

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

19 November 2013

**LEAD OFFICER:** Director, Health & Environmental Services

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### HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

#### Purpose

1. To seek Cabinet approval of a revised Health & Safety Policy and associated documents.

#### Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Cabinet,
  - (a) approves the revised SCDC Health & Safety Policy, Statement of Intent, and Legislation List (**Appendix 1, 2, and 3**), subject to any comments from Trade Unions.
  - (b) agrees that future formal review of the Policy and other Health & Safety paperwork take place every 3 years, unless circumstances require it sooner.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Council must agree and publish a corporate Health & Safety Policy. This policy must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it meets organisational and legislative requirements. Formal approval by Cabinet of the Policy provides visible leadership and commitment to the Health & Safety principles set out in the "Statement of Intent" (Appendix 1 and 2).

#### Background

4. The Council is under a legal duty to protect the Health & Safety of employees under the Health & Safety at Work Act.
5. SCDC Health & Safety "competent person" advice is provided by the SCDC Facilities Manager with additional support bought in from Cambridge City to advise on "high risk" activities such as waste collection operations. To reduce costs and duplication and support improved resilience and joint-working with Cambridge City (for example, on cross-border waste collection at Cambridge North-West and the RECAP waste joint-working programme), efforts are being made to align Health & Safety documents and systems with those of the City Council.

#### Considerations

6. The Health & Safety Policy and associated documents (Appendix 1, 2 and 3) are now almost identical in format to those used by Cambridge City. For South Cambridgeshire DC, this means that the Policy document has been shortened and now provides greater clarity of organisational roles and responsibilities. Similar work is underway with the South Cambridgeshire DC Emergency Plan.
7. Previous practice at South Cambridgeshire DC has been to review and sign-off all Health & Safety Policy and process documents every year. This resulted in a paper-led, process-approach to Health & Safety which generated unnecessary extra work for staff.

To move away from this process approach, it is proposed that formal Policy and systems document reviews take place every 3 years unless learning or organisational or legislative changes dictate this should be done sooner. It will be the responsibility of individual managers and staff to identify any changes in their area that might impact on the effectiveness of the Council's Health & Safety approach.

### **Options**

8. SCDC is required to review and publish its Health & Safety Policy. Cabinet can therefore approve, amend or reject the Policy documents. If Cabinet rejects the revised Policy documents and approach, the options are to rework the proposed new Policy approach or to update the previous Policy documents.

### **Implications**

9. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:

#### ***Legal***

10. Reviewing and publishing an updated Health & Safety Policy will enable SCDC to meet its legal obligations to staff under the Health & Safety at Work Act.

#### ***Risk Management***

11. Failure to review and update the Policy will leave SCDC staff at increased risk of damage to their health and wellbeing at work and SCDC at risk of enforcement action by the HSE, particularly in the event of an incident.

#### ***Equality & Diversity***

12. Health & Safety legislation and the SCDC Health & Safety Policy and systems apply to all staff and visitors. Legislation requires that reasonable adjustments are made to ensure the health and safety of everyone on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### **Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)**

13. These revised Health & Safety Policy documents have been developed in consultation with EMT, the SCDC Safety Committee and the SCDC Corporate Health & Safety & Emergency Planning Team consisting of Director, Health & Environmental Services, Head of Service Environmental Health & Licensing, Facilities Manager and the joint SCDC / CC Health & Safety / Emergency Planning Officer. Trade Unions views are being sought at a meeting on 12 November 2013.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

#### **Aim 1 – A1 – Continue to invest in employees and members by carrying out actions in the Organisational and member Development Strategies.**

14. Continuing to ensure high standards of Health & Safety will reduce absences and costs as well ensure SCDC feels like a great place to work.

#### **Aim 2 – A3 – Ensure best use of Council assets and benefit from opportunities to achieve efficiencies from working together.**

15. Adopting the same Policy document format and processes as Cambridge City will reduce the work needed across both authorities to maintain effective health & safety and emergency planning systems.

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