

# Thanet District Council

# Corporate Health & Safety Policy

Incorporating Workplace Health and Wellbeing Incorporating Workplace Health and Wellbeing

July 2023 Version 4

Health & Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 Section 2(3) Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Regulation 5



A copy of this Policy shall be brought to the attention of all employees. This Policy supersedes the previous Policy and shall be reviewed annually or revised as necessary in light of operational or strategic developments.

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# Health and Safety Policy

### 1.0 Introduction

It is the main priority for Thanet District Council to create a safe working environment for all employees, contractors and members of the public by following legal requirements and best practices in relation to occupational health and safety management.

The Council will risk-assess its activities, provide suitable competency-based training wherever it is necessary, and encourage all employees, contractors and volunteers to develop and support a positive safety culture.

The Corporate Health and Safety Policy for Thanet District Council is applicable across the entirety of its undertaking as an employer and service provider. The scope of this Policy statement, organisational responsibilities and arrangements in relation to health and safety within the Council will cover the Council's role as

- a major employer
- a major purchaser of services and goods from other organisations
- The Council's role as landlord

### 2.0 Health And Safety Policy Statement

Thanet District Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its staff, contractors and anyone affected by its activities. The Chief Executive and the Director for Health and Safety accept that they have ultimate responsibility for the delivery of an outstanding Health and Safety Culture within the Council. It is their intention that the Council will set an example of how to deliver the highest standards of Health and Safety effectively and encourage other organisations with whom we work to strive for the same. Elected Members of Thanet District Council will support the principles of this policy in the Council's approach to managing health and safety.

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) collectively and explicitly accepts responsibility for health and safety and as a result has set up and empowered the Corporate Health and Safety Committee to which it has delegated a series of responsibilities.

The role and function of the Council Health and Safety Committee are to support the Corporate Management Team with the responsibility to administer and positively monitor the implementation of the Council's Health and Safety Policy. The Health and Safety Committee will also take the necessary action to ensure that all Council Services apply the Council's Health and Safety Policy appropriately.

TDC will make every effort to maintain and advance its positive health and safety culture by creating an environment with fairness and clear lines of responsibility at its core. Effective reporting of all incidents is central to ensuring the health and safety of all persons affected by TDC's activities. TDC will promote a fair working environment where employees are not afraid of blame but are encouraged to report incidents and near misses to prevent serious incidents in future.

By investing in training and innovative communication systems TDC will ensure an effective exchange of ideas - a process led by management and staff who are the main source of information allowing continuous improvement of health and safety in the Council.

We recognise that the provision of safe equipment, systems and procedures are not sufficient if the culture doesn't encourage healthy and safe working. Therefore proactive management of and involvement in health and safety by all staff at each level of the organisation is fundamental to ensuring the Council's successful health and safety culture. Collaboration and cooperation between employees, contractors and the public is also a key factor in the management of health and safety and will be promoted at every level to ensure the successful operation of our organisation.

TDC's culture is based on planning, implementation and review which means we will measure our performance and failures and learn from them to allow progress and improvement. This in turn will allow staff and contractors to fully understand and appreciate safety standards and procedures leading to a safe working environment for all.

The health and safety policy is unlikely to be successful unless it actively involves everybody at work. We all have an individual responsibility to ensure our own safety and to avoid doing anything that will put others at risk

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January 2022 August 2023 August 2023

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### 3.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

It is the policy of Thanet District Council to safeguard the Health, Safety and Welfare of its employees and all persons likely to be affected by its undertakings.

The Council accepts the aims and provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and aims to comply with all other relevant statutory obligations.

### The Council is committed to

- Developing a positive health and safety culture in all undertakings which secure the commitment and participation of all employees;
- Assessing the risks to the health and safety of its employees, contractors, volunteers and to anyone else who may be affected by its undertakings with the aim of eliminating or controlling the hazards /risks, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Making arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures identified as being necessary by the health and safety risk assessments;
- **Providing information**, instruction, training, and supervision to employees and others as is necessary to implement and maintain high standards of health and safety;
- Establishing arrangements for making sure safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Provision and maintenance of a working environment for employees that is safe, without
  risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at
  work, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- **Developing procedures** for Joint Consultation with Employees or their Representatives;
- Where any service of the Council enters into an arrangement on Partnership Working, an
  agreement must be reached, prior to commencement, with all partners to determine how
  Health and Safety will be managed and the standards to be met. As a minimum standard,
  the Council's policies and arrangements for securing health and safety will be maintained;
  and
- The Council aims to promote positive policies regarding health and safety at work. Each employee, regardless of status, is responsible for strictly adhering to the Council's policies and procedures that are identified in documentation held at designated Council establishments.

### 4.0 ORGANISATION RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for all Health and Safety issues within the Council and will provide effective leadership and direction for the implementation of this policy. The Chief Executive will make sure, via the Corporate Management Team, that responsibilities are met and that adequate resources are made available to enable this policy to be implemented.

### 4.2 Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer Corporate Director

The strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer nominated by the Chief Executive for health and safety and is directly accountable, has responsibility for administering and positively monitoring the implementation of the Council Health and Safety Policy. A Health and Safety Report will be published on a quarterly basis to the Corporate Management Team through the corporate compliance report.

The nominated strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer will make sure, without detracting from the primary responsibility of the Service Director, provide Heads of Service, Managers and Supervisors, the provision of competent technical advice and support on Health and Safety matters through the Council Health and Safety Committee. The Council Health and Safety Officer will provide competent advice/assistance within the meaning of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

### **4.3 Strategic Directors**

The strategic Director of each Council department has overall responsibility for implementing this Policy within their Service. They will ensure the ongoing maintenance of their Service's Health and Safety Management Standards and that appropriate measures are in place to make sure that the information contained within it is available throughout their Service.

The Service's Health and Safety Management Standards will contain details of the management, organisation and responsibilities for Health and Safety and detail the service's specific arrangements to comply with Council policy. Through these Management Standards, the Strategic Director's responsibility for Health and Safety is shared. This means that Directors, Heads of Service, Managers and Supervisors within their areas of responsibility will be accountable for the health and safety of employees and/or other persons who may be affected by the Service's undertakings.

The Strategic Director nominated for health and safety by the Chief Executive will lead on all health and safety issues, but each Strategic Director is responsible to the Chief Executive for the implementation of this policy within the services for which they have strategic management responsibilities and will:

- Provide effective leadership and direction to ensure the policy is implemented;
- Provide ongoing commitment and leadership to continuous improvement in health, safety and wellbeing.
- Assist with the development of the collective vision and direction necessary to comply with relevant statutory provisions and follow best practice.
- Ensure that Heads of Service, or others directly reporting to them, are provided with appropriate support, training, guidance and resources to enable them to discharge their health and safety duties.
- Ensure that adequate information is given to Councillors so that health, safety and welfare issues are considered as part of their decision-making process.
- Ensure that the arrangements in place to ensure the health and safety of those within their service area are working, kept up to date and known to those within their service area
- Ensure all contractors and partners are properly appointed and managed to ensure that they are carrying out the work on behalf of the Council in a safe manner in accordance with legislation and this policy.
- Ensure that there is an effective decision-making process for dealing with emergencies and for providing leadership and adequate personnel and arrangements to ensure that it is managed correctly.

### 4.4 Head of Service or Manager reporting directly to a member of CMT

Heads of Service, or Managers, who are directly accountable to the Chief Executive, or a Strategic Director, will:

- Provide effective leadership and direction to ensure the policy is implemented;
- Have overall responsibility for implementing and coordinating the Service's Health and Safety Organisation and Arrangements.
- Make sure the provision of adequate financial resources for Health and Safety Management;
- Make arrangements to ensure the ongoing development and implementation of a Health and Safety
  risk assessment strategy that meets the requirements of the Council's Health and Safety Policy as it
  relates to their Service activities. The risk assessment strategy will ensure that Line Management
  identify the relevant preventive and protective measures required to make sure the safety of
  employees and anyone else who may be affected by the Service activities;
- Make arrangements for implementing the health and safety control measures which follow the risk assessment strategy. The Service management will ensure that the Service develops a Health and

Safety Plan annually in conjunction with the Council Health and Safety Committee, based on the further actions identified within the risk assessments, to make sure that there is measurable planned progress to implement the additional control measures required. These Health and Safety Plans will be submitted for consideration to the Council Health and Safety Committee. The arrangements will cover the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach to managing health and safety and make sure that the preventive and protective measures identified are in place, working effectively and regularly monitored;

- Make arrangements to make sure that all employees, including temporary workers, and volunteers
  are familiar with the Health and Safety Policy and that they are provided with relevant information
  and training on the use of equipment, plant, substances and machinery and are competent in their
  jobs to avoid risks;
- Make arrangements to make sure that where their service is entering into an arrangement on Partnership Working, that agreement is reached, prior to commencement, with all partners to determine how Health and Safety will be managed and the standards to be met. As a minimum standard, the Council's policies and arrangements for securing health and safety will be maintained; and
- Make arrangements for a Service Health and Safety Committee structure to facilitate joint employee/employer participation and collaboration on health and safety matters in all service areas.
- The Head of Service is appointed to have overall responsibility for implementing and coordinating the Service's Health and Safety organisation and arrangements and will advise the Council's Health and Safety Officer at the earliest opportunity of significant business changes or practices likely to impact the Council's Health and Safety Management System.

### 4.5 Heads of Services and Managers with property responsibilities:

- Ensure that any property, equipment (including machinery and tools), or other assets within their range of services are managed to ensure that they are safe and comply with all the statutory requirements and manufacturers' instructions. Where medical surveillance is required, ensure that HR is informed and records kept of all tests and checks as required by legislation.
- Ensure that the structure and services of all workplaces occupied by the staff within their service comply with the provisions of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations and accompanying Approved Codes of Practice.
- Ensure that all construction and maintenance work (permanent and temporary) complies with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and has the appropriate duty holders appointed, including any work delegated to partners/contractors as the ultimate responsibility is with the owner of that site and activity.
- Provide basic information to visitors to ensure their health and safety while in Council buildings.
- Ensure all relevant statutory notices and health and safety information are displayed as appropriate and all health and safety notice boards in each building are kept up to date.
- Liaise with partners/contractors to ensure that all statutory duties to ensure the safety of the Council's properties/land, including tests, inspections, repairs, and replacements to property, plant and equipment are being undertaken and that all records held are up to date and in place.
- Ensure that appropriate fire safety and other inspections are carried out for each site so that appropriate actions are taken to ensure the safety of those on the site at any time.
- Ensure that there is an effective evacuation procedure and adequate numbers of trained personnel
  for each building under their responsibility to ensure the safety of all employees and the public in the
  event of an emergency.
- Ensure that all emergency evacuation drills are carried out in accordance with legal requirements.
- Ensure that any first aid rooms, within the area of their responsibility, are regularly checked and first aid stocks replenished.

### 4.6 All Managers, Team Leaders, Supervisors etc.

All Managers, team leaders, supervisors etc. are responsible for:

 Suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken for all work-related activities undertaken by their staff.

- Safe systems of work and procedures are developed and implemented.
- That they encourage and support active communication and cooperation between management and employees.
- Health and safety training needs are identified and staff receive appropriate training.
- Resources are made available to provide adequate supervision and instruction to staff to the level identified in the risk assessment.
- Staff are kept updated and informed about health and safety issues that may affect them and encouraged to develop a positive and proactive safety culture.
- Work equipment is suitable for the task for which it is being used. That it is properly maintained and where appropriate routinely and regularly inspected and tested.
- Accidents and incidents within their areas of control are reported and adequately investigated in order to establish the root causes and to enable measures to be introduced to prevent re-occurrence.
- Formal procedures are in place for the selection, approval and monitoring of contractors.
- Where buildings or premises are shared with another user, the health and safety responsibilities are clarified and agreed upon.
- Health and safety records such as premises inspections are maintained and made available for audit.
- Action is taken over any wilful disregard of the Council's health and safety policy, procedures and arrangements by any employee.

### 4.7 Health & Safety Manager - this role is responsible for;

### 4.7 Employees

### The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 states that:

"It shall be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work." "As regards any duty or requirement imposed on their employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, cooperate with them, as far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with." "No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions."

### All employees, regardless of status, must observe the following:

- Act in a responsible manner at all times;
- Familiarise themselves with this Health and Safety Policy;
- Take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves and others;
- Commit to making sure they are fit for their role, by making sure they are well enough and informing their manager if not;
- Report to their supervisor all hazards which they cannot eliminate or control themselves;
- Use correctly all work items (including Personal Protective Equipment) provided by the Council in accordance with the training and the instructions they receive to enable them to use the items safely;
- Accept the need for safety training;
- Request/discuss safety training with their line manager when they feel their skills need updating;
- Report all accidents, incidents or near misses to their supervisor;
- Inform their line manager of any aspects of their health or medical treatment, which may affect their ability to carry out their duties safely or need adjustments made;
- Seek first aid treatment for any injury sustained at work;
- Work safely and do not remove any safety device/guard provided for the safety of themselves and others;
- Ensure that when driving while at work that they are fit to do so, have completed the drivers' risk
  assessment, have business insurance and drive in a safe and proper manner in accordance with
  legislation and the Council's Driving Policy;
- Co-operate in joint consultation on Health and Safety matters;

- Cease any work activity or leave any work area where the employee or their representative believes there is serious/imminent danger to themselves or others. No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee who reasonably ceases a work activity for health and safety reasons; and;
- Co-operate directly and fully with any investigation into the circumstances of any incident in which they are involved.

### **4.7 Disciplinary Procedures**

Disciplinary action may be initiated against all employees who knowingly violate or fail to implement safety procedures or standards or fail to use Personal Protective Equipment or equipment provided for their safety. The Council's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures will be followed.

### 5.0 Management Standards

Where major risks or hazards are identified Council-wide, the Council Health and Safety Committee will develop Service Health and Safety Management Standards which will contain detailed information, and where necessary support specific guidance documents, to enable Council services to comply with these Health and Safety Management Standards.

The Management Standards documents will set out the relevant Council policy objectives and provide a reference for legal obligations. The documents will clearly set out the responsibilities of Council Managers through the provision of detailed advice on best practices and the Council Management System control arrangements. The documents will be produced by the Council Health and Safety Committee in consultation with appropriate Service personnel.

The Health and Safety Management Standard documents will be Service-specific and will have a direct influence on the implementation of other Council policies. They will be provided for health and safety topics that require management action, risk assessment provision and associated Health and Safety management system documentation.

Where they are provided it is the intention that these documents will provide a standard of control to be achieved through the service-specific risk assessments. The specific service assessments can where necessary implement further controls or take any such alternative action which will achieve the same level of control in their specific circumstances. Where this is the case then the rationale for the actions taken should be fully documented in the risk assessment process.

The Health and Safety Management Standards will be produced for inclusion within web-based software Health and Safety pages, electronic access will be provided and printed copies with infographics will be provided upon request. Each Service may provide additional Management Standards pertaining to any activity which is particular to their own Service. Details of all Service Management Standards will be stated within their specific Service Health and Safety System Management Standard.

### 5.1 Health and Safety System

Our organisation is using web-based software to help us manage Health & Safety and other aspects of our business.

The Health and Safety System provides detailed information on the Service Health and Safety management structures and specific roles and responsibilities.

### 5.2 Asbestos

The Council acknowledges the health hazards arising from exposure to Asbestos and will protect those employees and other persons potentially exposed to Asbestos as far as is reasonably practicable. Exposure will be minimised through the use of proper control measures and work methods supported by the training of employees. Each Service Director who is responsible for the management of their premises will appoint a person responsible for coordinating the control and management of Asbestos with the responsibility for dealing with all matters involving Asbestos within the Service.

No work shall commence on Asbestos material or materials thought to contain Asbestos until it is sampled and an assessment of the potential exposure of employees and others, as a result of that work, is undertaken. A suitable plan of work shall be made before work commences.

### 5.3 Construction Work (CDM)

Heads of Service whose Service is involved in construction work will take appropriate steps to make sure that such work is planned in accordance with relevant standards or statutory provisions (principally the CDM Regulations). They must also make sure that all persons at all levels are competent to carry out their duties.

Employees must be provided with the necessary information relating to any risks arising out of the work, the preventive or protective measures to be taken, and the procedures required in the event of serious or imminent danger.

The Construction, Design and Management Regulations place duties on clients, CDM designers, contractors, principal contractors and the self-employed, all of whom are required to work together in order that health and safety are incorporated into projects as early as possible. These members of the construction team must also make sure that safety management systems are established to control all project activities.

These Regulations also contain specific provisions relating to how all construction work is carried out. Inter-Service organisation and arrangements must be in place to make sure that relevant duties are allocated to competent persons where a Council service performs a multi-functional role for CDM (i.e. any combination of the following duty holders - Client, Designer, and Contractor or Principal Contractor). The competent person must be provided with adequate resources to carry out those duties. Arrangements must be in place to make sure duties are clear, concise and there is no ambiguity between duty holders.

The Council will provide all available information about the condition of any premises under its control at or on which construction work is to be carried out.

The Council will ensure that any work planned will be in accordance with any relevant or statutory provisions and that the necessary information relating to risks arising out of the work will be provided.

### **5.4 Control of Contractors**

The Council through the provisions detailed in the Service Contractors Management Standards document will make sure that all contractors working on Council premises are properly vetted from a health and safety perspective.

The Council will monitor the activities of contractors on-site to minimise the risks presented to employees and to other persons on-site or within Council buildings including members of the public.

The Council Health and Safety Committee meets on a quarterly basis to discuss policy, the ongoing management of contractors working on Council premises, reported incidents and contractor's performance.

### 5.5 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

Heads of Service shall have procedures in place to make sure that no work is carried out which is liable to expose any employees or others to any product, chemical or substance hazardous to health unless a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks created by that activity and of the steps needed to reduce the risks has been made.

Exposure to hazardous products, chemicals or substances will either be prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled. Measures introduced to control exposure will be maintained, examined and tested to ensure their continued effectiveness.

Personal protective equipment will be provided only as a last resort means of controlling exposure to substances.

Information, instruction and training will be given to employees exposed to substances hazardous to health.

### **5.6 Display Screen Equipment**

All workstations must satisfy the minimum requirements of legislation and employees must be aware of how to set up their workstations to enable them to work safely. All employees who regularly use display screen equipment are required to carry out the online DSE risk assessment initially and as required by their manager due to changes in the workstation or ongoing reviews to ensure they are comfortable and using this equipment correctly. Employees must ensure they take appropriate breaks. Where display screen equipment is utilised by Gouncil employees a workstation assessment with regard to the use of display screen equipment will be carried out on the E-learning system or on standard DSE assessment forms and reviewed in accordance with the Service DSE Management Standard. All workstations must satisfy the minimum requirements of legislation and employees must be aware of how to set up their workstations to enable them to work safely. All employees who regularly use display screen equipment are required to carry out the online DSE risk assessment initially and as required by their manager due to changes in the workstation or ongoing reviews to ensure they are comfortable and using this equipment correctly. Employees must ensure they take appropriate breaks.

The above arrangements cover whether you work in an office or at home. The above arrangements cover whether you work in an office or at home.

Managers must ensure that each staff member using display screen equipment completes the online DSE risk assessment initially and on an ongoing basis. Where issues in the assessment are identified, the manager will arrange, with the help and support of their trained DSE assessor or Occupational Health assessor, to supply any equipment etc. that is identified to make the workplace safe.

Employees designated as 'users' will be entitled to eyesight tests if requested/required and corrective appliances specifically necessary for DSE work.

### 5.7 Electricity

The Council will make sure that all electrical equipment and systems are properly constructed, installed and maintained and that installations are suitable for the environment in which they are used.

Suitable protective equipment will be provided where necessary and maintained in good condition. Work on electrical equipment and systems can be hazardous and Service Management will, therefore, reduce the risks, as far as is reasonably practicable.

All persons carrying out electrical work will be competent for the tasks assigned to them.

All fixed electrical systems and portable appliances utilised by employees will be inspected and tested at statutory intervals.

### 5.8 Employment Skills - Work Placements

The Council recognises its responsibility to make sure that young people are protected at work from risks to their health and safety. This will be achieved through specific measures included within the risk assessment process. The Council's duty of care extends into the work experience or vocational training placement of any school student and places an obligation on the Council to make sure that any placement made under either of these initiatives is without significant risk to the health, safety or welfare of the student. This will be achieved through the risk assessment process.

### 5.9 Fire Safety

The Council's first objective with regard to fire safety is fire prevention through the systematic application of the fire management measures detailed in the Service Fire Management Standards.

Each Council premise will maintain a fire register detailing the monitoring arrangements, maintenance arrangements and managerial responsibilities for the control of fire within the premises.

# Should a fire break out all Council premises will have arrangements in place to make sure that:

- Fire can be detected in a reasonable time and people can be warned reliably:
- **People** who may be in the building can get out quickly and safely;
- **Staff** in the building know what to do if there is a fire, that all premises have suitable and sufficient emergency procedures;
- There are an appropriate number of trained fire wardens available in accordance with the emergency procedures, and
- There are adequate supplies of first aid fire equipment available.

### 5.10 First Aid and Medical Attention

First aid requirements will be identified through a risk assessment process to make sure the adequacy and appropriateness of first aid personnel, equipment and facilities.

Sufficient numbers of trained First Aid personnel and equipment to deal with injuries, accidents and ill health will be provided by each service. To this end, the Council will provide information and training on First Aid to employees to make sure that statutory requirements and the needs of the organisation are met.

It is the responsibility of departmental managers to make arrangements for sufficient members of staff to be trained in first aid. Those employees who obtain First Aid certificates are to be given the opportunity to attend refresher training. Details of first aiders' certificates are to be kept on their individual training records.

### 5.11 Gas Safety

This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the safe installation and use of gas appliances, fittings and pipework in all Council premises. In particular, it outlines the requirements for services to have adequate arrangements in place for responsibilities, record keeping, inspection, maintenance, repair, competence and training. It also includes information for emergencies and unsafe situations.

### 5.12 Incident Reporting and Investigation

The Council's incident reporting procedure, as detailed in the relevant Management Standard document, must be followed at all times. Every Council premises or section should have ready access to a Council accident book and incident report forms (electronic or paper).

### **Accidents**

An accident is defined as "An unplanned event that causes injury to persons, damage to property or a combination of both"

All accidents & near misses must be reported to the Departmental Manager/Supervisor and entered into the Electronic Accident book at the time of the accident.

Accidents that occur off-site must be recorded in the Accident Occurrences book at the location. The details must also be entered into the Council's accident system by a supervisor. Only First Aiders, Supervisors and Managers are to make entries on the Accident System.

### **Near Miss**

A near miss is defined as "An unplanned event that does not cause injury but could have done so" All near misses or damage, are to be reported to the Departmental Manager/Supervisor to enable them to investigate the causes and to prevent re-occurrence.

### **RIDDOR 13**

Under the requirements of RIDDOR 2013 (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) where an accident occurs causing loss of life, a specified major injury or condition, or an employee being away from his place of work for over 7 days the reporting authorities must be informed by a "responsible person". A 'responsible person' means the employer, the self-employed or the person or people in control of a working premise.

All RIDDOR reportable incidents must be notified to the Council Health and Safety Committee within the detailed timescales. The Council Health and Safety Officer will make arrangements to make sure that reportable incidents are reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

Suitable arrangements will be put in place to inform the appropriate Trade Union or Employee Representative of reported incidents.

Service management has the responsibility to conduct an appropriate investigation of all accidents, dangerous occurrences or near misses with the objective of identifying the root cause and the appropriate steps needed to prevent a recurrence. In addition, the Health and Safety Officer from the Council Health and Safety Committee may further investigate serious accidents/incidents and make recommendations to prevent a recurrence.

### 5.13 Induction

Appropriate health and safety inductions are the best way of complying with a number of legislative requirements for information provision.

Under the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*, s. 2(2)(c) there is a duty for employers to provide 'such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of his employees. This is further reinforced by *the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999* which identifies situations where health and safety training is particularly important, for example when recruiting a new employee. Health and safety inductions are a significant component of the council's health and safety management system. The induction process forms a useful part of the means of promoting a positive safety culture and effectively demonstrating the organisation's commitment to health and safety, which is particularly important to a new starter. The health and safety induction is one of the first indications to the new starter of the attitude of the company, toward health and safety and the timing, conduct and content of the induction can present the first indication of the organisation's safety culture.

### **5.14 Infection Control**

The Council recognises the benefits to staff and service users of controlling infections in the workplace. This will be addressed through all workers adopting appropriate precautions, consistently and responsibly in their day-to-day practices.

The precautions developed through risk assessment should largely prevent the spread of the majority of infections, particularly blood-borne viruses, such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) as well as bacterial infections such as MRSA.

### 5.15 Legionella

The Council recognises the risk of infection from Legionella bacteria and will take all reasonable steps to implement an appropriate health and safety management system for water systems within Council premises to ensure that the necessary measures to prevent, or adequately control, the risk from exposure to Legionella bacteria. The council will, therefore:-

- Put procedures in place to control and minimise these risks.
- Ensure that all work undertaken and procedures adopted are, as a minimum, in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice.
- Provide information, guidance and training for managers responsible for premises and other key managers to ensure they are aware of their role with regard to this policy.
- Promote good system design to reduce the risk of legionella bacteria multiplying.
- Promote good maintenance procedures to reduce the risk of legionella bacteria multiplying.
- Have procedures in place to deal swiftly with any indication that the control measures implemented are not working effectively.
- Ensure that it has competent advice readily available to resolve any issues including the services of competent, specialist contractors to assist to meet its obligations.

### **5.16 Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment**

The Council recognises that it has a duty to reduce the risks to employees and others from lifting operations. In order to assist the Council in discharging this duty, all Services must make sure that all lifting equipment provided for use at work is:

- Strong and stable enough for the particular use and marked to indicate safe working loads;
- Positioned and installed to minimise any risks;
- Used safely, i.e. the work is planned, organised and performed by competent people; and
- Subject to ongoing thorough examination and, where appropriate, inspection by competent people.

### 5.17 Lone Working

The Council recognises that lone workers face particular difficulties and will not require an employee to work alone where a risk assessment considers there is an unacceptable risk and will make sure that all lone workers are appropriately trained, receive regular supervision and are instructed in all matters relating to their health and safety at work.

### 5.18 Manual Handling

The Council recognises that manual handling is one of the most common causes of absence through injury in the workplace and must be avoided, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Where it is not possible to eliminate manual handling, assessments will be undertaken to determine the level of risk. Suitable controls will be introduced, to reduce the risk of injury, including the risk of repetitive strain injury, to the lowest extent reasonably practicable, including training, mechanical aids, automation, redesigning the system of work or even the workplace itself.

In most cases manual handling assessments will be incorporated into generic risk assessments, however, a specific Manual Handling Assessment will be carried out when required.

### 5.19 Disabilities

Reasonable adjustment will be made to meet the needs of employees with disabilities in line with the various regulations. Employees should discuss their needs with their line manager or HR as soon as possible to enable suitable arrangements, facilities etc. to be put in place. Where their health condition or impairment could affect their ability to evacuate the premises safely they should discuss with their line manager so that they can make the necessary arrangements.

### 5.20 New and Expectant Mothers

The Council recognises the risks associated with working operations that may pose a risk to a new or expectant mother or to that of her baby and will ensure that decisions on how to manage those risks are made in an informed, rational and structural manner as determined by a specific Risk Assessment. This will ensure the workplace/activities are:

- Safe, i.e. the work is planned, organised and performed by competent people; and
- Subject to ongoing thorough examination and, where appropriate, inspected by competent people;
- Risk assessment form available on the internal web-based Health & Safety System

### **5.21** Noise

The Council will take all reasonable steps necessary to make sure that the risk of hearing damage to employees who work with noisy equipment or in a noisy environment is reduced to a minimum. Noise assessments will be carried out to estimate the magnitude of the problem.

Methods of reducing noise levels and/or exposure times will be implemented as alternatives to personal protective equipment. Ear defenders will be provided only as a last-resort means of controlling exposure to noise.

Services management will provide adequate training. In particular, all employees who are subject to high levels of noise will be provided with readily understood information about the harmful effects of noise and what they must do in order to protect themselves and meet the requirements of Council policy.

Where it is required by risk assessment, the Service will make arrangements for employees to be included in a Health Surveillance Programme provided by the Council's Occupational Health provider.

### 5.22 Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protective Equipment

The Council accepts that the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) is a last resort, and is committed to continuing to seek and introduce alternative methods for reducing risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

The Council will provide suitable and sufficient PPE/RPE where risks cannot be removed or adequately controlled by other means.

When PPE/RPE is to be provided as a control measure, Services are instructed, in consultation with employees and their representatives, to carry out a full assessment in accordance with the Service PPE/RPE Management Standard to determine its suitability, its compatibility with other items of PPE/RPE, provide adequate storage, provide adequate training, ensure adequate maintenance arrangements and that it is provided at no cost to the employee.

An employer cannot ask for money from an employee for PPE/RPE, whether it is returnable or not. This includes agency workers if they are legally regarded as our employees. If employment has been terminated and the employee keeps the PPE/RPE without the employer's permission, then, as long as it has been made clear in the contract of employment, the employer may be able to deduct the cost of the replacement from any wages owed.

### 5.23 Risk Assessment

Risk Assessments will be conducted for all activities within the Council and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

The Council risk assessment process which includes management system documentation, trained risk assessors and consultation with all stakeholders is aimed at providing effective risk control for all significant hazards.

Management Standards documents on significant hazards, for example, lone working are available to inform the process.

### 5.24 Safety Representative and Safety Committees

The Council acknowledges the importance of employee involvement in health and safety matters and the importance of the positive role played by safety representatives. As such, the Council will provide the facilities and assistance that safety representatives will reasonably require in order to carry out their functions.

### 5.25 Safety Signs and Signals

All safety signs and any safety signals used (for example, for reversing of vehicles) within Thanet District Council will comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations.

Appropriate safety/warning signs must be provided and maintained, where any risks identified by the risk assessment required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations cannot be controlled by other means.

### **5.26 Security Threats**

All staff are responsible for the security of their building which should include bomb threats, fires, intruders, and other potential security issues, for example, firearms and weapons attacks. The specific responsibilities and procedures to be implemented are detailed within the Service Management Standard.

### 5.27 Smoke-Free Workplace

The smoke-free workplace legislation seeks to guarantee employees the right to work in the air free of tobacco smoke. The requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations also place stringent requirements on employers to assess risks and make sure that non-smokers are protected from the dangers of tobacco smoke whilst at work. This also precludes the use of electronic cigarettes within the workplace.

Smoke-free Legislation: The Health Act 2006: Smoking has been prohibited by law in virtually all enclosed and substantially enclosed work and public places throughout the United Kingdom. Smoke-free legislation in England forms part of the Health Act.

Under the Health Act, "substantially enclosed" means premises or structures with a ceiling or roof (including retractable structures such as awnings) and where there are permanent openings, other than windows or doors, which in total are less than half of the area of the walls. So, for example, bus stops can be required to be smoke-free if the shelter is substantially enclosed. The law also applies to workplace vehicles that are used by more than one person at any time.

Heads of Service, Managers and Supervisors will be responsible for enforcing the smoke-free workplace policy within their respective areas. It is the responsibility of employees to comply with the terms and conditions of the Policy.

### 5.28 Stress

The Council recognises that whilst a degree of pressure can be a positive force at work, excessive pressure can have a negative effect on health and on performance at work.

The Council is committed to promoting good health at work and providing suitable support mechanisms for employees suffering from the effects of stress.

Council Services will identify stressful jobs and situations, through risk assessment, with the objective of reducing harm from stress, as far as is reasonably practicable.

The Council will make sure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that excessive pressure is eliminated from the work environment, and that the necessary risk assessments are completed and acted upon in the case of workplace stressors.

To assist in this process the council will:

- provide suitable support mechanisms for employees suffering from the effects of stress;
- encourage a working environment where employees who feel they are suffering from the effects of stress can approach their managers in confidence, in order that necessary support mechanisms can be put in place;
- encourage a culture where stress is not seen as a sign of weakness or incompetence;
- ensure adequate rehabilitation of employees returning to work after periods of absence due to stress;
- offer suitable training to enable employees and managers to recognise symptoms of stress, the
  effects of stress at work, effective communication, handling difficult situations, time management and
  employee relations;
- undertake general health promotion activities within the workplace; and where employees are suffering from stress, the council will provide the necessary mechanisms to promote a return to full health as quickly as possible. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance from any one of the following:
  - Line Manager;
  - Senior Manager;
  - o and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Any contact will be dealt with in complete confidence. Employees will be offered any relevant counselling, help with stress reduction techniques and a full appraisal of their work situation.

### 5.29 Training

The Council recognises and accepts that for health and safety training to be successful; its role within the Council must be understood. Training is provided as identified through the risk assessment process, not just to satisfy legal requirements, but also to drive and support the Council Health and Safety Management System.

The training offered by the Council Health and Safety Committee, for example, Health and Safety Management Training and also hazard-specific training such as manual handling, fire warden, display screen equipment assessors etc., provides staff that have key Health and Safety responsibilities with the knowledge, skills and aptitudes to perform their duties successfully.

Service management will make sure that all new employees joining the service and all employees commencing work in an area where they may be exposed to new risks are given appropriate induction training. New employees are known to be more likely to have accidents than those who have had time to recognise the hazards of the workplace.

Formal health and safety training is a legal requirement and will form part of all Council service induction programmes.

### **5.30 Transport Safety**

Workplace transport is the second biggest cause of fatal accidents in British workplaces, killing hundreds and injuring thousands of people every year. The vast majority of these accidents are preventable. The Council is committed to doing all that is reasonably practicable to make sure high standards of health, safety and welfare for all employees and others who may be affected by Council activities when vehicles are used as part of the work.

The transport policy comes under the umbrella of the council's health and safety policy framework. The purpose of this policy is to enable the council to meet its obligations to ensure compliance with the statutory

legal requirements whilst protecting our employees and third parties, so far as is reasonably practicable, from all occupational road risks associated with work-related driving.

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Managing workplace transport safety usually involves controlling a wide range of interlinked matters including Vehicle Safety, Driving, Loading/Unloading, Towing, Vehicle Operation etc.

Service management will provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and provide the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision required for this purpose.

### 5.31 Vibration

The Council recognises that occupational exposure to vibration can cause discomfort and adverse health effects. The Council will comply with the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations by identifying and assessing the magnitude of existing vibration risks and implementing control measures to eliminate or reduce those risks, as far as is reasonably practicable.

Service management will have a strict purchasing strategy in relation to any tools and equipment, which may expose employees to vibration. In addition, the Head of Service will make sure that competent persons are designated to assess the vibration levels of work equipment (including existing work equipment or sample equipment being assessed for purchase) to make sure that vibration levels fall within safe limits.

Where it is required by risk assessment, the service will make arrangements for employees to be included in a Health Surveillance Programme provided by the Council's Occupational Health provider.

### 5.32 Violence

The Council does not accept that it is part of any employee's duty to be subjected to verbal abuse, threats or physical assault.

The Council in providing services to the community expects that members of the public will treat its employees with courtesy and respect and equally expect employees to show courtesy and respect to members of the public.

It should be made clear to all clients, customers and service users of Council facilities and services that violent or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and that any assaults on Council employees will, in all appropriate circumstances, lead to a Police investigation and possible criminal proceedings.

Employees are encouraged to report incidents of violent behaviour to which they have been subjected to their manager/supervisor who will discuss/investigate the incident and, where possible, take action to prevent a recurrence. The action is taken or the action proposed should be recorded using the online incident form.

All employees will receive appropriate safeguarding training related to their duties to make sure they have the skills and knowledge to perform their duties.

### 5.33 Volunteers

Volunteers provide an essential service to the Council and any activity carried out by volunteers must be properly risk assessed with safety arrangements put in place and adequate support and training provided to these persons.

Volunteers also have a duty of care to themselves and others and must cooperate with the Council's representative(s) and carry out their tasks in the manner prescribed by the Council and report any health and safety concerns to that person.

### 5.34 Wellbeing & Occupational Health

The authority is committed to protecting and promoting the health, safety and well-being of all its employees and volunteers. A happy and healthy workforce will deliver a better and more efficient public service.

Employee health, safety and well-being is everyone's responsibility, therefore it is the responsibility of all employees, managers and Occupational Health providers, to work together to deliver the Council's commitment to improving employee health, safety and well-being.

There are sound legal, economic and moral reasons for looking after the health, safety and well-being of employees, and the health and safety of anyone else affected by the work of the Authority.

All managers must meet legal duties and avoid unnecessary ill-health, accidents, additional costs, penalties and damage to the Councils reputation. Managers at all levels have influence over and impact on the health, safety and well-being of employees. In certain circumstances, managers are required to refer an employee to Occupational Health for medical advice on how best they can support their employees to enable them to deliver their work potential. The desired outcomes include that all employees are enabled to engage in productive work, as far as reasonably practicable, in an environment and culture in which their health is protected, regular attendance at work is supported, work-related health risks are adequately controlled and good health is promoted.

### 5.35 Work at Height

Work at height is the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injury.

Service management shall identify through risk assessment all areas of the Service operations where employees are expected to work at height and comply with the Work at Height Regulations in so far as:

- Avoiding work at height where they can;
- Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height;
- Where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

### 5.36 Work Equipment

All Council services are required to develop their work equipment purchasing and associated arrangements in respect of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations in conjunction with the council's procurement policies.

Services management must make arrangements for assessing the suitability of work equipment with respect to its initial integrity, the place where it will be used and the purpose for which it will be used.

Services management must make arrangements for suitable maintenance, inspection, information, instruction and training.

Services management must also make specific provisions for conformity with legislative requirements, specific dangers, markings and warnings and mobile work equipment.

### 5.37 Workplace Welfare

The Council will make sure that a safe working environment is maintained in each area under its control through the maintenance of an effective monitoring regime that should include Health and Safety Inspections and Audits.

Services must also make provision for a number of additional specific requirements relating to the subject headings in their Service Workplace Management Standard, for example, maintenance of the workplace, equipment, devices and systems, the conditions of floors and traffic routes, falls or falling objects; organisation of traffic routes, home working etc.

The Council is committed to reducing the number of slip and trip accidents as part of a national strategy to reduce occupational injuries and ill health as well as to meet Council targets for reductions in accidents.

The Council recognises its responsibility to make sure that young people are protected at work from risks to their health and safety. This will be achieved through specific measures included within the risk assessment process.

### 6.0 THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY Committee

The role and function of the Council Health and Safety Committee is to support the Corporate Management Team with the responsibility to administer and positively monitor the implementation of the Council's Health and Safety Policy. The Health and Safety Committee will also take the necessary action to ensure that all Council Services apply the Council's Health and Safety Policy appropriately.

This includes:

### 6.1 Health and Safety Service Provision

- **Developing** Council Health and Safety Policy and advising on Service Management Standards, Guidance Documents and the Council Health and Safety Management System;
- **Monitoring** the implementation and application of the Council Health and Safety Policy, reporting to strategic Directors/Heads of Service on any matters requiring action;
- Assisting with the development, implementation and application of Service Health and Safety
  Management Systems as detailed in their Service Health and Safety Management Standard.
  Providing advice and support to management to enable them to meet their Health and Safety
  responsibilities;
- Advising Council Services on new legislation, regulations, and codes of practice and guidance notes relevant to their operation. Providing advice and support in the formulation and implementation of safe systems of work, Health and Safety Management Standards and Health and Safety Guidance documents;
- **Monitoring** the assessment of risks to the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by the Services work activities, for example, Noise, COSHH, Vibration, etc.;
- Monitoring the implementation of control measures which follow on from the risk assessment programme i.e. the planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the Health and Safety Management System;
- **Delivering** Health and Safety Training for all levels of employee and any specialised training where required;
- Advising Elected Members in relation to Health and Safety Matters;
- Promoting Health and Safety education programmes to develop Health and Safety awareness at all levels within the Council;
- Making sure that appropriate accidents/incidents within Council Services are reported to the enforcing authority. Providing statistical analysis on reportable accidents occurring within Council; and
- Liaison with outside bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, Kent Fire and Rescue, Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Insurance Company / Broker etc.

### 6.2 Powers of the Council's Health and Safety Officer

To effectively implement the provisions of the Council Health and Safety Policy the Council Health and Safety Officer will have the following powers:

- The right to enter any Council premises at any time if it is safe to do so;
- To inspect and audit all Council premises;
- In the event of a major incident/accident to require that plant and equipment is not disturbed, to enable measurements, statements, photographs and any other relevant information to be collated;
- To take away or impound any, machine, substance or product which is required to complete an investigation;
- To issue an inspection report which should be implemented in situations where the Council Health and Safety Officer is of the opinion that a breach of statutory requirements or Council Policy has or is likely to take place;
- Where, in the opinion of the Council Health and Safety Officer, there is an immediate risk of serious personal injury, then the officer in consultation with management will take action requiring the immediate cessation of any activity;
- Where a Council Health and Safety Officer is of the opinion that a building or structure is a serious danger to employees or others, then the officer in consultation with management will take action which may include the temporary closure of a premise in extreme situations;
- To require those with possible knowledge or information relevant to an investigation, to give that knowledge/information either verbally or in a written statement. The Council Health and Safety Officer has the discretion to allow another to be present during questioning and the taking of a written statement;
- To inspect and take copies of books or documents required as part of the investigation in compliance with the data protection act; and;
- To require assistance within a person's limits of responsibility/authority.

### 6.3 Health and Safety Monitoring

The strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer Director of Communities—Commercial & Operational Services—trategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer will ensure that the Health and Safety performance within Council Services is effectively monitored and improved on an ongoing basis.

Regular programmed premises audits and inspections will be conducted by the Council Health and Safety Committee on an ongoing basis as detailed within the Health and Safety Management Standards for each Service.

Relevant management information collated from the completed audit documents will be presented at the Council Health and Safety Management Committee meetings to provide oversight of the Health and Safety Management System across the services.

### 7.0 Trade Union Health And Safety Representatives

The Council recognises the importance of employee involvement in Health and Safety matters and the positive role played by Trade Union Safety Representatives appointed under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1996 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

It is the Council's intention to provide such facilities and assistance so that Safety Representatives can reasonably carry out their functions.

### 7.1 Arrangements for Consultation and Co-operation for the Health and Safety of Workers

 Management must consult with safety representatives over issues related to Health, Safety and Welfare and provide the information Safety Representatives require in order to carry out their functions, for example, on Risk Assessment, Personal Protective Equipment, Work Equipment, Respiratory Protective Equipment etc.;

- Safety Representatives are required to give the management reasonable notice of their intention to carry out inspections, to provide written reports following such inspections and to adhere to the Council's procedures when disputes over Health and Safety issues arise;
- Management must give careful consideration to the movement of Safety Representatives from their
  work location. This would include exploring all other available options before the employee is moved
  for operational reasons;
- Management must consult with Safety Representatives prior to employees moving into a new
  office/premises/location to ensure that the Safety Representatives can comment on the standard of
  the new premises with particular reference to the welfare facilities and health and safety measures;
- Management must cooperate with Safety Representatives in the completion of Council Safety Representative Inspection Reports. It is most important that managers take a proactive role in dealing with the matters brought to their attention via safety inspection forms and that they conform to the necessary time scales, and
- Management within each service must make arrangements to establish and actively encourage a
  Service Health and Safety Sub Committee structure to facilitate consultation and co-operation on
  Health and Safety matters in some service areas for example operations or a contractor's forum.

### 7.2 The Function of Safety Representatives

The functions of Safety Representatives under the terms of legislation and as applied by this policy are:

- **To carry out** inspections of the workplace every three months or immediately following notifiable accidents or dangerous occurrences. It is important that management bring accidents to the attention of the Safety Representatives as soon as practicable;
- **To investigate** potential hazards and dangerous occurrences in the workplace and to examine the cause of accidents at the workplace;
- **To investigate** complaints by any employee they represent, relating to that employee(s) health, safety or welfare at work;
- **To bring** to the employer's notice, in writing, any unsafe or unhealthy conditions or working practices or unsatisfactory arrangements for welfare at work; and
- To encourage safe practices among the employees they represent.

### 8.0 Corporate Management Team

The role of the CMT is to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties.

The Function / Remit of the Corporate Management Team:

- Examine Health and Safety statistics and identified trends within the Council;
- Examine reports on Key Performance Indicators;
- Discuss and validate Council Health and Safety Policy and Management System documents;
- Perform as the final arbitration point for issues referred from Corporate Health and Safety Committee;
- Review ongoing enforcement actions taken against the Council and set strategy;
- The initiation and monitoring of Health and Safety Strategies, Initiatives and projects; and
- The production and monitoring of Council Health and Safety Plan

### 8.1 The Role of the Health and Safety Officer

- Provide statistics and narratives on identified trends;
- Provide detailed information on relevant ongoing enforcement action;
- Provide detailed information on Health and Safety initiatives and progress with the Council Safety Plan:
- Provide Council Health and Safety Policy and Management standards for validation;
- Provide a report on Key Performance Indicators;

### 8.2 Monitoring and Review of the Policy:

- This policy will be refreshed on an annual basis and reviewed on a three-yearly cycle. Minor alterations to the policy can be approved by the Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Council's Health and Safety Committee. Any substantive alterations to the content of the policy will be approved by the Corporate Management Team.
- A further Equality Impact Assessment will be completed if there is a major revision of this policy, which requires it to go to CMT.

### **Document Control**

Title/Version Health and Safety Policy

Owner

Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer Corporate Director - Communities - Operational and Commercial Services Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer - Chair of TDC Health and Safety Committee

Date Review date

**Approved** 

Reviewer

Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer Gorporate Director - Communities - Operational and Commercial Services Strategic Director of Corporate Services & Section 151 Officer - Chair of TDC Health and Safety Committee

Date & by whom EIA Signed off Revision History

Date	Reviewer	Version	Description of Revision	
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## **Appendices**

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Structure of Senior Management



