

Report to: **Full Council**

Date: **30<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Title: **Annual Review of Health and Safety Policy Statement**

Portfolio Area: **Wellbeing/Leader**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: Immediately following this Meeting.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council be RECOMMENDED to adopt the annual joint health and safety at work policy and that it is signed by the Head of Paid Service and the Leader of the Council.**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Council is required to prepare a written health and safety policy statement by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The policy should be agreed and signed off by the Head of Paid Service and the Leader of the Council.
- 1.2 The Joint South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council Health and Safety policy documents the Council's position regarding its intentions, organisation and arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees, and the health and safety of any other person working in, visiting the Councils, or who may be affected by their activities
- 1.3 The policy is required to be reviewed annually and where appropriate, revised to reflect any significant change within the Organisation.
- 1.4 There are no changes to the Policy this year.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council is required to have a written health and safety policy under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The Policy is an important document to set the responsibility for the health and safety of staff in the Council's employment and those persons effected by its activities. The Policy covers the entire range of Council Services.
- 2.2 The Policy is supplemented by a number of Safety Codes dealing with specific issues relevant to particular Service Groups and/or activities, e.g., Work at Height, Working Alone, Incident Reporting, etc. These Codes will have the same status as the Policy
- 2.3 The Policy adopts a sensible approach to managing risk which reflects best practice and is based on integrated management principles enabling the Council to achieve a correct balance in managing health and safety as part of an overall risk management
- 2.4 The Policy should be reviewed annually and revised to include any significant changes
- 2.5 The past year has been a challenging one due to the impacts on the Council of the covid pandemic. From a health and safety perspective the safety of staff and members has been foremost in our minds. Protocols have been introduced, adapted and kept under review to follow the changing Government guidance to ensure staff and members are operating in a safe working environment.
- 2.6 There has also been a strong focus on health and wellbeing. Managers have been encouraged to continue to support their teams and the Human Resources team have promoted mental health initiatives.

## **3. Outcomes/outputs**

- 3.1 The Council is required to have a Health and Safety Policy agreed by senior management and members, signed off by the Head of Paid Service and the Leader of the Council

## **4. Options available and consideration of risk**

- 4.1 There is a statutory requirement to agree and implement the Councils Health and Safety Policy. Failure to do so would risk prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive and put employee's health and safety at unacceptable risk.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The Council should agree the revised Health and Safety Policy and continue to review it on an annual basis and/or when significant changes occur.
- 5.2 The Risk Management Officer group should provide a basis for integrating health and safety into its management structure and achieve continuous improvement in health and safety standards.

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 The Policy conforms to the 2013 HSE guidance in order to ensure that the Council is legally compliant. Accordingly, the Policy needs to be formally adopted by the Council.
Financial	Y	Achieving legal compliance requires the Council's officers to actively engage in carrying out health and safety responsibilities intrinsic to their job role. The cost will be officer time which is accounted for within existing budgets.  Achieving best practice will require an ongoing commitment to continuously improve the health and safety management system which will add to the cost of officer time.
Risk		The potential cost of not achieving legal compliance includes: i HSE enforcement costs ii legal and court cost iii compensation costs iv loss of credibility.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		The Policy applies to all members of staff and has considerations of the effect of Council activities on non-employees. Effective management of health and safety should ensure that equality and human rights are not infringed.
Safeguarding		Indirect impact derived from suitable and sufficient risk assessment of activities associated with vulnerable groups

Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No direct impact
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		As above, indirect impact on wellbeing derived from suitable and sufficient assessment of risk of work activities, e.g., lone working
Other implications		None

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

South Hams District and West Devon Borough Council's Health and Safety Statement

#### **Background Papers:**

None