

Health and Safety Strategy 2024-2027

Cabinet	25th July 2025
By	Matthew Sanham (Head of Finance and Procurement)
Cabinet Portfolio Member	Cllr Rob Yates, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Key Decision	No
Decision classification	Unrestricted
Call in status	Can be called in
Ward:	N/A

Purpose of the Report

The Health and Safety Strategy for 2024-2027 has been developed to support our aim of promoting and ensuring high standards of Health and Safety in all that we do.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Cabinet agrees to the Health and Safety Strategy in Annex 1, which aims to develop, implement and embed:

1. Efficient, proactive and pragmatic systems of delivering H&S;
2. A safe and healthy environment for staff and those affected by our activities;
3. A robust health and safety culture across all departments of the Council;
4. Effective means of protecting stakeholders, including staff and all those affected by our activities from harm.

1. Summary of Reasons

- 1.1 A recent health and safety audit by East Kent Audit Partnership in 2023 and a follow-up in May 2024 provided a limited assurance opinion which found the Council to be “Reactive” based on the Hudson Ladder with systems in place to manage hazards not being used to their full potential. This means that there is some good work going on, but that it tends to be in reaction to specific events rather than a more systematic approach. The Council is committed to progressing towards a “Proactive” and ultimately a “Generative” culture and the actions identified in this strategy build on the issues identified in the EKAP audit.
- 1.2 The action plan from this audit has been the key driver in Health & Safety work since that time, and over several months has highlighted a need to revise the Council’s approach to Health and Safety to ensure we get the transformational change needed for continuous improvement in our Health & Safety Management Systems.
- 1.3 The multi-year strategy has been developed based on work carried out so far and

provides a framework for setting key performance indicators (KPIs) and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of health and safety programs going forward and matches the vision of the CMT's recent management structure change. This allows the council to make data-driven decisions and adjust strategies based on performance outcomes.

2. Background

- 2.1 A recent health and safety audit by East Kent Audit Partnership in 2023 and a follow-up in May 2024 provided a limited assurance opinion which found the Council to be "Reactive" with systems in place to manage hazards not being used to their full potential. This means there is some good work going on, but it tends to be in reaction to specific events rather than a more systematic approach. The Council is committed to progressing towards a "Generative" culture and the actions identified in this strategy build on the issues identified in the EKAP audit.
- 2.2 The key challenge for the successful implementation and delivery of the strategy is how we build upon the progress we have made so far and further embed health and safety into the operations of the Council. The ability to not only maintain but develop further the effectiveness of our health and safety management system gained through the significant progress achieved so far is vital.

3. Relevant Issues

- 3.1 During 2023/24 we saw several significant changes in the Council's management structure which has led to positive changes in the way health and safety are managed throughout the council. In addition, some of these changes were informed by an external audit of health and safety across the Council carried out by the East Kent Audit Partnership which provided a limited assurance opinion in 2023 and in a follow-up in May 2024. In response to this, strengthened governance arrangements have been introduced alongside an action plan to address the issues raised within the audit report, which is being monitored by the Corporate Management Team (CMT)..
- 3.2 The vast majority of the recommended actions have already been implemented, however, as this plan is being closed out it is evident that we currently do not have a strategy to build on what has already been achieved. Therefore the key challenge going forward is to successfully implement and deliver a strategy that can build upon the progress we have made so far and further embed health and safety into the operations of the Council. The ability to not only maintain but develop further the effectiveness of our health and safety management system gained through the significant progress achieved so far is vital.
- 3.3 The proposed strategy has been developed to address these challenges, with five key themes being proposed:

- Leadership and Management
- Competence
- Risk Management
- Health and Well-Being
- Collaborative/Partnership working

3.4 Each theme has several improvement actions and the action plan identifies the steps required to achieve each of these and how we will monitor the success of the actions.

4. Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

4.1 This report is not a key decision and therefore considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 16th of July 2024.

5. Alternative Options

5.1 Cabinet could propose further amendments to the proposed Health and Safety Strategy as Annex 1 to the report.

5.2 The Cabinet could approve the proposed Health and Strategy publish the document and issue to staff.

6. Consultation

6.1 The strategy will return to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee on the 21st of August 2024 for consultation and disseminated to the staff/unions through the directorate meetings and on the Health and Safety Management System.

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Finance and Resources

7.1.1 There are no direct budgetary implications arising from the approval of this strategy. Implementing the strategy across the organisation will ensure the Council uses its resources efficiently and effectively manages its risk exposure. Doing so will help to prevent workplace incidents and illnesses which can lead to cost savings associated with medical expenses, compensation claims, and potential legal fees. A proactive health and safety strategy is an investment in risk reduction.

7.2 Legal and Constitutional

7.2.1 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to put in place arrangements to control health and safety risks. As a minimum, the Council is required to have the processes and procedures in place to meet legal requirements. Health and safety regulations may change over time. A strategy ensures that the council can adapt to evolving legal requirements and maintain

compliance with health and safety legislation, reducing the risk of penalties or legal issues.

7.3 Council Policies and Priorities

7.3.1 Health and safety is considered a fundamental aspect of the corporate priorities for TDC. When health and safety are integrated into corporate priorities, it can lead to significant benefits, including improved employee well-being, reduced accidents and incidents, increased productivity, and enhanced reputation.

7.3.2 This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -
(delete as appropriate)

- To keep our district safe and clean
- To create a thriving place
- To work efficiently

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 Having a well-defined strategy in place allows the Council to identify and address potential risks proactively, and provides consistency and continuity in health and safety efforts. It facilitates the development and implementation of preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of accidents, injuries, and other health and safety incidents, and mitigate risks for the council.

7.5 Climate Change and Biodiversity

7.5.1 A health and safety strategy can significantly influence the impact of climate change by ensuring that health and safety strategies comply with environmental regulations which can help reduce environmental harm. This includes adhering to regulations related to emissions, waste management, and chemical safety.

8. Equality, Equity and Diversity Implications

8.1 The Strategy covers all employees across the organisation and aims to treat everyone fairly regardless of protected characteristics. It seeks to ensure that there are no barriers to anyone accessing and making use of the strategy and related procedures.

9. Crime and Disorder Implications and Community Impact

9.1 A well-implemented health and safety strategy can indirectly influence crime and disorder in several ways within the UK. While the primary focus of health and safety strategies is to protect employees from workplace hazards, these strategies can also contribute to a broader culture of responsibility, compliance, and community well-being, which can have positive effects on crime and disorder.

10. Subject History

- 10.1 A recent health and safety audit by East Kent Audit Partnership in 2023 and a follow-up in May 2024 provided a limited assurance opinion which found the Council to be “Reactive” with systems in place to manage hazards not being used to their full potential. This means there is some good work going on, but it tends to be in reaction to specific events rather than a more systematic approach. The Council is committed to progressing towards a “Generative” culture and the actions identified in this strategy build on the issues identified in the EKAP audit.
- 10.2 The key challenge for the successful implementation and delivery of the strategy is how we build upon the progress we have made so far and further embed health and safety into the operations of the Council. The ability to not only maintain but develop further the effectiveness of our health and safety management system gained through the significant progress achieved so far is vital.

Annexes

Annexe 1: Draft Health and Safety Strategy 2024-2027

Annexe 2: EIA Document

Background Papers

HSE Guidance

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Report Sign Off

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