Corporate Focus – Health & Safety
Agenda Item 11

National Park Authority Board Meeting
Monday 15th March 2021

Paper for information

1. Purpose

1.1.   This paper provides our 2020/21 annual update to the Board on Health and Safety.

2. Recommendation

2.1.   We recommend that the Board notes the content of this report. It outlines information on our response to the pandemic and our Health and Safety progress in reducing identified Health and Safety risk and highlights priorities for the coming year.

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan and/or Our 5-year Plan

3.1.   This paper contributes to Our 5-year (Corporate) Plan through our commitment to invest in our staff as well as focusing on continued improvement of our systems and processes to ensure compliance with Health and Safety.

4. Background

4.1. Our Health and Safety Policy, clearly sets out organisational responsibilities. The CEO has overall accountability. The Board's responsibilities are:

- Assure itself that there is a written Health and Safety policy, in which management responsibility for health and safety is clearly allocated at all levels

- Receive and consider health and safety reports enabling evaluation and monitoring of the health and safety performance of the National Park Authority

- Review significant risks faced by the National Park Authority

- Adopt a scrutiniser role to ensure that the National Park Authority continually develops and improves the Safety Management System

5. Key Health & Safety progress in 2020/21

5.1. The biggest Health & Safety risk of 2020/21 for the organisation was the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-safe working, and COVID safety measures at our public-facing sites, became central and led to big changes in how we work. Throughout the year we instituted a culture of COVID-safe working that was embedded in everything from our CEO messages, to brand new policies and procedures, new working groups, trade union liaison, and careful selection of what tasks we would carry out if they couldn't be done from home. Alongside this we also progressed compliance in other areas as the year progressed and lockdown restrictions eased.

5.2. The following summarises the key actions taken in response to the pandemic as well as the progress made in relation to the key priorities we had set for 2020/21 prior to the pandemic.

COVID Response

- Resilience Team

  The Executive team and key members of staff met daily to establish priorities and contingency planning in line with changing government guidance. In addition to this a weekly Executive/Operational Manager check in was established to ensure Operational Managers were updated as well giving them the opportunity to feedback live issues from their teams.

- Operational Guidance

  To protect NP staff, volunteers, visitors, and contractors from the risks of COVID-19 and prevent the spread of infection we produced comprehensive COVID Operational Guidance.

- Staff Communications

A wider staff communication plan was developed to ensure all staff were fully aware of the measures that had been put in place to ensure their safety and equip them with the knowledge required to follow the right processes to carry out their role safely.

- Workplace/Sites

Significant work was carried out to ensure that our work places and sites were adapted to create COVID safe spaces in line with Government guidance.

- Risk Assessment

Prior to the pandemic we were reviewing our approach to Risk Assessments. We adopted interim COVID-19 assessment measures which were a combination of the 'Take 5 Card' with reference to existing risk assessments and the introduction of our revised risk assessment template. These COVID-safe assessments were completed for all activities not undertaken from home and were a mixture of specific and general assessments.

- COVID Ready Group

This replaced the H&S Committee during and coming out of the first lockdown period, focusing on our organisational response to Scottish Government guidance and the impact on day to day operational issues, our facilities, procurement, fleet management, home working and staff wellbeing. In the autumn the group merged back into our H&S Committee.

- Lone Working

Due to resource constraints SEPA were unable to provide a service during the pandemic, this continues to be the position. The provision was managed internally and this will continue for the coming season. A formal review of the process is scheduled for later in the year in preparation for the 2022/23 season.

- Wellbeing

Staff wellbeing was our number one priority from the outset. Numerous initiatives have been developed over the past year signposting staff to mental health advice and guidance, developing a Manager's Guide to Wellbeing and running virtual wellbeing sessions.

- Home Working/DSE

As the majority of staff continue to working from home we have developed a Homeworking Toolkit which included DSE Assessments, Home Working Policy & Procedure, Risk Assessment and Wellbeing Advice for Home Working.

2020/21 outcomes/priorities

The previous annual report to the Board in March 2020 set out a number of focus areas for the year. The pandemic meant we had to quickly shift these priorities as the highest risks were clearly in other areas. However, we still made progress on a number of non-COVID related items:

- Significant process has been made with the review of H&S policies, and the following were reviewed:

  - Health & Safety Policy
  - Accident Reporting
  - Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health
  - First Aid
  - Display Screen Equipment
  - Control of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome
  - Control of Noise
  - Whole Body Vibration Policy
  - Young Persons Policy
  - Driving & Vehicle Policy
  - Personal Protective Equipment

- A new site and visitor risk assessment process has been developed with a number of assessments already undertaken and a programme is in place for further assessments to be completed in 2021/22.

- The Water Safety project has progressed and a project team is driving the RoSPA recommendations forward, including the installation of new signage and rescue equipment. Positive communication with local authorities and partners has begun to promote a consistent approach to water safety across the National Park.   The project will continue into 2021/22 to finalise our water safety policy and ensure RoSPA recommendations are completed.

6. Health and Safety Training

6.1.   Health and Safety training was a key theme for us in 2019 in order to ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their work safely. Due to the pandemic there was no external training carried out in 2020 although we have training planned for 2021/22 subject to the ongoing restrictions allowing us to progress this.

Staff have completed the following e-learning modules through our ELMS system:

Course Title	Number Attended
Asbestos Awareness	**45**
Display Screen Equipment	**26**
Driving Safely	**130**
Fire Safety	**31**
Introduction to Health and Safety	**106**
Legionella Awareness	**14**
Manual Handling	**113**
Personal Safety	**14**

7. Reporting of Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses/Hazards

Accident, incident, near miss and hazard (AINH) reporting has dropped dramatically compared to 2019/20. We consider that this is due to far less in person work during the pandemic, and staff's heightened awareness around safety.

Year	AINH Reports
2019/20	127
2020/21 (10 months)	9

7.1. To ensure that reports continue to be submitted when needed, over the past few months we have been working with staff to raise awareness of the importance and requirement for reporting.

7.2. The table below details the number of Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses and Hazards reported until the end of January 2021 as well as the total number reported for 2019/20.[1]

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[1] **Incident**: An unplanned, undesired event that may cause injury, illness or property damage or some combination of all three. Unplanned and undesired do not mean unable to prevent; these events should have been foreseeable and as such proper planning and assessment should have prevented the incident.
Accident: Similar to incident however not foreseeable; despite effective planning and assessment the accident occurred.
Near Miss: An event that, while not causing harm, has the potential to cause injury, ill health or property damage.
Hazard: An object, situation or behaviour that has the potential to cause injury, illness or property damage.
RIDDOR Reportable: are those that require a report to be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The RIDDOR reportable entry in 2020/21 is due to a member of the public attending hospital after an accident.

Category	2019/20 Year In Full	2020/21 (10 months)
Accident	68	2
Incident	15	3
Near Miss	12	3
Hazard	30	0
RIDDOR Reportable	2	1
Total	127	9

7.3. Over the past few months progress has been made on closing AINH reports from this year and previous years. We will continue to focus on this work with staff to close these in reasonable timeframes.

8. Risks & Next Steps for 2021/22

8.1. Alongside our response to the pandemic we currently consider the following to be our top health and safety risks that we want to make progress against in 2021/22:

Focus	Action
Gaps in policies, procedures, and compliance	There are a policies and procedures that need to be established. In some cases, this means that tasks are being undertaken without a formal review of the safe method of working. We will continue to progress policy development over the coming year. Health and Safety policy reviews are monitored through the Audit Committee. Putting these policies and procedures in place enables us to consider them against HSE or other standards.
Resources	With the increase in this year's budget this will allow managers throughout the organisation to focus resources to ensure Health and Safety continues to be prioritised and a key consideration in our plans and activity. Continued training, a further developed suite of policies, and specific awareness activity will also help increase the buy-in and acceptance of staff in taking the time to put in place new working practices.
Risk assessment completion rates	Risk assessment completion rates have increased due to COVID safe working, however, there are potentially unknown or unmitigated risks that we need to capture. We are working to increase the number of risk assessments being completed including those for our sites and visitor sites.
Lone Working	Staff working alone or at remote sites are at increased risk. We will undertake a review this year of our lone working system so that we can continue to improve the policy and provision for lone and remote working.

9. Conclusion

9.1.   Despite the challenges of the pandemic we have still made progress on the health and safety outcomes we set for 2020/21. This has included the revision of a significant number of health and safety policies and procedures as well as progressing our approach to risk assessments and progressing our work to have a consistent approach to water safety. Responding to the pandemic will remain our key focus over the coming year alongside the other priority health and safety actions that we have identified.

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