

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Open Spaces Water Safety Policy
Meeting/Date:	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy & Growth) – 12 January 2016 Cabinet – 21 January 2016
Executive Portfolio:	Councillor Robin Carter – Executive Councillor for Operations & the Environment
Report by:	Alistair Merrick – Interim Head of Service (Operations)
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

1. The report provides the opportunity for the Panel to scrutinise the draft Open Spaces Water Safety Policy before it is submitted to the Cabinet for endorsement.
2. The draft Open Spaces Water Safety Policy has been developed to enable the Operations Service to better ensure the safety of users of public open space managed on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council. The open water areas within these open spaces if not well managed could present a real danger to users of the open space and this policy sets the direction for the future management of this open water.
3. The policy confirms that the Council will provide appropriate arrangements for the management of areas of open water under its control. These arrangements should ensure that, 'so far as reasonably practicable', all open water facilities and other water based facilities for which the Council is responsible, are maintained in a safe condition for the benefit of the users and the safety of staff.
4. Following analysis of best practice across other local authorities it is recommended that the Council should adopt a structured process for risk assessing all the open water areas it owns or manages. This is to confirm the key issues to be considered as part of an active assessment of risk and then to be managed. The starting point will be to categorise every open water area in accordance with the Risk Level Classification contained in Appendix 3 of the attached policy document.

5. The categorisation is determined by site specific risk assessments conducted in accordance with RoSPA guidance. It is recommended that RoSPA be retained to train staff within Environmental Services Section of Operations to carry out these site specific risk assessments over the next 12 months. This will make the Council self-sufficient going forward to create sustainable arrangements for managing open water areas.
6. In accordance with best practice the management measures that will be adopted following the site specific risk assessments will include the following:
 - Provision of off-site safety information predominantly via the Council's Website.
 - When confirmed as required by the site specific risk assessments provision of onsite signage that details the key dangers and safety arrangements.
 - Site rescue equipment to be provided if confirmed by the site specific risk assessments.
 - Edge protection, particularly the removal of dense vegetation will be carried out at the appropriate time of year if confirmed as required by the site specific risk assessments.
 - In the design of future new sites that contain open water RoSPA design guidance will be followed.
7. Where a Site Specific Strategy exists, it will be the responsibility of the Operations Manager (Environmental Services) to ensure implementation of the actions identified.

Recommendation(s):

1. The Panel are invited to make comments that will be included in the report to Cabinet seeking the endorsement of the draft Open Spaces Water Safety Policy.
2. Cabinet are recommended to approve the Open Spaces water Safety Policy including the proposed programme of site specific risk assessments to confirm the safety measures to be implemented on a site by site basis.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The report provides the Panel with the opportunity to scrutinise the draft Open Spaces Water Safety Policy before it is adopted.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The draft Open Spaces Water Safety Policy has been developed to enable the Operations Service to better ensure the safety of users of public open space that the service manages on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council. The open water areas within these open spaces if not well managed could present a real danger to users of the open space and this policy sets the direction for the future management of this open water.

- 2.2 Types of open water within the ownership of the Council include:

- Lakes/former quarries;
- Rivers and banks;
- Back waters/tributaries;
- Brooks and banks;
- Marina;
- Weirs;
- Ponds;
- Streams;
- Balancing ponds;
- Drainage ditches.

A full schedule of types of open water under the Council's control is provided in **Appendix 1** of the attached draft policy document.

- 2.3 Open water can present significant risks that may vary in response to environmental changes, for example, the desire to swim in cold water on a hot day or the attraction to walk on ice in the winter.
- 2.4 This water safety policy has been designed and developed based on advice and guidance from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), 'Safety in Inland Water Sites - Operational Guidelines' (RoSPA document).
- 2.5 The Council have designated the Operations Manager (Environmental Services) as the lead manager responsible for this policy and the implementation of any actions within the water safety policy in liaison with the Council's Health, Safety & Resilience Officer.
- 2.6 Various parts of legislation (Appendix 2 of the attached draft policy document) place statutory duties on owners of inland water sites, or the person responsible for the site, to provide for the safety and the well-being of visitors, which includes employees and members of the public. Both statute and common law have a relevance to the operation of inland waters.
- 2.7 **Statement of Intent:** Therefore the Council will provide appropriate arrangements for the management of areas of open water under its control. These arrangements should ensure that, 'so far as reasonably practicable', all open water facilities and other water based facilities for which the Council is responsible, are maintained in a safe condition for the benefit of the users and the safety of staff.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Following analysis of best practice across other local authorities it is recommended that the Council should adopt a structured process for risk accessing all the open water areas it owns or manages, This is to confirm the key issues to be considered as part of an active assessment of risk and then to be managed. The starting point will be to categorise every open water area in accordance with the Risk Level Classification contained in Appendix 3 of the attached policy document. This categorisation then dictates the appropriate safety measures that will be implemented, i.e. all Category 'A' sites will require a separate site-specific water safety strategy.
- 3.2 The categorisation is determined by site specific risk assessments conducted in accordance with RoSPA guidance. It is recommended that RoSPA be retained to train staff within Environmental Services Section of Operations to carry out these site specific risk assessments over the next 12 months. This will make the Council self-sufficient going forward to create sustainable arrangements for managing open water areas. Appendix 4 of the attached policy document contains three examples of site specific risk assessments.
- 3.3 In accordance with best practice the management measures that will be adopted following the site specific risk assessments will include the following:
- a) Provision of off-site safety information predominantly via the Council's Website to help prevent accidents and drowning. The development of this information will be on-going. A link will also be created to the Webpages of One Leisure to promote safe swimming opportunities.
 - b) When confirmed as required by the site specific risk assessments provision of onsite signage that detail the key dangers and safety arrangements, identification of safety equipment and instruction in its' use; and 'nag signs' that repeat key safety messages. All signage installed will comply with Health and Safety Signs and Signals Regulations.
 - c) Site rescue equipment to be provided if confirmed by the site specific risk assessments and it will comprise life rings for sites with steep banks and deeper water, and throw lines for sites with shallower banks.
 - d) Edge protection, particularly the removal of dense vegetation will be carried out at the appropriate time of year if confirmed as required by the site specific risk assessments.
 - e) In the design of future new sites that contain open water RoSPA design guidance will be followed.
- 3.4 Where a member of the public or staff are involved in a water based accident or sustains an injury, the incident will be recorded in accordance with Council procedures. Members of the public will be encouraged to report any incidents to the Council.
- 3.5 Where a Site Specific Strategy exists, it will be the responsibility of the Operations Manager (Environmental Services) to ensure implementation of the actions identified.
- 3.6 Where a Site Specific Strategy does not exist, implementation of actions within this policy will be the responsibility of the Countryside Service Manager and the Street Scene Area Managers in the to implement.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

4.1 The comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) following its meeting on the 12th January 2016 are attached as Appendix 2.

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS AND HOW THESE WILL BE ADDRESSED

5.1 The structured approach to the categorisation of open water areas through site specific risk assessments to put in place the appropriate management arrangements is being recommended to ensure the effective management of open water within the District's open spaces with the safety of users being paramount.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 The schedule of site specific risk assessments to be completed will be incorporated into the service improvement plan for the Operations Service with deadlines set for completion of each risk assessment. On a monthly basis a RAG report (red, amber, green traffic light status) is produced to confirm progress being made this will now include progress in the completion of the risk assessments. If a risk assessment is flagged as red, in danger of not being delivered it will be targeted for intervention by the Head of Service to ensure it is ultimately delivered.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

7.1 The policy will fundamentally contribute to the Corporate Plan as follows:

- a) Enhancing fundamentally the safety of the green environment of the District.
- b) Operations becoming much more business-like and efficient in the way it delivers safe services.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The service improvement plan includes for a structure of on-going consultation with residents and service users, these will be used to test the appropriateness of the management arrangements for open water put in place from the users' perspective.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The policy has been drafted to fully comply with all relevant legislation as detailed in the attached draft policy document (Appendix 2 of the document).

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The policy has been developed within existing resources. The implementation of the policy (the site specific risk assessments) will be incremental to enable it to be delivered within existing resources. However pump priming of £30,000 from underspending in 2015/16 will be provided for equipment and signage confirmed as necessary from the site specific risk assessments.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The policy is consistent with the following Council health and safety documents:

- General Statement of Safety Policy;
- Health & Safety Policy – Organisation & Responsibilities;
- Health & Safety Arrangements.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

12.1 The scrutinising of the draft Open Spaces Water Safety Policy gives the Panel the opportunity to influence the final document submitted to the Cabinet for endorsement.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

13.1 Appendix 1: the draft Open Spaces Water Safety Policy.

13.2 Appendix 2: comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) from its meeting on the 12th January 2016.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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Water Safety Policy

For Open Space Managed by Huntingdonshire District Council

Version	Date Issued	Review
Version 1	7 September 2015 (HL)	AM (7 September 2015)
Version 2	23 November 2015 (HL)	AM (7 December 2015)
Version 3	7 December 2015 (HL)	AM (10 December 2015)
Version 4	13 January 2016 (AM)	
Version 5		

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (the Council) has a number of public open spaces within its ownership that includes areas of open water. Due to the diverse shape and size of these areas of water, their use is varied. The Council recognises the need for open water for both environmental reasons and for recreation and leisure activities.

1.2 The Council has committed to supporting improvements to green space within our strategic priorities and objectives and specifically this Open Spaces Water Safety Policy contributes to the Corporate Plan for 2015 - 2016 strategic priority of '*Working with our communities*' in that it will:

- Help create safer, stronger and more resilient communities; and
- Help Improve health and well-being of residents and visitors to the District.

1.4 Types of open water within the ownership of the Council include:

- Lakes/former quarries;
- Rivers and banks;
- Back waters/tributaries;
- Brooks and banks;
- Marina;
- Weirs;
- Ponds;
- Streams;
- Balancing ponds;
- Drainage ditches.

A full schedule of types of open water under the Council's control is provided in **Appendix 1**.

1.5 Open water can present significant risks that may vary in response to environmental changes, for example, the desire to swim in cold water on a hot day or the attraction to walk on ice in the winter.

1.6 This water safety policy has been designed and developed based on advice and guidance from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), 'Safety in Inland Water Sites - Operational Guidelines' (RoSPA document), <http://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/leisure-safety/inland-water-sites.pdf>.

1.7 The Council have designated the Operations Manager (Environmental Services) as the lead manager responsible for this policy and the implementation any actions within the water safety policy in liaison with the Council's Health, Safety & Resilience Officer.

2.0 Statement of Intent

2.1 The Council will provide appropriate arrangements for the management of areas of open water under its control. These arrangements should ensure that, 'so far as reasonably practicable', all open water facilities and other water based facilities for which the Council is responsible, are maintained in a safe condition for the benefit of the users and the safety of staff.

3.0 Legal Responsibility

3.1 Various parts of legislation place statutory duties on owners of inland water sites, or the person responsible for the site, to provide for the safety and the wellbeing of visitors, which includes employees and members of the public. Both statute and common law have a relevance to the operation of inland waters.

3.2 **Statutory Health and Safety Requirements:** This policy does not replace the responsibility of the Council to also adhere to the following legislation; and further detailed information on this legislation can be found at **Appendix 2:**

- Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAW) 1974;
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981;
- Public Health Act 1936;
- Occupiers Liability Act 1999;
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.

3.2 **Other Occupational Health and Safety Duties:** Operators to whom the 1974 Act applies also have various duties, including the recording, notification and investigation of accidents to the enforcing authority (e.g. HSE or local authority environmental health departments). The appropriate enforcing authority must be notified where a member of the public has drowned or has been taken to hospital for medical treatment, i.e. following a near drowning incident.

3.3 **Common Law Duty of Care:** Although there is a lack of legislation in this area, responsible bodies do have powers to effect preventative measures and the site owner must ensure that all facilities and equipment are suitable and safe to use. Under common law, liability to negligence may arise from the breach of fundamental duty, known as a 'duty of care'. The duty is described as follows, and applies to members of the public as well as operators:

'To take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to cause injury to your neighbour'.

This can be defined as:

'What the reasonable man/woman would have foreseen as being necessary'.

3.4 A certain level of risk is acceptable and it is expected that safety measures will be applied *'as far as is reasonably practicable'*. In other words, practicable measures have to be technically feasible, and costs in time, money and effort are reasonable. In the case of safe management of inland water sites, the duty of care means that the burden of taking adequate precautions falls on the site operator.

4.0 Provision of Off-site Information

4.1 The Council is committed to providing safety information to staff and the public and understands that providing literature/information on water safety to both the public and staff can help in the prevention of accidents and drowning. The development of this information will be ongoing, in order to fully convey the safety message to people. The purpose of such information is to heighten people's understanding of the risk of open water and its surroundings to match that of the real risk. This is particularly important when considering children around open water as often their perceived risk of a hazard is very low.

4.2 The Council will provide information to the public via a water safety webpage on the Council's website; this will include a link to the policy and examples of standard site signage that will be used to warn of danger.

5. On-Site Risk Assessments

5.1 Detailed in this section of the policy is the process that will be adopted for assessing risk for each open water site; this confirms the key issues to be considered as part of a risk assessment.

5.2 **Risk Assessment - Categorisation of Sites:** Unsupervised open water can present a high level of risk due to the nature and use of adjacent walkways and Green Space. In order to assess the level of risk at each site, the Council will categorise sites to identify the highest and lowest risk areas so the appropriate action can be implemented.

5.3 Sites will be categorised using the Risk Level Classification shown at **Appendix 3. This will give** each site a Risk Level from 'D' (lowest) to 'A' (highest). This categorisation will then dictate the appropriate safety measures that will need to be implemented, for example all Category 'A' sites will require a separate site-specific water safety strategy.

5.4 Following the completion of the initial programme of risk assessments the following durations will be adopted for the review of the risk assessments:

- a) Sites classified as Risk Level A sites will have their risk assessments reviewed annually.
- b) Sites classified as Risk Level B sites will have their risk assessments reviewed every two years.
- c) Sites classified as Risk Level C and D sites will have their risk assessments reviewed every three years.

In the event of a change in legislation or a major incident all risk assessments will be reviewed as a matter of course.

6. Site Water Safety Signage

6.1 Where necessary (confirmed through risk assessments), three forms of site signage will be used to improve and ensure greater awareness of the potential dangers of water on the Council's public open spaces. These are as follows:

a) **Multi-signs:** Signage outlining key dangers and key safety information, to include the following:

- Location and Emergency Services code for the site;
- Map of the site with lifesaving points and help points identified, (i.e. where such equipment is installed);
- Do not enter the water;
- No swimming;
- Action to be taken in an emergency;
- Location of nearest telephone;
- Space will also be provided for the positioning of temporary notices, (e.g. danger – ice take care!).

Multi-signs will be provided at each key site (Category 'A' sites) with positioning of these being determined through the site specific safety strategies. It is important that this signage relates exclusively to safety and that it is kept simple and does not include any other information. An example of the signage that will be adopted is detailed below.



b) **Safety Points:** Life buoy covers repeating key information from Multisigns (details of emergency telephone numbers, Emergency Service Code for example). Safety points will be provided at key sites (Category 'A' sites) where identified in the site specific strategies. Where safety points are prone to vandalism and their integrity cannot be guaranteed, an alternative strategy will be investigated (increasing the physical level of edge protection for example).

c) **Nag Signs:** These are smaller signs displayed in key locations, again repeating key information from the Multi-signs e.g. Danger No Swimming, Deep Water. Nag signs will be installed where necessary as outlined within the Site Specific Evaluation at **Appendix 4.**

- 6.2 **Warning Sign Specification:** As far as practically possible warning signs will be in accordance with the recommendations of the RoSPA water safety committee and the requirements of the Health and Safety Signs and Signals Regulations [amended 2002]. All new signs erected will meet the BS 5499-11:2002 BSI standard. The Council will consider the demography of the District when providing signage and multi-lingual signage will be installed where appropriate.

7 Rescue Equipment

- 7.1 Site rescue equipment, if required, will comprise of life rings and throw ropes. Life rings are generally considered suitable for areas having steeper banks and deep water such as adjacent to locks, quay sides or rivers. Throw lines, however, are more suitable where the gradient is shallow and directional suitability is required. The provision of new and replacement rescue equipment at Council sites will be determined by the site specific risk assessments.
- 7.2 Where appropriate, safety signage and lifesaving equipment should be combined into a position known as a safety point (as detailed above). Where many safety points are located on one site, each should be identified by a number, recorded on a site plan and monitored. The location of 'safety points' will be determined by the risk assessment process and will likely reflect probable points of access to the water and where there may be a rescue attempt. A safety point should be in visibility from any point around the potential risk.
- 7.3 **Vandalism and Rescue Equipment:** Life buoys and containers (safety points) can often be targeted for vandalism, graffiti and theft. Where safety points are prone to vandalism and their integrity cannot be guaranteed, an alternative strategy will be investigated (increasing the physical level of edge protection for example).

8. Edge Protection

- 8.1 Edge protection is generally at least a 1 metre gap of dense and/or hostile vegetation (weed, scrub, nettle and brambles for example) from the water body (lake, stream, river etc.) to a designated path used by the public. The provision of edge protection at Council sites will be determined by the site specific risk assessments. If it is necessary to carry out any work to edge protection vegetation, this will be carried out during the autumn, winter or spring with the following exceptions:
- a) Maintenance to areas required for the safe operation of the onsite sporting activities, including angling, swimming and sailing.
 - b) Work required for the health and safety of the general public and operational activities.
- 8.2 **Future Design of Water Edges:** In the development of any new sites containing water a number of factors need to be taken into consideration in their design. Design guidance can be found within the RoSPA publication 'safety in inland water sites' – operational guidelines. <http://www.rospace.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/leisure-safety/inland-water-sites.pdf>. The Council will be adopting this design guidance in respect to considering the future development of its sites and when considering planning applications that include the transfer of land to the Council as the part of a planning agreement.

9 Staffing and Contractors

- 9.1 All Huntingdonshire District Council staff and contractors responsible for open water sites are required to implement the Council's Health and Safety Policy and adopted safe working practices and to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments in relation to activities carried out adjacent to water.

10. Site Supervision

- 10.1 On areas of open water full time supervision is deemed to be neither reasonable nor practicable and is not the most effective reaction to a water hazard. Where staff are present on site (such as sites managed by Countryside Service), they may take a proactive approach in educating the public and highlighting the common dangers around open water (distribution of water safety leaflets for example).
- 10.2 **First Aid Provision at Open Water Sites:** First aid equipment will be provided where there is permanent staff on site. All contractors with a formal agreement to use water bodies at Council sites must provide sufficient first aid equipment for staff.
- 10.3 **Use of Open Water for Activities:** Where a group or organisation wishes to use an area of water for an approved activity, an application must be made to the Council's Operations Service. This does not apply to normal arrangements of a club or group using the water by lease, license or any other formal agreement. Applications must be made via the Council's Events Application Process.

11. Recording and Reporting of Accidents

- 11.1 Where a member of the public or staff are involved in a water based accident or sustains an injury, the incident will be recorded in accordance with Council procedures. Members of the public will be encouraged to report any incidents to the Council via the contact details provided on site water safety signage.

12. Monitoring and Implementation

- 12.1 Where a Site Specific Strategy exists, it will be the responsibility of the relevant Operations Manager (Environmental Services) to ensure implementation of the actions identified.
- 12.2 Where a Site Specific Strategy does not exist, implementation of actions within this policy will be the responsibility of the Countryside Service Manager and the Street Scene Area Managers in the Operations Service to implement.

Schedule of Huntingdonshire District Council Owned Outdoor Open Water Sites

Site Number	Site Locations
	Principal sites with heavy public use and large amounts of water
1	Hinchingbrooke Country Park
2	Paxton Pits (including sailing lake)
	River Banks
3	Regatta Meadows, St Neots
4	Riverside Park, St Neots (both sides of River, including Slipway)
5	Riverside Park, Huntingdon
6	Hartford Church Riverside, Huntingdon
7	River Mill Quayside, Ramsey
8	Riverside, Barford Road, St Neots
9	Mill Lane, Little Paxton
10	Common, St Neots
11	Navigation Wharf, St Neots
12	Caravan Park, St Neots
13	Jubilee Gardens, Bridge, St Neots
14	Holt Island, St Ives
15	Ouse Valley Way, Districtwide
16	Wilhorn Meadow, St Ives
	Marina
17	Barford Road, St Neots
	Weir
18	Barford Road, St Neots
	Brooks
19	Alconbury Brook (in HCP)
20	Duloe Brook, St Neots
21	Colmworth Brook (Foundry Way behind B & Q)
22	Hen Brook (Inc. Linear Park)
23	Fox Brook (Inc. Cambridge St & Loves Farm)
24	Barracks Brook, Stukeley Meadows (along Ring Road to River)
25	Long Moor Balk, Stukeley Meadows
26	Sawtry Brook (rear of Farfield Close)
	Ponds
27	Priory Park, St Neots
28	Spring Common, Huntingdon
29	Cricket Pitch, Godmanchester

	Balancing Ponds
30	The Maltings, Sawtry
31	Flamstead Drive, Huntingdon
32	The Glades, Woodlands, Huntingdon
33	Dartmore Drive, Huntingdon
34	Lannesbury Crescent, Loves Farm, St Neots
35	Anderson Close, Loves Farm, St Neots
36	Dixy Close (Off Line Pond), Loves Farm, St Neots
37	Belland Hill, Loves Farm, St Neots
38	Furrowfields, Loves Farm, St Neots
39	Dramsell Rise, Loves Farm, St Neots
40	Great High Ground, Loves Farm, St Neots
	Drainage Ditches
41	St Neots Riverside – Pitch n Putt
42	Priory Park, St Neots
43	Somersham Rd, St Ives
44	Nursery Gardens, St Ives
45	At Audrey Lane, St Ives
46	Houghton Rd, St Ives
47	Chestnut Rd, St Ives
48	Westwood Rd, St Ives
49	Filberts Walk, St Ives
50	Apreece Way, Stilton
51	Cooper Thornhill, Stilton
52	Slade Dyke, Ramsey
53	Spring Common (Spring Head and Pond)

Statutory Health and Safety Requirements applicable to this Policy

Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAW) 1974: Section three of the 1974 Act specifically requires every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that he/she takes the necessary steps to ensure the safety of non-employees affected by his/her activities.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: These were made under the HASAW 1974 Act. They require that health and safety is suitably managed so as to control risks effectively and present no harm to people. The regulations require that an adequate and suitable assessments of work related hazards should be carried out to determine the preventative and protective steps that must be taken.

The Council understands that the regulations also require employers to have access to competent advice, to monitor and review their systems, to have emergency procedures and to provide information and training. These issues are covered within this policy

The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981: The regulations set out the range of numbers and training of first-aiders, and the type of equipment that should be provided.

Public Health Act 1936: This is an enabling law offering local authorities the power to regulate water users (for example, to prohibit swimming).

Occupiers Liability Act 1999: This states that the occupier must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of visitors to his/her land or premises. This duty is particularly onerous where children are concerned. The occupier owes the duty of care not only to visitors but also to trespassers as well.

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996: This implements European Directive 92/58/EEC, which came into force in April 1996. This standardises safety signs throughout member states of the European Union. The regulations require employers to use safety signs where there is a significant risk to health and safety of their employees that has not been avoided or controlled by the methods required under other relevant law, provided use of a sign can help reduce the risk.

A new BSI standard has been developed specific to water safety signs. The standard BS 5499-11: 2002 was published on 20/07/2002 and RoSPA recommends that:

'Any new signage should conform to this standard in the future and that a regular review of existing signage is carried out. Those signs that are in need of repair or have poor legibility/clarity of image should be replaced straight away and all others should be subject to programmed replacement. The period of time for such replacement should be 'reasonable' in terms of overall cost against the safety gain or imperative. Overall it should not be unreasonable to expect that all signs should also comply with this new standard within a five year period'

All new signage will be to this standard and when replacing old signs this standard will be taken into consideration. This issue will be placed in the overall action plan.

Risk Level Classifications

Risk Level D

- Water less than 0.5m in depth providing an ornamental function.
- Solid well defined edge. Minimal height above water surface. The edge may be stepped allowing a gradual approach to the water.
- Water body is not the attraction to the site, nor is it in a central location.

Action

- The treatment is distinctive in that there is no fencing.
 - A 1 metre edge protection may be provided
-

Risk Level C

- The water will exceed approximately 0.5m in depth.
- The edge is well defined, solid and not more than approximately 2m above the water surface.
- Water body is not the attraction to the site, nor is it in a central location.
- The use of the site may attract, in particular young people.

Action

- A 1 metre edge protection will be provided
 - Nag signs (signage repeating key safety information danger – no swimming for example) may be provided
-

Risk Level B

- Deep water
- Solid, well defined edge
- Other contributory factors may include the heavy presence of people, walking or seated
- Water may be reason for visiting

Action

- A 1 metre edge protection will be provided
 - Nag signs may be provided
 - Additional signage and Life buoys may be present
-

Risk Level A

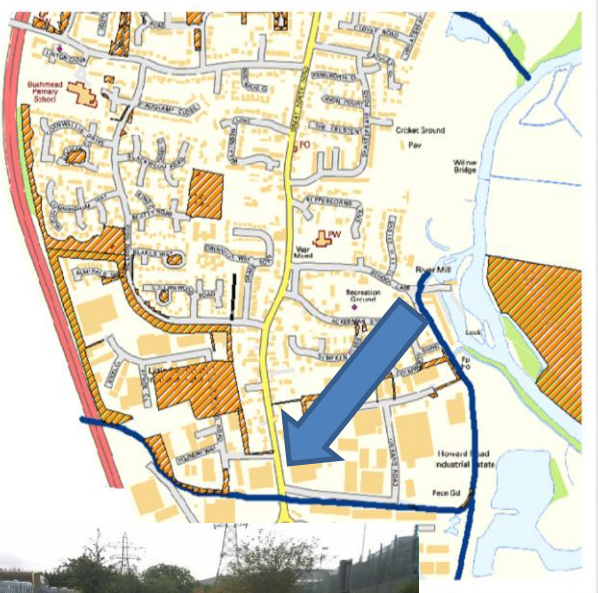
- Deep water
- Water main attraction to site.
- Water used for water sports
- Heavy presence of people

Action

- A RoSPA water safety review to be carried out followed by A Council produced water safety strategy.
-

Examples of Site Specific Risk Assessments

Site 1 - Colmworth Brook, Eaton Socon, St Neots



Type of Water – Awarded Watercourse, Stream/Brook

Risk – Level C

- General Info – The District Council owns 300m along the North bank of the brook which runs through Open Space to the rear of Light industrial and retail units.
- The brook is prone to flooding and although the depth is generally below 0.5m it can rise significantly.
- A majority of the bank has sufficient edge protection and has mixed gradients both steep and shallow.
- The site is not heavily used by the public
- Nag Signs 'Danger of Drowning' have been installed on opposite bank (privately owned) where edge protection is not as established.

Action – Maintain a 1 metre edge protection along the stream.

Site 2 - Duloe Brook, Eaton Socon, St Neots



Type of Water – Awarded Watercourse, Stream/Brook

Risk – Level C

- General Info – The District Council owns 800m both sides of the brook which runs through Open Space and close to housing (7-10m away from boundary)
- The brook is prone to flooding and although the depth is generally below 0.5m it can rise significantly.
- A public footpath follows the brook and a post and rail field fence has been installed from Queens Garden south.
- A majority of the bank has sufficient edge protection and has mixed gradients both steep and shallow.
- The site is used by the public as a green connection through a housing estate.
- There is evidence of children playing in the brook to include remnants of a rope swing

Action – Maintain a 1 metre edge protection and install 'nag' signs along Open Space

Site 3 – River Bank, Riverside Park, St Neots



Risk Level B

- Deep water fast moving water
- Solid, well defined edge bank edges to include 2 sets of moorings
- Park heavily used recreationally and for events
- Life Buoys are present and checked on a weekly basis - continue
- Picturesque setting of River draws people to the park

Action

- Within reason a 1 metre edge protection will be maintained
- Nag signs to be provided at 1 per 100metres of bank