

## North York Moors National Park Authority Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee

5 September 2016

### Health and Safety

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members regarding Health and Safety activity during 2016/17.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Both Members and Officers are keen that health and safety continues to have a high priority and a revised systematic approach to formal reporting to Members was agreed in the February 2014 meeting of this Committee.
- 2.2 In November 2015, Members and Officers determined that additional short papers would be presented at each FRASC, focussing on different subjects. It was agreed that the September 2016 report should provide a more detailed analysis of the Authority's safety record in comparison with that of other National Park Authorities.

#### 3. Accident and Near Miss Comparisons 2015/16

- 3.1 At the previous meeting of this Committee, the Authority's accident record was discussed in some detail. It was noted that comparisons nationally were difficult and it was agreed that a comparison with other National Park Authorities would be the most appropriate. The table below summarises the responses from the Authorities that answered the requests for information;

	Reported Accidents	Near Misses	Reportable Incidents
Broads	28	59*	1
Lake District	14	25	2
Pembrokeshire	32	n/a	4
Northumberland	4	n/a	0
Snowdonia	22	n/a	1
Exmoor	8*	n/a	0
Dales	10	n/a	2
South Downs	13	1	0
North York Moors	6	2	1

\* The Broads carry out 'safety observations' (the equivalent of our spot checks) which highlight good practice and those practices which require improvement; in this case 52 safety observations required follow up action. At Exmoor, accidents and near misses are recorded together.

- 3.2 There are considerable variations in these figures which must in part reflect the varying work undertaken by different National Park Authorities (e.g. the Broads has a large direct labour force given its navigational responsibilities) but even so there are noticeable differences in the numbers of accidents recorded. It may be significant that the number of reportable incidents, where there is a clear statutory definition, is relatively consistent. We need to be as certain as we can be that, while the number of reported accidents in the North York Moors is low (especially given our large field force,

if volunteers are included) , there is no reason to think that this represents an under-reporting of the true situation.

- 3.3 Individual managers at all levels and the Health and Safety Group are active in promoting and talking about health and safety within their teams; health and safety is a standing item at all team meetings and sickness absence statistics do not point to unreported accidents resulting in lost time. All Authorities who responded reported that slips, trips and falls were the most common cause of accidents. This includes both minor accidents and those which required reporting to the Health and Safety Executive under formal reporting mechanisms.
- 3.4 An area for continued vigilance and encouragement is the reporting of Near Misses, the number of which looks to be relatively low for this Authority. The Broads has taken the approach that combining these incidents with safety observations will help them drive down the number of accidents as corrective and preventative measures are implemented. The use of spot checks, the activities undertaken and how this data is being used to improve health and safety practice will be incorporated into the November report to this Committee.

#### 4. **Accidents and Near Misses 2016/17**

- 4.1 At the time of writing this report, a further 10 accidents and 1 near miss had been reported since 1 April. 3 of the accidents have resulted in either changes in working practice or the removal of a hazard. All of the accidents have been minor in nature, with no sickness absence as a result.

#### 5. **Progress on the 2016/17 Health and Safety Action Plan**

- 5.1 A brief summary is given below on the progress made in delivering the annual Health and Safety Action plan. A detailed update will be given at the December NPA;
- A staff survey investigating attitudes to health and safety to be conducted – this will be based on a survey developed by the Forestry Commission; **work to be completed in Autumn 2016.**
  - Validate the effectiveness of health and safety arrangements resulting from the delivery of the Volunteer Strategy; **Dom Passman to do this as part of Service Level Agreement with input from our insurers, Zurich Municipal, regarding Associate Volunteer group agreements .**
  - Implement follow-up actions resulting from the investigation into the accident at Hutton le Hole car park on 27 October; **completed**
  - Invite the SLA provider to visit an ongoing bridge construction to give an independent view on the safety issues relating to these complex pieces of work; **Initial visits undertaken; follow up visit is arranged and outcome to be discussed at a Ranger team meeting.**
  - Review induction processes to ensure that all new staff receive timely and proportionate health and safety training; **initial discussions held, further work to do, but will be completed shortly.**
  - Introduce targets for each Director to ensure that their Department carries out a specific number of spot checks on both contractors and staff working methods – the aim of this is to both support good working practices and to weed out any bad ones. **Done – each Director has these and will be monitored by CEO as part of appraisal process**

- The Health and Safety Group to recommend to the Chief Executive how the proper and effective consideration of health and safety matters might be better incorporated into formal reports and policy development; **work to be completed in Autumn 2016**

## 6. National Health and Safety Issues

- 6.1 A recent court case has resulted in a London Borough being fined £500,000 when one of its staff used a cut-off saw for pruning tree branches and cut his leg. Although the injury was serious, it was not life threatening and the individual will make a full recovery. The Council was fined for allowing one of its staff to use the wrong tool for the job; the saw was also fitted with the wrong blade, there was only a standard manufacturer's risk assessment for using the equipment and the member of staff had not seen this or the operating manual.
- 6.2 At the Members' health and safety training last year, it was emphasised that the courts are taking an increasingly punitive view of organisations who do not adequately manage health and safety with the fines being very significant. The details of the case have been circulated within the Ranger team and will be discussed at a forthcoming Ranger team meeting as well as the next Health and Safety Group.
- 6.3 The Health and Safety Executive has launched a campaign to highlight and reduce the number of fatalities within agriculture, forestry and fishing which resulted in the deaths of 29 workers in 2015/16. It is worth noting that the two most common causes of death were accidents involving vehicles (e.g. tractors and ATVs) and falls from height which accounted for 13 out of the 29 fatalities. The 2 reportable accidents that this Authority has had in the last two years have been within these categories, emphasising the importance of the robust investigations and response to ensure that there will be no repeat of either incident.
- 6.4 The next meeting of the Health and Safety Group will discuss how to use this information and the HSE publicity to reinforce good working practices using vehicles and working at height.

## 7. Financial and Staffing Implications

- 7.1 There are no significant financial or staff issues related to the contents of this report.

## 8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That Members note the detail regarding the reported accidents and near misses in other National Park Authorities and make any comments on the observations on the actions taken by Officers in relation to parts 3-6 of this report.

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### Background documents to this report

### File ref.

NPA Reports, December 2013, 2014, 2015  
 FRASC Reports 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016  
 Health and Safety Executive <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/pdf/fatal1516-poster-hires.pdf>