

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 9 MARCH 2021

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMPLIANCE

REPORT BY MARK ARMSTRONG, DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of the Council's Health and Safety arrangements through the Policy Statement and Health and Safety Policy which have been fully reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation, roles and responsibilities and the roll out of the SHE Assure safety management system.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee

- (i) Note the detail within the statement, the policy, and, specifically the roles and responsibilities, including those of elected members, and
- (ii) Note the Council's statutory responsibilities and approve the revised health and safety policy statement and policy.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/COUNCIL PLAN

Health, safety & wellbeing is integral to how the council operates and conducts its business through our employees and the services delivered to our communities, Therefore, the contents of this report contribute to the achievement of the council's priorities and strategic objectives as detailed within the Angus Council Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

Angus Council as an employer, must comply with the primary legislation of The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other legislation including the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006. We must also consult employees as defined in the general regulations about employers' duty to consult their workforce about health and safety; the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 (as amended) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

Angus Council through its elected members, Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team accepts its statutory responsibility as an employer to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of its employees and all persons likely to be affected by its activities. It is vital that all employees accept their responsibilities to ensure that council business is carried out in a manner which considers the health, safety, and welfare of those living, working, or visiting the council area in line with statutory requirements. Health and safety is everyone's business.

To achieve this, alongside the policies, procedures, and guidance, underpinned by training, several forums are in place to support the delivery of competent and robust health and safety.

A joint consultative committee meets quarterly, chaired by the Depute Chief Executive., Membership includes representation from all directorates, the Health and Social Care Partnership and the trade unions.

Operational health and safety groups are also in place across the Council and are service/directorate specific.

Regional meetings with other local authorities are attended by the safety team and these collaborative meetings share good practice and learning. This collaboration has proved invaluable during the ongoing response to the global pandemic, alongside the collaboration to procure a digital safety management system, (SHE Assure).

4. CURRENT POSITION

The health and safety compliance team, work in support of and in the provision of competent advice to directorates and services. This is to ensure that legislative requirements are met and to promote a positive health and safety culture across the organisation. It does this by developing, implementing, and supporting a corporate management framework approach to health and safety.

A review of the statement and policy is undertaken annually, reflecting relevant changes within the council, legislation, and roles and responsibilities. During 2019/2020, an in-depth review of the policy and supporting documentation was completed. Subsequently, a more detailed policy, containing the strategic arrangements for Health and Safety Management, alongside a broader expansion of the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities has been produced. There has been a delay in the finalisation of the policy for 2020/21, and the submission to committee for approval, as a result of the ongoing response to the pandemic.

Since March 2020, the impact of the Covid-19, global pandemic on council services has been significant. Consequently, the priorities of the health and safety service continue to be re-prioritised to reflect the changing landscape, ongoing assessment of the myriad of Covid-19 guidance and to ensure that safety is paramount for our staff and customers. There have also been weekly meetings with human resources and the trade unions, which have been welcomed and have strengthened already good working relationships.

As the council continues to transform the way in which it delivers services, the health and safety service is also transforming the way in which it manages health and safety, with the development and roll out of a software solution (SHE Assure). The SHE Assure Health & Safety Management system will enable Angus Council to effectively manage all aspects of health & safety which will ensure we are fully compliant, minimise and manage risk, and promote a culture of health & safety awareness within staff. SHE Assure is a dedicated health & safety system, with decades of experience within the health & safety profession. Backed by a powerful reporting tool, Angus Council Directors, Service Leaders and Managers will be in a position to make informed decisions by fully understanding the level of risk and compliance within their own areas.

This project is a collaboration with Perth & Kinross and Clackmannan Councils.

5. PROPOSALS

That the Committee reviews and approves the changes to the health and safety statement and policy.

That further information will be provided to elected members once the SHE Assure system is fully functional.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications arising directly from this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

None.

8. CONSULTATION (IF APPLICABLE)

There has been consultation with trade unions.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:
Appendix 1 – Health & Safety Policy Statement
Appendix 2 – Health and Safety Policy