

# PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

## Health & Safety Policy

14 June 2017

### Report of Chief Officer (Health & Housing)

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To approve the council's revised and updated Health & Safety Policy for signature by the Chief Executive.

**This report is public.**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the updated Health & Safety Policy be ratified for signature by the Chief Executive.
- (2) That the ambition and commitment reflected in the draft revised Health & Safety Policy be formally endorsed.

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Health & Safety at Work Etc Act 1974 and regulations made under it contain provisions relating to health and safety policies. Such policies must protect health and safety, both of our workforce and others coming into contact with risks arising from both our service delivery and our premises management and maintenance.
- 1.2 The council has an over-arching health and safety policy which we commonly refer to as the 'Safety Policy'. The council also has various service-specific safety policies and a number of property-related (fire, asbestos and legionella) safety policies.
- 1.3 This report concerns the council's over-arching Safety Policy which is presented for approval in a revised and updated form.
- 1.4 Approval of the Safety Policy is a matter falling to Personnel Committee under the terms of the council's Constitution (Part 3 Responsibilities for Functions, Section 6, paragraph 6.1):

*"To deal with the appointment of staff and to determine the terms and conditions on which staff are employed. In particular the Committee will...*

*...6.2 Be responsible for Health and Safety policy"*

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 The draft revised Safety Policy is attached as Appendix 1. This document meets the requirements of health and safety law, also guidance from the Health & Safety Executive.
- 2.2 Updates have been made to reflect changes in the council's service and management structure.
- 2.3 Revisions have been prepared reflecting identified needs for proactive, planned and performance-focussed management of health and safety.
- 2.4 The council's health and safety structure is shown in a diagram on the final page of the draft revised Safety Policy. Further detail of corporate health and safety support to council services, managers and employees will be provided when the Safety Policy has been approved in final form.
- 2.5 Care has been taken to ensure that every provision in the draft revised Safety Policy, whilst potentially demanding of our busy managers, supervisors and staff, is reasonably achievable within the council's financial and staffing resources. This will require proportionate time and effort to be invested. Inevitably this may require management of any conflict with other prevailing service delivery priorities.
- 2.6 A full range of support and advice measures have been planned to assist managers, supervisors and staff. These will be finalised once this draft revised Safety Policy is approved.

## **3.0 Details of Consultation**

- 3.1 The Health & Safety Joint Consultative Committee (H&S JCC) has been kept consulted throughout the preparation of the revised draft Safety Policy. Changes arising during this consultation have included:
  - the positive tone and wording of the general policy statement (front page)
  - clarification of the relationship between the over-arching Safety Policy and subsidiary safety-related policies referred to in paragraph 1.2
  - an addition to the responsibilities of supervisors
  - the inclusion of specific responsibilities for all staff
- 3.2 Full staff / management consultation has been carried out in accordance with health & safety employee consultation requirements. The draft revised Safety Policy was met with a positive reception. No staff concerns have been raised. Managers whilst content with the draft revised Safety Policy will inevitably be concerned to ensure that they can reasonably and fully implement what will be required of them.
- 3.3 The Health & Safety Joint Consultative has been consulted on post-consultation finalisation of the draft revised Safety Policy.

#### 4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	<b>Option 1:</b> Approve the draft revised Safety Policy as presented	<b>Option 2:</b> Require changes to the Safety Policy as presented
Advantages	<p>Meets legal requirements.</p> <p>Has staff and management support in its present form.</p> <p>Represents an ambitious approach to consolidate and strengthen proactive, planned and performance focussed health and safety across the council.</p>	<p>None identifiable during preparation of this report.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Sets an aspirational standard in the General Statement (first page) and therefore carries the risk that we may fail to achieve our ambition.</p> <p>Setting out responsibilities in the level of detail provided will lead to further implementation stage work which, although planned for, will require a time commitment.</p>	<p>Without careful consideration may fail to ensure legal requirements are met and a good balance is achieved with other policies.</p> <p>Might have the effect of raising or lowering the expected health and safety standard, performance and outcomes.</p> <p>May require re-consultation with the workforce.</p>
Risks	<p>The aspirational standard in the General Statement (first page) carries with it the risk that we may fail to achieve our ambition. However a number of supporting and management actions are planned.</p>	<p>Setting a lower standard would provide weaker levels of health and safety assurance and protection to council employees and others it is designed to protect.</p>

#### 5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The draft revised Safety Policy meets legal requirements and sets a good standard in keeping the workforce and public safe from the council's work activities and premises. Consultation has confirmed good support and, with the right level of in-service prioritisation for health and safety, we can expect improvements in both safety culture and performance.

#### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

The draft revised Safety Policy is directly designed to enhance Health & Safety standards and outcomes. No other impacts or implications have been identified.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The draft revised Safety Policy helps to ensure the council fulfils legal Health & Safety requirements. No adverse legal implications have been identified in the wording of the document.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

For now it is assumed that any additional staff resource requirements potentially arising through compliance with the updated Health and Safety Policy are manageable and so there are no specific identifiable additional financial implications arising at this time.

This will need to be kept under review however, and if additional resources are required, this will need to be fed into the Council's formal corporate monitoring and annual budget processes.

## OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

### Human Resources:

There are specific Human Resources implications in terms of employee protection and sickness absence in connection with health and safety, also Learning and Development needs to help secure safe working practices. These are achievable and will be detailed in supporting measures once the Safety Policy has been approved.

### Information Services:

No specific implications have been identified.

### Property:

There are specific Property-related health and safety implications, these are made clear in the document.

### Open Spaces:

There are specific Open Space-related health and safety implications, these are made clear in the document.

## SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

## MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comment.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

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