

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Safety Advisory Group  
**Meeting/Date:** Cabinet – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016  
**Executive Portfolio:** Cllr Steven Cawley  
**Report by:** Chris Stopford – Head of Community  
**Ward(s) affected:** Internal

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**Executive Summary:**

Following the update of the Constitution, the Council has reviewed its existing arrangements for the management of its health and safety obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and considers that the existing processes can be improved.

The existing Safety Advisory Panel and service area specific activities can be combined to a single Corporate Health and Safety Board, made up of representatives of employees, senior management, and Staff Council. In addition to the Corporate Health and Safety Board, it is recommended that oversight of the Council's activities be provided by the Council's Employment Committee alongside its existing oversight of workforce information.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet is

**RECOMMENDED**

1. To agree the establishment of a Corporate Health and Safety Board to take responsibility for ensuring the arrangements for corporate health and safety are appropriate, and effective; and that the Corporate Health and Safety Board is provided with overview by the Employment Committee, and
2. That the existing Safety Advisory Group be discontinued.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report sets out the Council's new approach to the management of health and safety at work insofar as it relates to the health, safety, and welfare of its employees, visitors, and those who may be affected by the Council's activities (hereafter referred to as Corporate Health and Safety). The report does not consider the Council's function as a 'regulator' under the Health and safety at Work etc. Act 1974 for work activities occurring in businesses across Huntingdonshire.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council has a legal obligation under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to take all reasonable steps, to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its employees, visitors, and those who come into contact with its activities. Further, under the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996, the Council has a duty to consult with its employees on matters relating to their health and safety.

The existing processes for Corporate Health and Safety has been reviewed, the processes have been recognised as being disjointed across Council service areas and locations. Further, the Council's has reviewed and adopted its Constitution, and in part of this review, and included the overview of Corporate Health and Safety within the scope of the Employment Panel.

## **3. OPTIONS ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 In ensuring that the Council can demonstrate its compliance, and that the Employment Panel can provide overview, it is considered that a new Corporate Health and Safety Board should be established, with representatives from each Service area, senior management, and the Staff Council. This Board would then report to Employment Committee. In establishing this Board, the existing Safety Advisory Group would be discontinued. The alternative is to leave the structures as they are but this does not now meet the needs of the organisation.

## **4. KEY RISKS**

- 4.1 Failure of the Council to address these issues increases the risk of workplace accidents and ill health. Failure to be able to demonstrate that the Council has taken all steps, so far as reasonably practicable, increases the risk of successful claim or litigation against the Council as an employer. This risk is mitigated by the establishment of a robust and demonstrable process for the management of Corporate Health and Safety.
- 4.2 Failure of the Council to protect the health and safety of those who come into contact with its activities, either as visitors of users of Council services and premises, also increases the risk of accident or injury, and subsequent claim or litigation against the Council.

## **5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN**

- 5.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Board will be established and an update on progress provided to the Employment Committee at its next meeting.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council has a legal obligation under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to take all steps, so far as reasonably practicable, to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees; and the health and safety of those who come into contact with its activities. This report provides a solution for ensuring that the Council satisfies this legal obligation.

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no additional resource implications from this report.

## **8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 8.1 The Council has an obligation to protect its staff, as already discussed within this report. The existing processes have been reviewed, and it has been recognised that improvements could be made to the processes and oversight

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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