

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Open Spaces & City Gardens	1 February 2016
<b>Subject:</b> Open Spaces Health & Safety Audit 2015	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Open Spaces	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>The annual Open Spaces audit of Health and Safety (H&amp;S) was carried out in the second half of 2015 and was validated by visits to three divisions. Hampstead Heath, City Gardens and Epping Forest in November 2015. These found improved consistency of good safety practice across the Department and action plans are in place to address any issues which arose.</p>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	
Members are asked to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the report.</li> </ul>	

## Main Report

### **Background**

1. The annual Health and Safety(H&S) audit carried out across the Open Spaces Department has the twin aims of providing assurance of the effectiveness of our management of H&S and support for managers in carrying out their H&S roles. Lead H&S managers carry out divisional self-assessments each year followed by validation visits to half the divisions in alternate years by managers from other divisions.
2. During the summer and autumn of 2015 self-assessments were carried out in all divisions and City Gardens, Hampstead Heath, and Epping Forest were selected to have their self-assessments validated through site visits to look at management practices, procedures and the safety culture on the ground.
3. Also during 2015, the Internal Audit section of the Chamberlain's Department carried out a review of the City Corporation's safety management arrangements. The audit sampled a number of departments, including Open Spaces.

4. 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 2015.

### **Findings of the Open Spaces Departmental Audit 2015**

5. The self-assessments were completed to a good standard and as in previous years, were found to present an open and honest reflection of H&S in the divisions whilst reflecting the diversity of the sites and the range of activities taking place. The divisions have developed Action Plans to address any issues arising.
6. 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 City Gardens were joined by a new H&S officer from Community and Children's Services to gain experience of the process.
7. Overall no major issues were evident through the audit and at Hampstead Heath in particular it was noted that many of the outstanding issues are of a lesser or 'housekeeping' nature. Significant improvements and proactive management of H&S were noted at Epping Forest.
8. There is a need to share the work of compliance with H&S systems and it was noted that recent changes to supervisory staff roles at Hampstead Heath provides an opportunity to involve staff at this level more in the self-assessments and to take responsibility for ensuring very local 'housekeeping' safety issues are dealt with in a timely manner. In addition greater use of generic risk assessments(RA) which are adapted to meet local needs, is being supported across Open Spaces. Further guidance has been prepared to assist officers with a more efficient and consistent approach to assessing risk and putting safe systems of work in place across the department.
9. The areas for improvement identified in the divisions varied greatly and were often of a very local nature. However they broadly reflected issues identified throughout the year through departmental risk management, accident and near miss investigations and issues raised at the departmental H&S meetings.
10. A permit to work system has been introduced at Epping Forest as a pilot scheme to assist with control of contractors on site. This has helped manage the risk of unsafe practices among contractors and is being considered for implementation by other divisions.
11. Lone Working arrangements are in place across all divisions. Good practice was noted in City Gardens where a new procedure had been put in place involving an externally monitored system called Skyguard. Staff who are identified as at risk carry an electronic device which is activated if an issue arises. The effectiveness, compliance and reliability of this system was monitored during the year and the lessons learnt were shared with the Department of the Built Environment who have City staff in similar situations.
12. Considerable improvements were made regarding traffic management at both Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath, notably with regard to contractors'

vehicle movements on the Heath and the one-way system at The Warren yard.

13. Since the amalgamation of City Commons, work has continued to align the H&S management systems between the former divisions for greater efficiency and consistency.
14. Good induction of staff was noted across the department and improvements in staff instruction and training were noted in City Gardens in particular where a new safety manual had been developed.
15. Significant work has been done to reduce harmful exposure to vibration from the use of work equipment. This has been supported across the department by an officer from Epping Forest visiting other divisions to assist and share expertise in measuring vibration arising from equipment. This information is then used to determine safe time limits for the use of the equipment by staff.

### **Internal Audit review**

16. The Internal Audit review of the City's H&S arrangements reported on:
  - corporate and departmental H&S policy and plans
  - embedding of H&S procedures in management practices
  - accident and near miss reporting
  - H&S qualifications of officers
  - annual certificates of assurance(ACA) provided by departments to the Town Clerk.
17. The only recommendation arising from this review regarding Open Spaces was in relation to the ACA. The department has not produced ACA's in the past as the annual audit system operated by Open Spaces predates that which was established corporately and the Director has therefore continued with the practice of annual reporting to your committee rather than the return of an ACA to the Town Clerk. In order to ensure continuity across all the City's departments, the review was of the opinion that the Open Spaces department should issue ACA's in future, in accordance with Corporate Guidance as well as the report to your committee. Given that our existing system is seen as very good, the additional requirement is not onerous and we will complete the ACA and be compliant for 2016.

### **Other H&S developments in the Open Spaces Department in 2015**

18. The Departmental H&S Plan was reviewed and added to during the year. The H&S Plan clarifies responsibilities and brings together guidance within the Department. It is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
19. Previously key departmental H&S risks were recorded in the 'Top X' system. These are now incorporated into the recently adopted software package called Covalent, as a corporate move to bring together H&S risks and other business risks in a single system for improved consistency of management and governance.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

20. The Open Spaces Audit informs 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.
21. 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”.
22. 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**

23. There is a high level of commitment to good H&S leadership and practice in the Department and there is much good practice. Action Plans are in place across the Department to address issues raised during 2015, whilst ensuring a balance between taking the precautions required and providing accessible and enjoyable open spaces.
24. 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 Plan

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