
Health & Safety Policy

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils





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1.0 STATEMENT of INTENT

- 1.1 South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council (the councils) recognise our responsibilities to our employees and will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure their health, safety and welfare at work, including working from home.
- 1.2 The councils will so far as reasonably practicable, ensure that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk by our activities, services and undertaking.
- 1.3 The councils give matters of health and safety equal importance to those of economy and productivity and seeks improvement in health and safety performance year on year.
- 1.4 The councils believe that injuries and ill health suffered at work can be prevented through effective management control and intervention.
- 1.5 The councils will provide safety information, instruction and training to our employees.
- 1.6 The councils will monitor the implementation of these arrangements and the safety performance of the councils.
- 1.7 The councils will manage our operations and staff in accordance with current statutory requirements.
- 1.8 The councils will provide competent resource in the field of health and safety to provide guidance to councillors and staff.
- 1.9 The councils seek cooperation from all employees in matters of health and safety at work. Employees are all directly responsible for health and safety at work.
- 1.10 The councils recognise the important and valuable role played by safety representatives. Safety Forums will be set up to facilitate consultation on health and safety issues.
- 1.11 The councils will review this Health and Safety Policy on a three-yearly cycle.
- 1.12 The councils will manage accidents, as well as potential major accident hazards in accordance with legislation and best practice.
- 1.13 The councils will promote a drug and alcohol-free workplace and encourage employees to report potential drug and alcohol issues in their respective workplaces.
- 1.14 The councils will develop and implement a health and safety management system following the Health and Safety Executive's, Health and Safety Guidance No. 65 "Managing for Health and Safety".
- 1.15 This Health and Safety Policy applies to all of the councils employees and to all councillors. Disciplinary action (including dismissal, where appropriate) may be taken against any employee found to be in breach of their personal responsibilities either under safety legislation or under the councils Health and Safety Policy.

Mark Stone
Chief Executive
2 December 2020



2.0 ORGANISATION and RESOURCE

- 2.1. The council's safety organisation chart (see Appendix 1) illustrates the lines of responsibility for health and safety within the councils.
- 2.2. The ultimate responsibility for safety within the councils lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive assumes the role of the councils Safety Director. Health and Safety has a dedicated monthly update at the Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings, to advise and report to the SMT on health and safety issues and performance in the councils.
- 2.3. The councils have appointed suitable qualified safety professionals as Senior Health and Safety Advisor and Health and Safety Advisor, to advise and assist managers on all aspects of safety management.
- 2.4. Acting Deputy Chief Executives, Heads of Service and Service Managers are responsible for health and safety matters within their areas of control and will ensure implementation of this Policy and the provision of appropriate resource for implementation of this Policy.
- 2.5. Chief Executive, Acting Deputy Chief Executives, Heads of Service, Managers and Team Leaders have responsibility for health and safety matters relating to persons reporting directly to them.
- 2.6. Every employee will take care, for his or her own health and safety, and for others whom their acts or omissions at work may affect.
- 2.7. All employees are encouraged to monitor health and safety issues at their workplaces and report matters of concern to their line managers.
- 2.8. Every councillor will take care, for his or her own health and safety, and for others whom their acts or omissions during carrying out their duties may affect.



3.0 SAFETY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- 3.1. Safety targets will be agreed by SMT each year and subsequently publicised. The councils aim to have no reportable accidents, no lost time accidents and no reportable dangerous occurrences as their ultimate goal.
- 3.2. Standards required by law and the council's safety policies and procedures will be complied with at all council locations. In addition, all locations are encouraged to put in place initiatives to improve safety standards based on local risks.
- 3.3. Risk assessments of work activities, council land, buildings, areas, plant, equipment, and disused areas and buildings will be carried out at all locations in accordance with the councils Risk Assessment Policy. These will be kept under review to ensure that the risks to health or safety of employees, tenants, customers, visitors and the public are prevented or controlled through appropriate measures. Competent persons will carry out these risk assessments. Key findings from these assessments will be recorded. Employees and/or safety representatives, as appropriate, will be consulted when carrying out these assessments, where relevant. Risk assessments will be developed into safe systems of work and communicated to those affected.
- 3.4. All projects and new business activities involving significant risks to health or safety shall be the subject of a documented safety review involving the relevant Head of Service/ Service Manager and the Senior Health and Safety Advisor.
- 3.5. Safety training for employees will be kept under review and carried out in accordance with the councils Safety Training Policy.
- 3.6. Safety policies, procedures, codes and guidance notes have been devised and are issued from time to time to support the safety management system and assist in developing safe systems of work. It is the responsibility of all managers and team leaders to ensure that these policies, procedures, codes and guidance notes are implemented. Any requirements for modification or revision should be notified to the Senior Health and Safety Advisor.
- 3.7. The councils will have a Health and Safety Forum, consisting of employees and management representatives, as well as the Senior Health and Safety Advisor. The Chief Executive or in his absence an Acting Deputy Chief Executive will chair the forum. Guidelines for the functions of representatives and the forums are given in the publication 'Safety Representatives and Safety Forums'. Forum meetings will be minuted and copies will be posted on noticeboards and circulated to relevant individuals.
- 3.8. At each location, adequate measures will be in place to deal with foreseeable emergencies. This includes the provision of first aiders, first aid equipment, first aid room, fire detection, firefighting equipment, fire wardens and documented emergency plans, as appropriate to the level of risk. Documented emergency plans will be exercised periodically.
- 3.9. Information relating to accidents and incidents at each location, along with other relevant information, shall be clearly communicated to employees.
- 3.10. The council's policy on managing contractors will be consistently applied.



- 3.11. The councils' plant, equipment, buildings, structures and areas will be inspected and maintained in line with statutory requirements and the council's inspection procedures. Records will be kept in respect of inspections and maintenance.
- 3.12. There should be regular contact with tenants, customers, contractors and other agencies during which health and safety issues will be discussed.



4.0 REPORTS, AUDITS, REVIEWS and MONITORING

- 4.1. Each year all services will establish safety targets and report on these in the form of an Annual Safety Review to the relevant Acting Deputy Chief Executive. The Acting Deputy Chief Executive responsible for each area will summarise performance against these targets in reports to the Chief Executive.
- 4.2. At each location, safety performance standards will be monitored by way of safety inspections, audits and reviews.
- 4.3. Accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be recorded and thoroughly investigated to ensure that effective measures are taken to prevent recurrence.
- 4.4. All accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be notified to the councils' health and safety team in line with the councils' health and safety reporting procedure.
- 4.5. The Senior Health and Safety Advisor, or their appointed representative, will audit various services on a three year cycle.
- 4.6. SMT will be provided with quarterly reports and annual reviews of safety performance in the organisation. The Senior Health and Safety Advisor may present an overview of updates at SMT as deemed appropriate.



5.0 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 All Employees

- 5.1.1. Be aware of personal responsibilities for health and safety at work (see Appendix 2).
- 5.1.2. Comply with the councils safety policies, safety codes, other procedures and safe systems of work issued to them.
- 5.1.3. Ensure that where personal protective equipment is specified and issued for a particular activity or location, it is used in the appropriate manner and any defects are reported immediately to their team leader or manager.
- 5.1.4. Report immediately to their team leader or manager any accidents, incidents, near misses or hazards at their place of work, on areas and buildings for which staff are responsible or any query regarding health and safety issues or documents.
- 5.1.5. Co-operate in the risk assessment process and the production of safe systems of work, the investigation of accidents and incidents, participation in training programmes and the achievement of health and safety targets.
- 5.1.6. Make full use of health and safety forum meetings by making suggestions for improving health and safety and by reporting all potential hazards and risks to their team leader, manager or safety representative.
- 5.1.7. Use materials, plant and equipment in accordance with the information, training and instruction given.
- 5.1.8. Use their best endeavors to assist the councils in doing everything that is reasonably practicable to safeguard the health and safety of its employees and others and to achieve the annual health and safety targets.

5.2. All Team Leaders

In addition to the duties in section 5.1 above, for locations or activities under their control:

- 5.2.1. Assist their manager in investigating accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses and actively report matters of concern.
- 5.2.2. Ensure risk assessments and safe systems of work relating to activities under their supervision are produced, properly communicated and fully implemented.
- 5.2.3. Encourage safe working practices, promote safety campaigns and make suggestions to improve safety standards.
- 5.2.4. Assist those under their supervision to understand individual responsibilities and the contents of safe systems of work by carrying out and recording regular *toolbox talks.

*A 'toolbox talk' is a short presentation to the workforce on a single aspect of health and safety



5.3. All Service Managers

In addition to the duties in section 5.1 above, for areas under their control they must:

- 5.3.1. Ensure the implementation of the councils Health and Safety Policy, safety management system and other procedures, with particular reference to the safety performance standards detailed in section 3.
- 5.3.2. Ensure risk assessments are carried out and safe systems of work are produced, communicated and implemented.
- 5.3.3. Ensure that emergency plans for their areas of responsibility are prepared, kept up to date through regular reviews and periodic testing.
- 5.3.4. Seek advice and assistance on health and safety from the Senior Health and Safety Advisor.
- 5.3.5. Carry out formal periodic safety inspections of areas under their control on a planned basis and report to the Acting Deputy Chief Executive or Head of Service as appropriate.
- 5.3.6. Promote safe working practices actively, to promote a positive attitude to safety which supports the council's safety awareness campaigns.
- 5.3.7. Ensure that accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses are immediately reported to the relevant line manager and the health and safety team.
- 5.3.8. Ensure that accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses are properly investigated in accordance with health and safety procedures and any resulting actions are promptly implemented.
- 5.3.9. Ensure that remedial actions arising from audits and safety inspections are completed within an agreed timescale.
- 5.3.10. Ensure that the work carried out by contractors on behalf of the councils is properly managed and that the council's policy on managing contractors is implemented.
- 5.3.11. Ensure that, where third parties are likely to be affected by the councils undertaking, they are informed of any such risks to their health and safety.
- 5.3.12. Ensure that all projects, new activities and services involving significant foreseeable risks to health and safety shall be the subject of a documented safety review involving the relevant operational management and safety team.
- 5.3.13. Identify the safety training needs of employees under their control and ensure that such training is provided periodically.



5.4. Engineering Management – Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Including Head of Housing and Environment, Head of Planning, Head of Development & Regeneration, Maintenance Managers/ Engineers, Project Managers/Engineers and Engineering Technical Service Staff.

In addition to the duties in section 5.1 and 5.3, for areas and activities under their control:

- 5.4.1. Ensure that the design, construction, specification, procurement and maintenance of plant, equipment and structures are properly planned, subject to suitable risk assessment and managed safely.
- 5.4.2. Ensure that plant, equipment and structures are inspected by competent persons in accordance with the councils Inspection Procedures and maintained in a safe condition.
- 5.4.3. Ensure that disused and/or non-operational equipment, plant and structures under the council's control are subject to a suitable risk assessment and are managed in a safe manner.

5.5. Property Management – Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Including Head of Housing, Head of Planning and Environment, Head of Development & Regeneration, Property Manager, Estate Managers and other Property/Estate/Land Management.

In addition to the duties in sections 5.1 and 5.3, for areas or activities under their control:

- 5.5.1. Ensure that the management of occupied and vacant property is properly planned, subject to a suitable risk assessment and managed safely.
- 5.5.2. Ensure the health and safety responsibilities are clearly and formally defined in all situations including council occupation only, multi occupancy and/or third-party occupation only.
- 5.5.3. Ensure that all duties required to keep the premises safe and compliant are undertaken.

5.6. Heads of Service

In addition to the duties in section 5.1 and 5.3, for areas or activities under their control must:

- 5.6.1. Ensure that all accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses are properly reported and investigated and that any remedial measures are identified, implemented and monitored.
- 5.6.2. Ensure that they and their teams deliver on the relevant actions in relation to property and engineering management as listed in 5.4 and 5.5 on behalf of the Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place.
- 5.6.3. Present monthly and annual reports to their line manager on the safety performance of their operation.



- 5.6.4. Ensure that buildings, structures, equipment and the estates under their control are properly inspected and maintained, so as not to create a foreseeable risk to the health or safety of council's employees or other persons.
- 5.6.5. Ensure that managers and others under their direct control carry out their respective duties within the requirements of this policy.
- 5.6.6. Ensure that there are adequate measures in place for first aid and to deal with other emergencies applicable to their area of responsibility.
- 5.6.7. Carry out formal inspections, on a planned basis, of randomly selected areas or activities, with the Safety Advisor and/or other managers.
- 5.6.8. Ensure that safety is a major consideration in all projects involving new business, construction and maintenance and the purchase of new plant or equipment and to ensure that formal, documented safety reviews take place at the appropriate time when there are significant health and safety risks.
- 5.6.9. Ensure that emergency plans are regularly reviewed and that emergency drills are carried out as appropriate.
- 5.6.10. Ensure that essential safety equipment is provided and maintained.
- 5.6.11. Ensure that remedial action arising from safety inspections, audits or following accidents or incidents are completed.

5.7 Safety Management – Health and Safety Advisor

In addition to duties in sections 5.1 and 5.3, for areas under their control:

- 5.7.1. Advise management on all aspects of health and safety at work, including the implementation of the councils safety policies, safety management system and other procedures.
- 5.7.2. Support line management in the investigation of accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses in our undertaking and recommend remedial measures to prevent recurrence.
- 5.7.3. Carry out formal periodic safety inspections and safety walkabouts with managers and safety representatives, on a planned basis and to submit reports to the Senior Health and Safety Advisor.
- 5.7.4. Liaise with the Senior Health and Safety Advisor, enforcing authorities, insurance companies on matters relating to health and safety at work.
- 5.7.5. Assist line management in planning and delivering safety training.
- 5.7.6. Attend safety forum meetings and provide reports, advice and guidance on safety performance and other safety issues.



5.7.7. Assist line management in monitoring exposure of personnel to harmful substances or agents and advise on effective control measures.

5.8 Safety Management - Senior Health and Safety Advisor

In addition to the duties under sections 5.1 and 5.3, for areas or activities under their control:

- 5.8.1. Advise Chief Executive, Acting Deputy Chief Executives and Managers on all aspects of health and safety at work and its undertaking.
- 5.8.2. Keep abreast of changes in legislation and interpret new or amended legislation for implementation within the councils.
- 5.8.3. Investigate major incidents and serious accidents as directed by the Chief Executive.
- 5.8.4. Provide functional leadership and management to the safety management team.
- 5.8.5. Continually improve the councils safety policies, safety management system and other procedures, to ensure their effectiveness.
- 5.8.6. Carry out periodic safety audits of council operations and facilities at agreed intervals and report to management and the SMT meeting.
- 5.8.7. Establish appropriate safety training standards for implementation within the councils.
- 5.8.8. Ensure appropriate policies, procedures and standards are produced in the key areas to meet all statutory and other regulations, the aims of the councils, and audit implementation of these policies and procedures.
- 5.8.9. Monitor the council's safety performance against agreed proactive objectives.
- 5.8.10. Advise SMT on significant foreseeable health and safety implications of SMT decisions.
- 5.8.11. Lead in carrying out formal documented project safety reviews of existing and new projects involving significant foreseeable risks to health and safety with relevant functional management.
- 5.8.12. Keep accidents and incidents under review in order to identify any adverse trends and advising SMT/the Chief Executive accordingly.
- 5.8.13. Represent the councils in working groups involving statutory authorities, insurance companies and other organisations, where applicable.
- 5.8.14. Prepare and monitor safety key performance indicators and improvement targets for reporting to SMT and highlight trends requiring specific action.
- 5.8.15. Attend the council's safety forum meetings.
- 5.8.16. Ensure best practice in safety management is shared throughout the councils.



5.9 Acting Deputy Chief Executives

In addition to the duties in section 5.1 and 5.3, for areas or activities under their control they must:

- 5.9.1 Ensure the implementation of the councils Health and Safety Policy, safety management system and other procedures with particular reference to the safety performance standards detailed in section 3.
- 5.9.2 Seek advice and assistance on health and safety matters concerning their areas from the Senior Health and Safety Advisor.
- 5.9.3 Ensure that adequate resources are available to meet health and safety targets.
- 5.9.4 Ensure that health and safety is always an agenda item at meetings with their management teams and those affecting safety.
- 5.9.5 Report to the Chief Executive on the safety performance of their areas of responsibility.

5.10 Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place

In addition to the duties in sections 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.9, for areas or activities under their control:

- 5.10.1 Ensure the estate and property management has appropriate guidance to implement the requirements of the councils Health and Safety Policy, safety management and other procedures.
- 5.10.2 Must ensure that all property related projects, new business and activities involving significant foreseeable risks to health or safety are subject to a documented safety review.
- 5.10.3 Where appropriate, to advise the Chief Executive on any property related solutions to specific safety issues.
- 5.10.4 Must ensure that engineering management has appropriate guidance to implement the requirements of the councils Health and Safety Policy, safety management system and other procedures, in areas and activities under their control.
- 5.10.5 Where appropriate to advise the Chief Executive on any engineering related solutions to specific safety issues.
- 5.10.6 Must ensure appropriate policies are established for the engineering aspects of planning, designing, constructing, specifying or procuring plant, equipment and structures.
- 5.10.7 Must ensure appropriate policies are established for the inspection and maintenance of plant, equipment and structures within the councils undertaking.



5.11 Councillors

5.11.1 Councillors are not responsible for managing health and safety services on a day-to-day basis but must understand the strategic way in which they can affect health and safety management in the councils.

5.11.2 Councillors will have both individual and collective governance responsibilities.

Councillors responsibilities are to:

5.11.3 Ensure that the Chief Executive has in place an effective health and safety policy

5.11.4 Hold to account the Chief Executive for the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy

5.11.5 Ensure that decision-making systems allow for health and safety implications to be given appropriate and proper consideration and are in line with the councils' policies and procedures

5.11.6 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services is the lead councillor for health and safety for each Authority and will receive monthly updates on health and safety, along with copies of the Health and Safety Quarterly and Annual Reports, and details of major incidents and accidents.

5.11.7 The Joint Audit and Governance Committee are responsible for scrutinising the councils health and safety performance through biannual reports to the Committee.

5.12 Chief Executive

In addition to the duties in sections 5.1 and 5.3 must:

5.12.1 Ensure the councils have an effective health and safety management structure for the implementation of the councils Health and Safety Policy, safety management system and other procedures.

5.12.2 Ensure that effective monitoring takes place within the councils on the implementation of the councils safety policies, safety management system and other procedures.

5.12.3 Receive oral and written reports from Acting Deputy Chief Executives and other relevant Managers, on fatal, major injury and other accidents and dangerous occurrences and report to the cabinet as necessary.

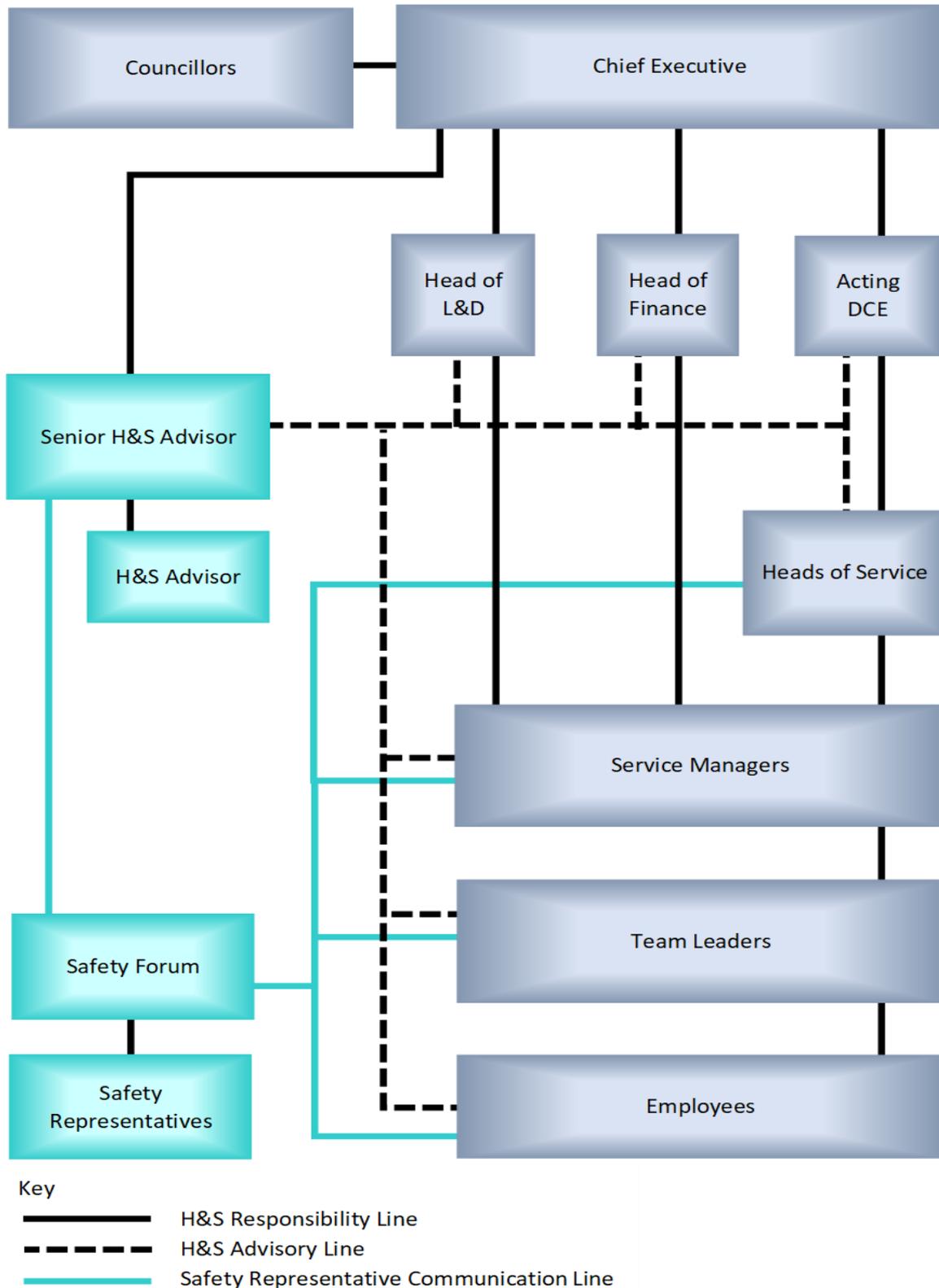
5.12.4 Delegate where appropriate, investigations of serious accidents and dangerous occurrences (or other safety related issues) to the most appropriate competent persons, depending on the severity of the incident.



- 5.12.5 Receive regular reports from the Senior Health and Safety Advisor on the safety performance of the organisation, and annual reports from the Acting Deputy Chief Executives on the safety performance of their areas of responsibility.
- 5.12.6 From time to time, review the safety performance of the organisation with the Senior Health and Safety Advisor and, as appropriate, with the Acting Deputy Chief Executives.
- 5.12.7 Assess and approve this policy at least every three years to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness.



Appendix 1 – Councils Safety Organisation Chart





Appendix 2 – Specific Health and Safety Responsibilities

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974: General duties of employees at work.

Section 7 –

“It shall be the duty of every employee while at work: to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him, so far as is necessary, to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.”

Section 8 –

“No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any relevant statutory provisions.”

Section 36 –

“Offences due to fault of other persons. Where the commission by any person of an offence under any of the relevant statutory provisions is due to the act or default of some other person, that other person shall be guilty of the offence, and a person may be charged with and convicted of the offence, by virtue of this subsection whether or not proceedings are taken against the first mentioned person.”

Section 37 –

“Where an offence under any of the relevant statutory provisions committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to have been attributable to any neglect on the part of any director/ executive, manager, secretary or other similar officer of that body corporate, or a person who was purporting to act in any such capacity, he as well as the body corporate shall be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.”



Appendix 3 – Guidance on Safety Management of Land and Buildings

Acting Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) Place is accountable for:

- provision and maintenance of building and grounds, both owned and/or managed by the councils;
- producing and maintaining building fire risk assessments, including evacuation drills;
- statutory testing of building fabric, structure and building systems;
- ensuring that all land, buildings and areas are inspected as a minimum once per year and remedial actions taken as required.

Council occupied buildings:

The occupier (name/ title holder) where the council are in the role as occupier, it is their duty to ensure that the space allocated to them is used safely and in accordance with the designed use.

The occupier shall:

- consult with DCE Place or external landlord to enable the building to be maintained in a safe condition and to report defects or building related accidents or incidents;
- cooperate with DCE Place to define the responsibilities for managing equipment and services.

Shared Premises:

DCE Place is responsible to ensure that effective arrangements exist:

- for cooperation, coordination and communication of health and safety measures with other occupiers sharing the council facilities;
- exchange of information on risks within the working environment and safe systems of work;
- cooperate on matters such as implementation, evacuation procedures, waste disposal, car parking etc.