

CORPORATE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE POLICY

Report of the: Director of Finance & Resources/Head of Housing & Environmental Health

Contact: Rod Brown

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required: N/A

Annexes/Appendices (attached): Council Health, Safety and Welfare Policy

Other available papers (not attached): None stated

REPORT SUMMARY

The Council has a statutory requirement to regularly review its Health, Safety and Welfare Policy. The current policy dates from May 2012.

This report outlines main content of the Council's revised Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, including details of the Council's commitment to, management of and arrangements for the effective implementation of Health, Safety and Welfare controls.

The policy also identifies clear responsibilities for health, safety and welfare which includes officers as well as Members of the Council.

RECOMMENDATION (S)

To endorse the Council's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.

Notes

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 Managing Resources – protects the people working for the Council and the public from harm or injury and mitigates any resulting financial liability as a result of any legal claim.
- 1.2 Quality of Life – develops a positive and confident attitude to health and safety risks which enables the Council to implement new services or activities with suitable awareness of associated risks.
- 1.3 Well-being is a priority theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

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2 Background

- 2.1 A safe and healthy workforce is a prerequisite to the delivery of excellent services to the residents, businesses and visitors to the borough.
- 2.2 The Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974 places a responsibility on the Council to have a written health and safety policy and to effectively manage the health, safety and welfare for all employees and anyone else affected by our activities.
- 2.3 The changes to the previous policy do not change the fundamental basis of the policy. These changes were needed to update the policy in line with the new organisational structure as well as in accordance with new HSE guidance (HSG65). The changes mainly realign the health and safety responsibilities with posts within the organisation and bring the policy in line with ISO 9001 and accepted good practice.
- 2.4 In addition to our statutory duty, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is also a health and safety enforcing authority responsible for inspecting and regulating a significant number of commercial premises within the borough for health and safety matters. As such, it is important that we can demonstrate our own good practice in managing our risks and to lead by example to other businesses within the borough.
- 2.5 The health, safety and welfare of our staff and the public is the responsibility of all of us, both front line officers, managers, Leadership Team, Director and the Chief Executive as well as all Members of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
- 2.6 Officers are responsible for the day to day management of health and safety risks and the welfare of staff. They achieve this, in part, through risk based assessments and having the necessary controls in place to ensure risks and staff welfare are effectively managed.
- 2.7 Members, although not responsible for day to day management of health and safety, do have a role in making decisions about the provision of services and associated budgets and this can affect health, safety and welfare of staff. Members also have a role in holding officers to account for the management of any risks.
- 2.8 The effective management of health and safety will be achieved through quarterly reporting to the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team by the Head of Housing and Environment, supported by the Council's Health and Safety Officer and an annual report to HR Panel.
- 2.9 Success in implementation the policy will be achieved through a programme of communications and training for officers and frequent auditing of levels of compliance and effective management of risks. This will in turn be reported to Leadership Team and Members in the manner set out in the above paragraph.

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- 2.10 The wide range of services provided by the Council, the various work activities and work locations used by the Council places a significant responsibility to manage the risks associated with the health, safety and welfare of our staff and all those affected by our activities.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The policy is composed of three parts, the first of which is the General Policy Statement which sets out the Council's commitment to developing a positive safety culture and identifies the objectives to be employed to achieve the policy aim.
- 3.2 The second part of the policy states how the Council will organise itself to perform its statutory duties in relation to health, safety and welfare, including identifying specific roles within the organisation and their responsibilities.
- 3.3 Following the Council's management reorganisation it is important that new responsibilities are clearly identified, particularly as responsibilities and duties are delegated down the organisation.
- 3.4 Members may wish to note that under Allocation of General Responsibilities that the role of Members is specifically identified. These duties and responsibilities include endorsing the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy, ensuring suitable resources and strategic direction are available and to monitor via reports on the overall performance of health and safety management.
- 3.5 The final part of the policy outlines the arrangements for implementing the policy including consultation arrangements, planning, risk assessments and review as well as auditing and checking, analysis of accident and incident data, training and communication and emergency procedures and links to existing corporate groups such as the Corporate Risk Group.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** Endorsement and adherence to this policy should mitigate successful financial claims against the Council.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** The Council's legal obligations are summarised elsewhere in the report. In order to meet those obligations, not least to protect individuals' health and safety, it is of critical importance we ensure that the policy is implemented and does not simply exist on paper.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 The policy will have no negative sustainability and community safety implications.

7 Partnerships

- 7.1 The policy does not directly affect any existing or proposed partnerships.

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8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 Endorsing the policy will ensure the Council can comply with the statutory requirement to have a policy for health, safety and welfare. It will also provide the mechanism to ensure we are managing our responsibilities in line with statutory requirements.
- 8.2 Failure to have an up to date and effective policy could expose the Council to legal challenge or prosecution. Should there be a prosecution for a serious health and safety breach, the lack of an up to date policy and evidence of appropriate health and safety management could expose the Council to both significant financial, reputational and legal risks.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 The effective management of health, safety and welfare is both a legal requirement and a cost effective practice. With the recent changes in management structure within the organisation and the diverse range of functions performed by the Council it is important that the existing health, safety and welfare policy is reviewed and implemented.
- 9.2 The recommendation is that Committee endorses the adoption of the revised Health, safety and Welfare Policy, which is a statutory policy.

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL