

# Worcester City Council

# CORPORATE

# HEALTH, SAFETY &

# WELFARE POLICY

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## **CORPORATE HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE POLICY STATEMENT**

Worcester City Council ('WCC' or 'the Council'), both as a collective and as individual managers and leaders, recognise and embrace their duty to safeguard those working on behalf of the Council and any third party affected by the Council's activities.

The Council understands that sound health and safety management is a core management function, fundamental to the delivery of all its services, and as such is committed to making safe behaviours and compliance with prescribed safe working procedures a condition of employment.

Whilst a sound process for the reporting and investigation of adverse health and safety incidents is used to inform operational adjustments and improvements, the Council is also committed to safeguarding the mental health and general wellbeing of our workforce, through the provision of a supportive, nurturing programme of pro-active and reactive interventions.

Furthermore, the Council continues to work in partnership with its employees, their representatives, our peers, and relevant partners to secure high standards of health, safety, and wellbeing for our employees and our councillors, the public we serve, and any third parties our work may impact upon, while continuing to strive for improvements where relevant and / or appropriate.

The policy statement, policy document, and health and safety management system will be reviewed and maintained by the Corporate Health & Safety Officer. The policy statement will be reviewed when active and reactive monitoring indicates a review is necessary and annually, as a minimum.

This policy statement is a declaration of the Council's commitment. It is available on the Council's public website for third parties to view and a copy is available for each Council premises via the Health and Safety intranet site. All new employees and all new councillors are given access to the statement and the underpinning policy document as part of their induction into the Council. All those working on behalf of the Council will undertake appropriate training to ensure they remain fully apprised of their duties and how to raise any health, safety, and welfare issues and / or concerns.

**David Blake**  
**Managing Director**

**Cllr Marc Bayliss**  
**Leader of the Council**

**February 2022**

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles and arrangements established within WCC to assist the Council in achieving high standards of health and safety when delivering its services to the public, and to support the wellbeing of all those working on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 The policy applies to all workers engaged by the Council, paid and unpaid, permanent, and temporary, and includes direct employees, councillors, volunteers, students, and contractors, across all Council activities.
- 1.3 WCC sticks closely to the guidance laid out in the Health and Safety Executive document [HSG65 Managing for Health and Safety](#) in steering its efforts to manage and continuously improve health and safety performance, implementing the Plan, Do, Check, Act framework.



## PLANNING

- 2.1 As with any successful management function, a key element is sound planning - identifying priorities, setting key objectives, identifying blockers and challenges (in the case of health and safety management these are hazards), assessing risks, implementing standards of performance, and developing a positive culture. As part of the planning process, WCC will:
  - produce an annual health and safety plan that identifies SMART objectives – Specific, Achievable, Measurable, Relevant, Time-related
  - refer to / use appropriate compliance standards
  - establish management arrangements, risk control systems and workplace precautions
  - set performance indicators, where appropriate
  - engage with and seek the participation and involvement of employees and their representatives

## **Corporate Health and Safety Arrangements and Guidance**

2.2 Underpinning this policy document is a suite of documents that provide more detailed information advice on the practical management of health and safety in relation to specific topics or areas of activity. These Corporate Health and Safety Arrangements and Guidance Notes are available on the [health and safety intranet](#). A list of current arrangements documents is available in [Appendix C](#) of this document.

## **ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

3.1 Engagement with and the full co-operation of all employees is vital to successfully managing health and safety. The Council recognises appointed safety representatives – union and non-union – and seeks to support them in their duties and endeavours by providing sufficient facilities to enable them to carry out their duties, and is fully committed to regular, active consultation with employees and their representatives on all health, safety, wellbeing, and welfare issues, and on any associated policies, procedures, and controls.

3.2 To facilitate this, the Council has established formal committees and groups to which issues can be brought, considered, and resolved.

3.3 The Corporate Health & Safety Officer (CHSO) is responsible for ensuring effective mechanisms exist for the sharing of information within the organisation, and for ensuring appropriate information is absorbed into and shared outside of the Council. Appropriate health and safety information is shared via the [health and safety intranet](#), maintained by the CHSO, where employees can access information on:

- This health and safety policy
- The policy's underpinning arrangements
- Safety concerns in the form of safety notices
- Safe working procedures in the form of risk assessments, operating procedures, and guidance notes

## **Raising issues and concerns**

3.4 The Council is committed to the continuous improvement of health and safety performance across the organisation and to investing time and resources to enhance working arrangements to deliver better, safer outcomes.

3.5 All employees are encouraged to raise health and safety issues and concerns in the first instance with their immediate line manager (this may be their team supervisor), though this does not detract from their right to raise issues with their trade union or employee safety representative.

3.6 Often, concerns can be remedied at a local level, however where this cannot be achieved, where the issue may have implications across other areas, or where additional guidance or intervention is required, managers are expected to liaise

with the relevant competent suppliers, departments, teams, or individuals and may seek advice from the Corporate Health and Safety Officer. If a resolution cannot be reached the issue should be escalated to the appropriate Head of Service and / or Director.

- 3.7 Councillors, contractors, and volunteers are encouraged to raise health and safety issues and concerns with the relevant Corporate Director or the Managing Director.
- 3.8 The Council's [whistleblowing policy](#) details how individuals can raise serious concerns outside of their line management arrangements and [Appendix B](#) illustrates the various mechanisms in place across different levels of the organisation to help the organisation to foster and support continuous improvement.

### **Joint Consultative and Safety Committee**

- 3.9 The function of the Joint Consultative and Safety Committee (JCSC) is to act as the Council's health and safety committee (as required by the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996).
- 3.10 The JCSC is the forum where all staff are given the opportunity to have a say in the Council's short and long-term decision making on workplace health and safety matters and comprises:
- A Member to act as chair.
  - Management representatives from key service areas.
  - Employee representatives, either unionised or non-unionised.
  - Representatives of others in the workplace, such as agency workers and contractors.
  - Other Council personnel included because of their specific competencies, such as the Corporate Health and Safety Officer.
- 3.11 Full details of the current representation, chair, officers and functions of JCSC can be found in the [Councils Constitution, Part 3 Responsibility for Functions - Appendix A](#).
- 3.12 The principal remit of the JCSC includes:
- review of health and safety incident data and trends.
  - examination of safety audit reports and the findings of enforcing authority inspection reports.
  - consideration of any reports on issues made by the safety representatives themselves.
  - assisting in the development of workable safety rules and safe systems of work.
  - evaluate the effectiveness and adequacy or otherwise of staff health and safety training.

- monitoring the adequacy of internal health and safety communication and publicity.
- evaluating revisions to the Council’s Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and making recommendations for further improvement, etc.
- reviewing the measures taken to ensure the health, safety, and welfare at work of employees.
- Consideration of matters referred to the Committee by health and safety representatives.

### **Health and Safety Risk Management Group**

3.13 The Health and Safety Risk Management Group (HSRMG) oversees the ongoing operational management of health and safety risk management at WCC and by associated partners / contractors. The HSRMG:

- Oversees the implementation of the current Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and approves revisions as required.
- Assists the CHSO with rolling out best practice across the organisation to ensure corporate buy in.
- Receives and reviews risk management reports prior to Corporate Leadership Team, JCSC, or other management groups receiving them.
- Considers health and safety risk management training requests and other applications for expenditure and agree budget submissions for approval by the Personnel and General Purpose’s Sub-Committee, as required.
- Receives and reviews corporate health and safety arrangements and procedures prior to Director sign off.
- Receives health and safety contract compliance and monitoring reports regarding partner organisations and key contractors, from responsible officers.
- Develops responses to and reviews actions against current insurance audit recommendations.
- Reviews insurance claims and develops appropriate measures and solutions to issues.

### **Corporate Management Team**

3.14 The Corporate Management Team (CMT), working in partnership with the Corporate Director - Planning & Governance and the Corporate Health & Safety Officer, will seek to support the continuous improvement in health and safety performance through a process of collaboration – on the development of documentation, systems, and processes - and engagement – with their staff, contractors, and others they engage with as part of their roles as strategic and operational managers for the Council.

3.15 Furthermore, by employing a collaborative, inclusive approach in their engagement with colleagues as part of the CMT, and in feeding information and feedback between this forum and their teams, they will play a vital role in influencing and improving the health and safety culture within the Council.

## **Member Health & Safety Champion**

- 3.16 The Council's Member Champion supports the work programme of Council officers by raising the profile of health and safety, assisting in securing adequate resources for the effective implementation of health and safety performance improvement and management initiatives and in the development of a positive health and safety culture within the organisation.
- 3.17 The role has defined terms of reference as a Member Champion approved by full Council and the Member Champion meets regularly with the Corporate Health and Safety Officer and the Corporate Director - Planning & Governance.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Reference should be made to [Appendix A](#) which illustrates the tiers for accountability and ensuring compliance within WCC.

### **Leader of The Council and Elected Members**

- 4.1 The Council's elected members place health and safety front and centre when making leadership decisions for and on behalf of the organisation and the public and commit to ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated to assist in delivering Council services and activities.
- 4.2 The Leader and elected members, Managing Director, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Corporate Management Team (CMT) have pledged to take a leading role in directing and managing health and safety, and will:
- Comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, as it pertains them as both leaders of the Council and workers for the Council.
  - Seek opportunities for ongoing and progressive improvement in health and safety standards.
  - Lead by example, setting a culture of positive health, safety, and welfare behaviours.
  - Ensure Council activities are risk assessed and safe working procedures and controls are drawn up to preserve health and safety.
  - Promote collaboration and co-operation between management and workers on all health, safety, and wellbeing matters. This extends to the activities undertaken by safety representatives.
  - Provide and undertake suitable training, information, and instruction, so all workers are competent to undertake the tasks they are required to carry out, and ensure suitable supervision is provided where necessary.
  - Ensure a Member is nominated as the Champion for health and safety.
- 4.3 The Council has charged the Corporate Director - Planning & Governance with assuming the overall responsibility for health and safety policy development, with the support of the Corporate Health & Safety Officer and empowers the Corporate Leadership Team to make policy decisions on behalf of the Council.

## **Corporate Leadership Team**

4.4 The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) comprises the Council's most senior directors in the organisation. They make policy decisions on behalf of the Council and ensure that all health, safety, welfare, and wellbeing issues are provided for. In addition to the above, the CLT also:

- Take responsibility and "ownership" of health and safety, providing strategic direction and endorsing corporate health and safety strategies.
- Ensure that health, safety, and welfare arrangements are developed, implemented, and reviewed.
- Seek and allocate adequate resources to ensure health, safety and welfare controls are implemented and issues are addressed.
- Lead on communicating health and safety messages and in the promotion of a positive health and safety culture.
- Receive sufficient information to maintain a strategic oversight on all health, safety, welfare, and wellbeing issues, including horizon scanning for emerging issues and intelligence.

## **Managers and Supervisors**

4.5 The terms managers and supervisors include any member of staff responsible for managing and directing the activities of others. Managers and supervisors are directly responsible for ensuring that rules, regulations, procedures, and codes of practice relating to the health, safety, and welfare of workers and anyone affected by their activities are correctly interpreted and implemented for all activities within their area of responsibility. Managers and supervisors must therefore:

- Represent their team, department or service at health and safety meetings at a local or corporate level, as required.
- Ensure this policy and the underpinning arrangements are fully implemented within their areas of responsibility.
- Plan health and safety to meet corporate health, safety, and welfare objectives.
- Assess activities for risk and plan work to effectively minimise or control risks.
- Ensure anyone undertaking work or affected by work activities is provided with appropriate and relevant information, instruction, and training to ensure the work can be carried out safely.
- Communicate, consult, and cooperate with employees and their representatives on all health, safety and welfare matters to facilitate and foster their participation and 'ownership' where appropriate.
- Provide feedback on any necessary improvements to policy, arrangements, procedures, systems, and processes to improve health and safety performance.
- Ensure adequate supervision is provided to safeguard good standards of health and safety.

- Provide appropriate equipment – including PPE – and resources to ensure work can be undertaken safely and enforce the use of such equipment and adherence to procedures prescribed in the interests of health and safety.
- Cooperate with audits and workplace inspections and ensure corrective actions are carried out.
- See to it that health and safety incidents and close calls (near hits) are reported, investigated and relevant actions are undertaken to prevent recurrence.
- Monitor performance at a local level to highlight patterns, trends, and any concerns.
- If necessary, instigate disciplinary sanctions where serious health and safety breaches may have occurred.
- Remain up to date on current health and safety issues, legal requirements, and best practice.
- Seek appropriate expert advice on health and safety matters when necessary to facilitate the effective implementation of this policy and the underpinning arrangements.

### **Corporate Health and Safety Officer**

4.6 The professionally qualified Corporate Health and Safety Officer has been engaged to provide a competent, comprehensive health and safety service to the Council and its workers. Supporting, advising, mentoring, and assisting directors, managers, supervisors, and employees in understanding and dispensing their health and safety duties and with all work-related health and safety matters, the CHSO also:

- Prepares, periodically reviews and as necessary revises, this policy document and the underpinning corporate arrangements, guidance notes, and any other health and safety management system documentation and procedures.
- Develops and maintains the corporate health and safety business plan, setting prioritised objectives, to address key health and safety themes and issues.
- Assesses risks and identifies appropriate control measures.
- Monitors active and reactive performance through a program of health and safety audits, workplace inspections, and safety tours.
- Maintains the health and safety incident (injuries, work-related illness, near hits, violence) reporting process and supporting investigations and leading and undertaking investigations where necessary.
- Liaises with external agencies and enforcing authorities on relevant matters, including the reporting of incidents such as those required under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).
- Analyses incident information to identify opportunities for improvement and making appropriate, targeted recommendations to minimise costs and prevent reoccurrence.
- Produces quarterly and annual health and safety reports and briefings.

- Keeps up to date on all emerging health and safety legislation, codes of practice, emerging issues, and intelligence and where relevant, undertakes gap analyses to inform organisational development.
- Leads by example in promoting a positive health and safety message by maintaining an open door and an accessible service for colleagues, at all levels, across the organisation.
- Develops and maintains mechanisms for communicating health and safety information and messages into, across, and out of the Council.
- Works with colleagues in relevant areas of the Council to ensure we have suitable and sustainable provisions in place to support health and safety requirements (such as competency, training, and health surveillance).
- Provides advice on complex and / or high priority issues.

## **Human Resources (including Occupational Health)**

4.7 The Human Resources (HR) team assists the Council with meeting the requirements of employment legislation, through the development of appropriate policies and procedures and through engagement with employee representatives and trade unions. HR also support and assist with the implementation of this policy by:

- Providing management with specific case management advice and guidance.
- When necessary, supporting assessments for the purpose of reasonable workplace adjustments.
- Managing the Council's sickness absence and attendance management policies, procedures, and systems.
- Overseeing the Council's worker wellbeing initiatives.
- Procuring, implementing, and monitoring occupational health arrangements. The Council's occupational health initiatives are outsourced to a third-party provider. Therefore, occupational health advice and support for managers and staff is provided through the HR team.

## **Organisational Development**

4.8 The Organisational Development (OD) team assist and support the implementation of this policy by maintaining and developing systems to enable managers to record personal development training for all employees ([Learning Lounge](#)). This includes health and safety induction and annual and periodic training, as well as task and role-specific competencies. OD manage the corporate training budget and ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to health and safety training, escalating any significant budgetary issues where / when necessary.

## **Procurement of Goods and Services**

4.9 All staff responsible for procuring and / or providing contractors, services, plant, vehicles, machinery, equipment and / or premises for or on behalf of the Council should ensure that all relevant health, safety, and welfare issues are identified and addressed by ensuring:

- Risks are assessed and minimised.

- Training needs for Council workers are identified and met.
- The design of new premises and refurbishment of existing premises complies with legal requirements, building standards and best practice.
- The engagement of contractors complies with legal requirements and best practice.
- That procured plant, vehicles, machinery, equipment complies with legal requirements, standards, and codes of practice.
- Any new plant, vehicles, machinery, equipment and / or ways of working are introduced in consultation with employee health and safety representatives.

## **Partners and Suppliers**

4.10 Health and Safety arrangements for external partners and suppliers, such as those delivering Council services, are governed by the contractual relationship they have with the Council. As a minimum partners and suppliers delivering Council services are required to declare that they will adhere to this policy and the underpinning arrangements and relevant procedures when undertaking Council business.

## **Health and Safety Reps**

4.11 The Council recognises the right of employees to nominate health and safety representatives – union and non-union representatives – and commits to consult and communicate with them, as well as the workforce generally, on all health and safety matters.

4.12 Health and safety representatives have the right of representing employees in consultations with the Council on health, safety and welfare matters and to attend safety committee meetings, where concerns regarding workplace safety matters, may be raised. They may also:

- Investigate potential hazards, dangerous occurrences and causes of accidents in the workplace.
- Investigate complaints concerning health, safety and welfare matters raised by any employee they represent.
- Undertake health and safety workplace inspections.

## **Employees**

4.13 Employees and workers are terms used interchangeably to encompass anyone undertaking work for the Council and includes permanent employees, agency staff, staff on temporary or fixed-term contracts, full-time and part time workers, students, councillors, and volunteers.

4.14 Employees have legal duties for ensuring and maintaining health and safety in the workplace. The Council recognises the importance of employee involvement in managing and safeguarding sound health and safety, and so actively encourages employee participation by promoting open, frank, and constructive consultation with employees and their nominated representatives and ensuring

they have access to relevant facts and information to make an informed contribution.

#### 4.15 All employees must, by law:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others affected by their work activities - what they do and what they omit to do.
- Co-operate with the Council or any other relevant person or agency, to enable the Council to discharge its legal responsibilities relating to health, safety, and welfare.
- Not interfere with or intentionally misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety, and welfare (plant, equipment, facilities, vehicles, materials).
- Use all work equipment, substances, materials, etc. as specified in procedures, instruction, and training.
- Without delay, report any work situation (working conditions, methods of working, tools, equipment, premises) that may present a serious / imminent danger to themselves or others to their line manager, the CHSO, or the health and safety representative.
- Promptly report all health and safety incidents (accidents, near hits, violence) and instances of suspected work-related illness to their line manager.
- Assist fully in the investigation of any health and safety incident.
- Report any health and safety problem that they cannot deal with themselves or any shortcoming they consider to be in the health, safety, and welfare arrangements, to their line manager, the CHSO, or the health and safety representative.
- Wear and use personal protective equipment, plant and equipment as specified.
- Ensure they are fit for work, relative to their role.
- Follow safe working procedures and methods of work.
- Operate plant and machinery safely and drive safely.
- Not be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or substances.
- Maintain good housekeeping and high standards of site tidiness.
- Seek health and safety advice where necessary.
- Not engage in acts of 'horseplay', practical jokes, or acts likely to cause harm or injury to themselves or anyone else.

### **Customers, Service Users and Members of the Public**

4.16 Through local communications such as the internet, signs, posters, etc, customers, service users and members of the public are encouraged to co-operate with the health and safety arrangements put in place to protect them and our workers.

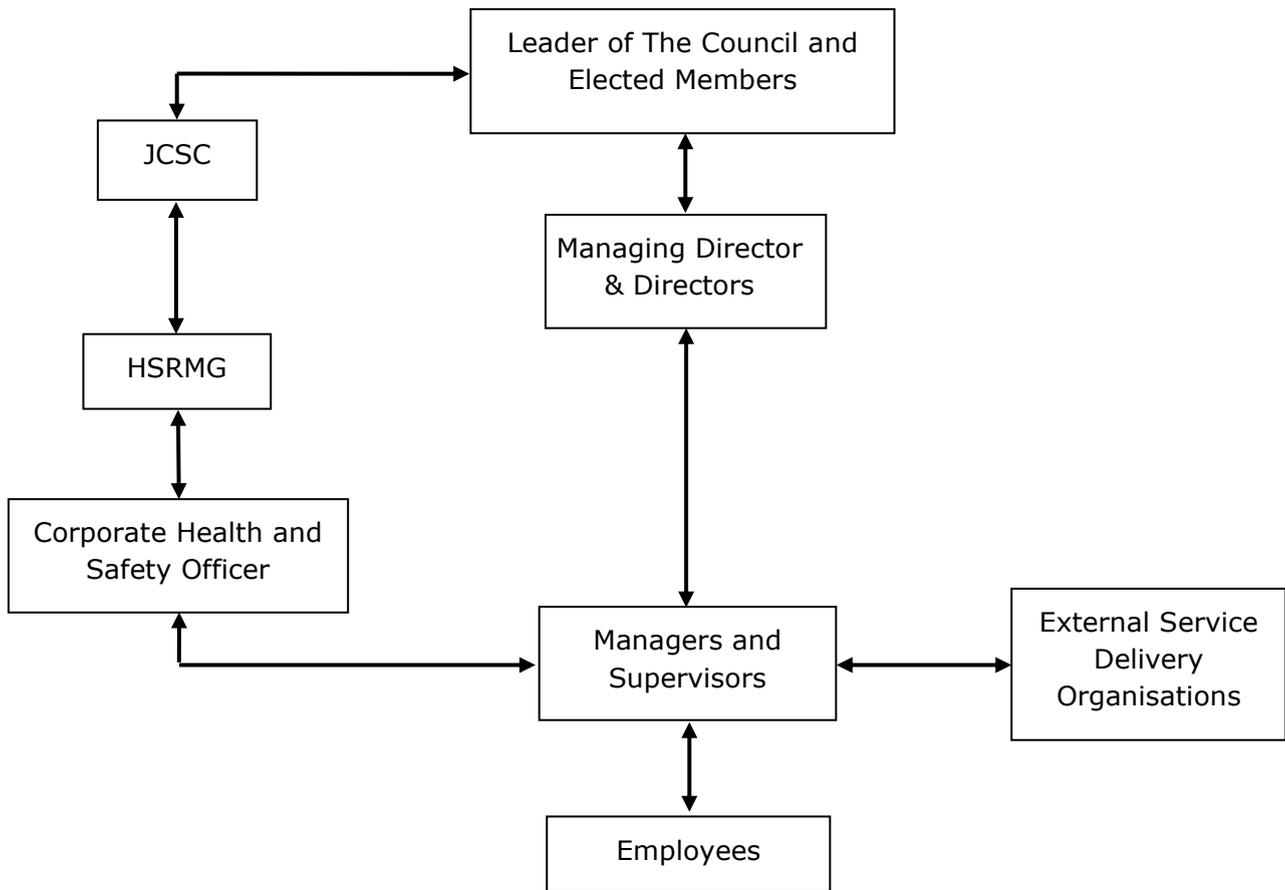
## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

5.1 The Corporate Director - Planning & Governance, with full support from the CHSO, will ensure that health and safety inspections are carried out throughout the Council to support and review active monitoring and to assist in promoting a

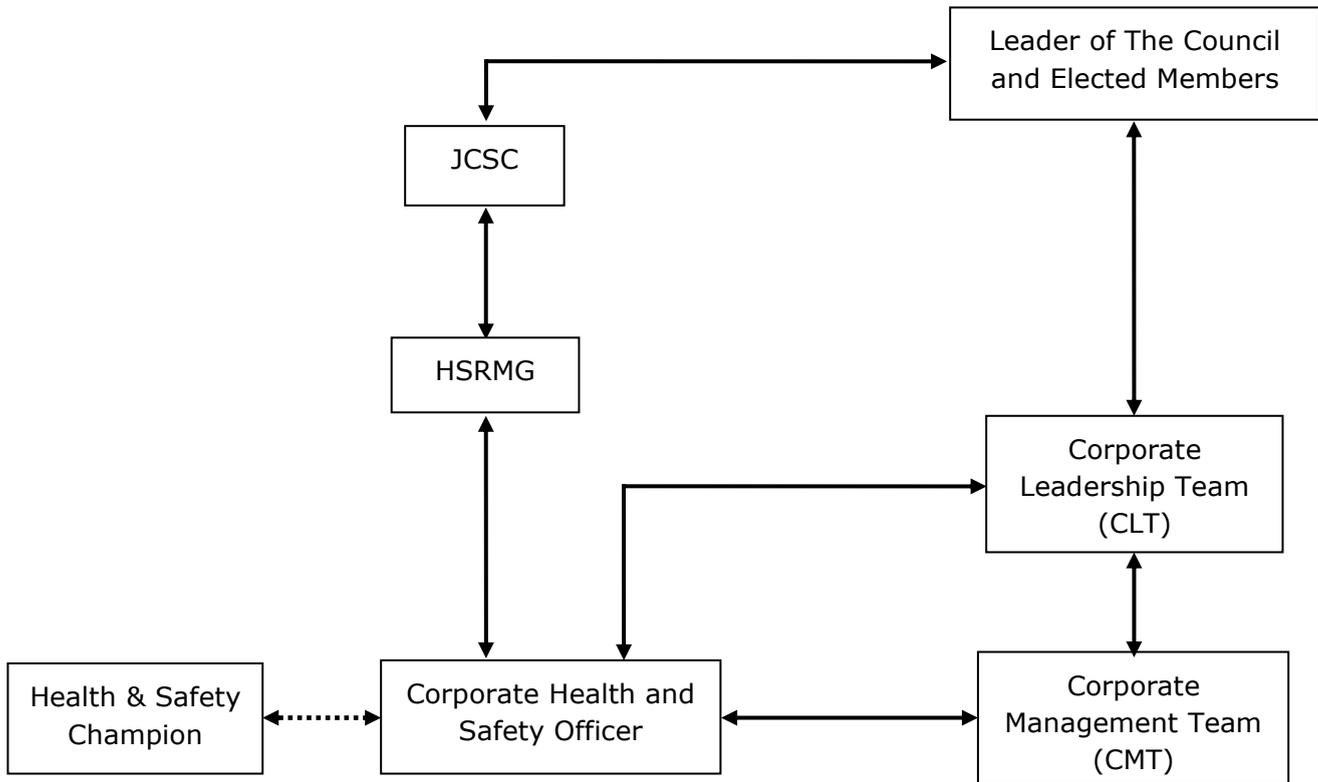
positive health and safety culture. The involvement of health and safety representatives in this process will be positively encouraged and audit reports will be considered as regular items on the agenda for the various Council health and safety Groups and Committees.

- 5.2 Monitoring of injuries, ill health and other "loss events" will take place as a necessary to complement active monitoring. This monitoring process will involve managers and safety representatives. The investigation of such incidents and losses, together with analysis of incidence, will be used as a tool to identify causes and reduce future incidence.
- 5.3 The Corporate Director - Planning & Governance, with full support from the CHSO, will ensure that re-active monitoring is undertaken across the Council. Incident investigation reports, audit reports, and inspection reports will be submitted to the appropriate manager and summary reports on the results will be presented at the appropriate health and safety Groups and Committees. Where any high-risk issues are identified, a report will be presented to the HSRMG and the JCSC.
- 5.3 The CHSO will carry out health and safety audits periodically and submit reports to the HSRMG. The reports will contain the necessary advice and recommendations to address any shortfalls or issues of concern. Based on audit reports and assessments, the HSRMG will make appropriate recommendations for reviews to policy, procedure, or arrangements, through the JCSC.

## APPENDIX A – ACCOUNTABILITY & COMPLIANCE



## APPENDIX B – MECHANISMS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



## APPENDIX C - DEFINITIONS

Hazard	Something that has the potential to cause harm, for example, a substance, an item of equipment, a work procedure, or a potentially aggressive customer.
Risk	The probability or chance that harm from a particular hazard will occur. The extent of the risk includes the number of people affected, the consequences for them, and the impact across the organisation – the level of risk represents the consequences (severity) of harm and the likelihood of it occurring.
Accident	An unplanned event that results in injury or ill health to people, or damage / loss to property, plant, materials, or the environment.
Near hit	Any untoward, unplanned, or unwanted event or circumstance that could have led to harm, damage, or loss of service, but was prevented and rectified before an accident occurred.
Cause for concern	Any condition, situation or circumstance that has the potential to cause harm, for example uneven paving or lack of lighting in a particular area.
Worker	Anyone undertaking work for or on behalf of the Council. This includes paid and unpaid employees, permanent and temporary employees, volunteers, students on work placement, Councillors, and agency staff.
Workplace	Any premises made available to any person as a place of work, but which are not domestic premises. This includes depots, car parks, corridors, staircases, paths, and roads used for access / egress that are not public roads.

## **APPENDIX D – INDEX OF ARRANGEMENTS DOCUMENTS**

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