



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 17 July 2024

REPORT TITLE:	HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval from Policy and Resources Committee for the Council's Health and Safety Policy Statement.

Appendix A to this report provides the revised Health and Safety Policy from 18 July 2024-17 July 2026. Appendix B to this report provides an addendum to the health and Safety policy to cover the roles and responsibilities of all Directorates and Asset Management during the roll out of a Corporate Landlord Model.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2023-2027 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

This matter affects all wards. It is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Policy and Resources Committee are requested to;

- a) Approve the Health and Safety Policy 18 July 2024-26 Statement.
- b) Approve the addendum to the policy, set out in Appendix A.
- c) Note the ongoing work to identify and manage health and safety risks and improve health and safety practice across the Council.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council has a legal obligation to produce and publish a Health and Safety Policy Statement. This should be approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 There were no other options considered as the Council has a legal requirement to produce a Health and Safety Policy statement.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers of five or more people to have a written health and safety policy statement. It should be specific to their business, setting out their general policy for protecting the health, safety and welfare of their employees, and others not in their employment, their organisation and arrangements for putting the policy into practice.
- 3.2 The Council's Health and Safety policy statement is also relevant to Local Authority Controlled and Voluntary Controlled schools where the Council is the employer (excluding academy schools). All organisations such as partners, contractors, voluntary, community and faith organisations who are working with the Council are expected to be aware of Wirral Council Health and Safety Policy and any management arrangements that may apply to their activities.
- 3.3 The Council's Health and Safety policy is reviewed and revised to ensure it is fit for purpose and relevant to the current structures and management arrangements in the organisation. The proposed policy statement is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.4 The Health and Safety policy statement comprises of three sections; the General Statement of Intent; Organisation Management Arrangements & Roles & Responsibilities
- 3.5 The roles and responsibilities of key officers have been updated and the policy includes details of the formal arrangements that are in place within the Council to support the management of health and safety issues. All Officers are expected to be aware of the employers Health and Safety Policy, at induction and via training. The revised policy will be communicated to all employees using existing communication arrangements, and an introduction to health and safety which includes the Health and Safety Policy is now mandatory for all employees.
- 3.6 The policy has been developed in Consultation with Directorates and stakeholders.

3.7 The Council is in the process of implementing a Corporate Landlord Model for premises compliance and safety. In terms of the Estate this will in particular change the role and responsibilities of Asset Management officers and provide clarity for many other colleagues operating premises as part of their own responsibilities such as Leisure Centre staff (as an example). It is expected that the Corporate Landlord Model will be fully implemented within the next 2 years, and a further review and update to the H&S policy will be required. In the interim, the addendum in Appendix B provides clarification of the roles and responsibilities of Directorates for managing premises safety and reporting hazards for remediation. Appendix A and B should be considered together.

Health and Safety Practice and Culture

3.8 The Council is a large employer and delivers a wide range of services. The Council has a legal responsibility to ensure it operates safe services for its workforce and public. The Council must have good systems in place to identify and manage risks and ensure that its workforce has the appropriate skills and resources to work safely. Whilst many council budgets are under pressure, the Council must continue to ensure that the health and safety of its staff remains paramount.

3.9 Since the previous policy was brought to committee in June 2021, the Senior Leadership team have continued to improve the profile of health and safety, reinforce compliance, and best practice and promote a health and safety culture in the organisation. This includes:

- Continuing with the Health and Safety Board, set up, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by senior leadership team, officers and representatives from relevant disciplines including Asset Management and Risk Management.
- Delivering the Health and Safety Improvement Plan with the aim of achieving best practice across several themes; Leadership and Accountability, Policy Framework, Governance, Performance Management, Risk Management, Wellbeing, Resourcing and Learning and Development. The plan incorporates best practice from the LGA and HSE standards.
- The development of a range of performance indicators for Health and Safety to provide greater oversight and assurance.
- A new health and safety risk register which will assist the Senior Leadership Team monitor progress against the objectives within the health and safety policy statement of intent.
- Continuous review of departmental health and safety risks, using a risk management tool to improve oversight and track actions required to mitigate risks. H&S audits are in progress and follow a strategy that was approved at the health and Safety Board.

- A revised Health and Safety Training strategy for generic and specialist role-based training across the organisation.
- Raising the profile of health and safety through regular items on the agenda at Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Management Team and Departmental Management Teams and in organisational communications.
- A new online learning and development course is available to familiarise all employees on the H&S Policy, the arrangements, roles and responsibilities.
- Development of an annual assurance statement to be signed off by each Director about how Health and Safety is managed within their Directorate.

3.10 Council Officers meet Trade Union Health and Safety (“H&S”) representatives regularly to discuss health and safety issues and seek to address any concerns and issues.

3.11 It is acknowledged that the Council’s management of health and safety issues and risks should have a greater profile with elected members and a Health and Safety report in relation to performance, assurance and work being undertaken is planned to be taken to Audit and Risk Management committee in July 2024.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no new financial implications arising from this report. The Council’s revenue budget makes appropriate provision for professional advice and guidance to be provided from the Council’s Health and Safety Team and for relevant training to be provided.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As identified within the body of this report there is a statutory requirement under the Health and Safety at Work, Etc Act 1974 for the Council to have in place a general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of its employees and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out that policy. The Act requires a written statement of policy and for that statement to be kept under review and updated where necessary. This policy, and any revision of it, must be brought to the attention of all employees.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The approval of the health and safety policy does not introduce any new resource implications. It strengthens the Councils approach to the management and strategic leadership for health and safety.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Health and Safety General Policy Statement sets out the Authority’s commitment to compliance with its duties and achieving high levels of health and

safety performance. It is itself reinforced by a broad range of supporting policies and guidance to ensure processes are in place for the Council to adequately identify and manage workplace risks.

- 7.2 A failure to make necessary changes to the policy and approve them would lead to the Council being in breach of its duty and at risk of prosecution, and without an adequate overriding policy the underpinning arrangements may not be effective.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Health and Safety Policy has been shared with Unions via the joint Trade Union and Management Health and Safety Committee and once approved, all managers will be made aware of the new policy via managers brief with a link to the Council intranet. The General Statement of Intent will be displayed in all Council premises.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equality implications arising from the report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of greenhouse gases or environmental implications.

REPORT AUTHOR:

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Health and Safety Policy Statement (contains Health and Safety Addendum)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
POLICY AND RESURCES COMMITTEE	30th July 2021