopted across the Corporation and this year the validation team at West Ham Park were joined by a member of staff from Markets and Consumer Protection to gain experience of the process.
8. Management changes were found to be having an impact on consistency and improvements in H&S in some divisions. This was noted following the amalgamation of Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common with the City Commons division. Staff were very positive about these changes and constructively engaged, however this work is still in progress and much change is expected regarding the bringing together of systems in 2015. At West Ham Park and Epping Forest the absence of key managers has also had an impact on progressing some H&S improvements.
9. The concerns identified in the divisions varied greatly and were often of a very local nature but they broadly reflected issues already identified through the departmental Top X system, the accident reporting and investigation system and issues raised at the quarterly Departmental H&S Improvement Group. These included: managing contractors; issues around the maintenance of equipment; working with the public/lone working; musculo-skeletal issues; premises fire risk assessments; noise and vibration; and risk assessments for the use of chemicals.
10. It was noted that considerable work has been done on most of these issues both locally and corporately and improvement plans are in place at each division to continue this work.
11. An example of this is the work done across the Department to address issues related to the use of computers. All of the computer users at Hampstead Heath, Queen's Park and Highgate Wood were brought into the corporate assessment system and reviewed in 2014. Musculo-skeletal cases associated with computer use have been falling as individual issues are addressed. There are currently 157 people who use computers regularly as part of their work in the Department. Of these, the number with work station related issues fell from 31 to 5 in the last year.
12. At City Commons fly tipping was raised as a H&S issue, particularly where there is a risk of exposure to asbestos. The need for training to help staff identify the risk of asbestos and procedures concerning fly tipped asbestos, has been identified and will be followed up through the divisional training plan. Part of this will involve learning from other Divisions where procedures have been developed to tackle similar issues.

13. Good induction of staff was noted across the department.
14. Fire risk assessments are in place in all Divisions. At Epping Forest fire risk assessments are reviewed by the Technical Officer annually but in some Divisions they have been identified for review. In 2014 the corporate Fire Safety Advisor carried out a review of fire safety at City Commons and Epping Forest and noted a number of improvements needed. Most of the actions have been completed or passed for action via the City Surveyor's Department.

Findings of the Corporate Audit of Open Spaces

15. The objectives of the Corporate H&S Audit are to identify any gaps in the safety management systems and to put forward recommendations as necessary to safeguard colleagues, contractors, members of the public and the organisation. The audit sought to identify strengths and areas of good practice, to help ensure they remain embedded and develop further. This was a sampling audit and the Corporate H&S Team chose to review City Gardens and Ashted Common. The Audit was based upon Indicators 1 and 2 of the 12 Indicators detailed in Appendix 1, in line with the sampling audits conducted in other departments by the Corporate Health and Safety Team. The divisions were revisited a few months following the audit to establish whether or not the issues had been progressed and to offer further assistance in meeting recommendations.
16. Members should be reassured that the Corporate audit found good consistency between the previous Open Spaces self-assessments and validation audits completed for City Gardens and Ashted Common.
17. Significant progress was made through this audit and support process, particularly in the City Gardens section where all chemical risk assessments were redone and new procedures were put in place to safeguard staff regularly working on their own, for example at weekends. A dedicated lone working monitoring system called Skyguard was purchased whereby vulnerable staff wear a monitored tracking device which provides an escalating response in line with the nature of the situation the staff find themselves in. Staff have responded very favourably to using the new monitoring system.

Other H&S developments in the Open Spaces Department in 2014

18. A new Departmental H&S Plan was put in place this year. This follows on from the corporate review of H&S in 2013 and the new City of London H&S Policy and guidance which developed following that review. Our new H&S Plan clarifies responsibilities and brings together guidance within the Department. It is attached to this report as Appendix 3.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. The Open Spaces Audit fulfils the Annual Certificate of Assurance to the Town Clerk for Health and Safety in the Open Spaces Department, required under the City of London Corporation H&S Policy.

20. 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”.
21. 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

Conclusion

22. There is a high level of commitment to good H&S leadership and practice in the Department and whilst there is much good practice, Action Plans are in place across the Department to address issues raised during 2014, whilst ensuring a balance between taking the precautions required and providing accessible and enjoyable open spaces.
23. The Open Spaces annual audit helps deliver the Department’s H&S policy and plan whilst supporting managers and staff in maintaining a positive safety culture in the Department.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Open Spaces H&S Indicators
- Appendix 2 - Findings of Corporate H&S Audit for Open Spaces in 2014
- Appendix 3 – Open Spaces H&S Plan

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Appendix 1 – Open Spaces H&S Indicators

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.

Appendix 2 – Findings of Corporate H&S Audit for Open Spaces in 2014

Ashtead Common

Areas of good practice noted include:

- High level of personal commitment and Leadership shown by the Chief Officer which in turn drives behaviour. Chief Officer “walks floor” of all sites once a year and is open to any areas, concerns and challenges from staff
- Well developed peer auditing systems and challenge groups in operation
- There is a high level of commitment to health and safety from staff at Ashtead Common all levels, with managers (Head Rangers) within the City Commons & Burnham Beeches Division leading by example.
- Structured briefing sessions are used for all volunteers. These are tasked based briefings, incorporating hazards/risk assessment with an opportunity for feedback. Records are maintained.
- There is a proactive and collaborative approach to health and safety at Ashtead common, which includes local inspection and monitoring regimes.
- Managers and staff have generally been provided with appropriate health and safety training and this is embedded within the PDR process.

Areas for further development / where further assurance may be required:

- Suitable and sufficient Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) risk assessments are required along with COSHH risk assessment training for relevant managers/supervisors.
- Continue with good practice, ensuring that any new local arrangements are consistent across both City Commons and Burnham Beeches and that any further opportunities for sharing best practices are exploited e.g. function / arrangements for safety committees.
- Many of the general risk assessments are quite generic and sometimes repetitive, so that controls may not always be suitably developed and prioritised. In addition to COSHH assessments, specific (and detailed) assessments may be required e.g. noise and manual handling.
- Further assurance around noise and vibration testing may be required.

City Gardens

Areas of good practice noted include:

- There is a high level of commitment to health and safety from staff at City Gardens all levels, with managers leading by example.
- City Gardens, as part of Open Spaces have robust internal (safety) auditing procedures in place including peer review audits which have been driving improvements. There is also good evidence of learning from incidents, which is used to improve control.
- Toolbox talks are used to enhance consultation and communication with staff on safety critical matters/procedures. It was reported that approximately half of all staff have English as their second language.
- There is a focus on risk priorities and management including work at height and unsafe memorials.

Areas for further development / where further assurance may be required:

- Suitable and sufficient Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) risk assessments are required along with COSHH risk assessment training for relevant managers/supervisors.
- A local health and safety committee incorporating City Gardens has been agreed for initiation during 2014; this is not yet in place.
- Many of the general risk assessments are too generic and repetitive, so that controls may not always be suitable developed and prioritised. In addition to COSHH assessments, specific (and detailed) assessments may be required for activities, including where significant manual handling operations are undertaken.