

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



## Report to the Cabinet

**Meeting Date:** January 21st 2020  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Nia Jeffreys  
**Contact Officer:** Geraint Owen  
**Contact Number:** 01286 679335  
**Item Title:** Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### 1 DECISION SOUGHT

Cabinet approval of the new Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### 2 REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

It is a legal requirement for the Council to have an adopted Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The current Policy dates back to 2015 and therefore needed reviewing to ensure it reflects current arrangements within the Council.

Cabinet approval demonstrates strategic commitment to this important field.

### 3 INTRODUCTION

Work to review and revise the current policy has been underway for several months, and it is a legal requirement that it is reviewed regularly. As there was a management review underway corporately however, it made sense to await the findings and confirmation of the new structure before consulting on the final draft with Officers, Unions and those elected members who sit on the Health Safety and Welfare Panel. This was in order to ensure that the new policy complements and reflects the new structure.

Having received and incorporated some comments as part of the consultation, the main changes include:

- Define the responsibilities of Heads of Department and Managers, and explain the role of Assistant Heads of Department and Team Leaders in assisting them to discharge these duties.
- Re-structure the Policy so that the responsibilities of all staff are clearly noted at the beginning of the document and not lost somewhere in the middle
- Differentiate between the responsibilities of Cabinet members and other elected members
- Ensure the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd are reflected in responsibilities on all

levels

- Confirm and strengthen corporate governance arrangements
- Ensure that the Policy is worded in way that satisfies the requirements of the ISO (International Organisation for Standardization) accreditation that is critical to some Departments.

#### **4 REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION**

Cabinet approval would help develop a management model within the Council whereby Managers shoulder the responsibility of health and safety standards, along with staff wellbeing within their Service.

No objections have been presented during the consultation stage.

An equality assessment had been undertaken and appended which has not found there to be any negative effect on equality rights, and indeed that the proposed Policy has a positive impact on many individuals who have protected characters.

#### **5 NEXT STEPS & TIMETABLE**

If the Policy is approved by the Cabinet, the leader and Chief Executive will be asked to sign the master document and work and the new Policy communicated to the workforce immediately, with awareness raised amongst staff on all levels.

#### **6 ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION**

The Policy has been shared with the Chief Executive, Heads of Departments and all members of the Health Safety and Wellbeing Panel which include the Trade Union representatives, and the Corporate Health and Safety forum as part of the consultation process.

Comments were received and incorporated during the consultations. The main comments received were:

- A request that the new Policy reflect the Council's new Management structure. To this extent it was decided to await for the new structure to be in place so that it could be reflected in the policy.
- A request to strengthen the wording in terms of general commitment to health and safety matters from minimum legal compliance to aim for continuous improvement, and this change has been incorporated.
- It was noted that there is some mention of contractor management in within the policy and it was requested that guidance is provided to Departments on this matter. Work will be undertaken on this specific matter in coming months.
- No comments were received by the Trade Unions.

Comments on behalf of the Finance Statutory Officer:

*The decision sought does not create a spending commitment. No comments from the perspective of financial propriety.”*

Comments on behalf of the Monitoring Officer:

*“As noted within the report, there is a statutory responsibility to adopt and review a Health and Safety Policy. There are also specific requirements in terms of content and responsibilities within the policy. The policy addresses these issues and there has also been an inclusive consultation process which included the trade unions.”*