

# Health and Safety Policy



<b>Adopted by:</b>	Watton Town Council
<b>Date:</b>	April 2026
<b>Review date:</b>	April 2029

## 1. Purpose and Scope

**1.1** This policy explains how Watton Town Council manages health and safety. Its purpose is to protect employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers and members of the public who may be affected by the Council's activities, and to ensure that health and safety responsibilities are understood and applied in a practical and proportionate way.

**1.2** The Council recognises its duties under health and safety law and is committed to providing, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe working conditions, safe systems of work, suitable equipment, appropriate information, instruction and training, and proper arrangements for reporting and responding to risk.

**1.3** This policy applies to employees of Watton Town Council and to councillors when undertaking Council business or acting in a workplace or staffing context. It also applies, where relevant, to contractors and volunteers working on behalf of the Council. Self-employed contractors remain responsible for meeting their own legal duties, but they must comply with any health and safety requirements that apply to the work they undertake for the Council.

**1.4** This policy should be read alongside the Lone Working Policy, PPE Policy, Sickness and Absence Policy, Capability Policy, Data Protection Policy and any relevant risk assessments, safe working procedures or site-specific instructions.

**1.5** This policy is non-contractual and may be amended by the Council from time to time.

## 2. Legal Framework and General Principles

**2.1** The Council will comply with relevant health and safety legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 as amended, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

**2.2** As a small town council, the Council will take a sensible and proportionate approach to health and safety. This means focusing on real risks, keeping arrangements practical and clear, and making sure that responsibilities, reporting routes and control measures are understood.

**2.3** Health and safety is a shared responsibility. The Council, its managers, employees, councillors, contractors and volunteers all have a role in identifying risk, working safely and reporting concerns promptly.

## 3. Responsibilities

**3.1** Full Council has overall responsibility for health and safety. The Council will take health and safety into account when making decisions, setting budgets, approving projects and managing premises, services and contractors.

**3.2** The Clerk, or another authorised officer where appropriate, is responsible for coordinating day-to-day health and safety arrangements. This includes maintaining this policy, arranging suitable risk assessments, keeping records, investigating incidents where appropriate, ensuring notifiable incidents

are reported, and making sure employees receive the information and support reasonably needed to work safely.

**3.3** Line managers are responsible for applying health and safety arrangements in practice within their areas of responsibility. This includes communicating instructions, monitoring compliance, reporting concerns and taking reasonable steps to address issues promptly.

**3.4** Employees must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by what they do. They must follow instructions and risk assessments, use equipment properly, wear personal protective equipment where required, report hazards or defects promptly, and report accidents, incidents and near misses without delay.

**3.5** Councillors must also take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others when undertaking Council business. Where councillors are present in workplaces, on site visits, at events or in other operational settings, they must follow reasonable health and safety instructions and co-operate with arrangements put in place by the Council.

**3.6** Contractors and volunteers must work in a safe manner, comply with relevant instructions and risk controls, and report hazards, incidents or concerns to the Council promptly.

## **4. Risk management and safe working arrangements**

**4.1** The Council will carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments for significant activities and will review them regularly, and sooner where there is a change in work activity, equipment, premises, staffing or following an accident, incident or near miss.

**4.2** The Council will provide appropriate induction and training for employees and, where relevant, for volunteers. This may include general health and safety awareness, task-specific instruction, lone working arrangements, manual handling, workstation safety, use of personal protective equipment, accident reporting and emergency procedures.

**4.3** All accidents, incidents and near misses must be reported promptly to the Clerk or appropriate line manager. The Council will keep appropriate records and will report incidents externally where the law requires this.

**4.4** The Council will maintain appropriate first aid arrangements and fire safety arrangements for its premises and activities. This includes keeping first aid supplies available where required, making suitable emergency arrangements and communicating evacuation and emergency information to those who need it.

**4.5** Where employees work alone, travel for work, use equipment, undertake manual handling tasks, work outdoors, or work with members of the public, the Council will assess the risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Further detail is set out in the Council's Lone Working Policy, PPE Policy and any related risk assessments.

**4.6** The Council recognises that work-related stress, aggression from members of the public and other wellbeing risks can have a health and safety impact. Reasonable steps will be taken to identify and manage these risks in a practical and supportive way.

## **5. Contractors, Equipment and Premises**

**5.1** The Council will take reasonable steps to ensure that contractors engaged on its behalf are competent, appropriately insured and able to provide risk information where required. Health and safety expectations will be reflected in procurement, contractor instructions and site arrangements where appropriate.

**5.2** Work equipment used by the Council will be suitable for its intended purpose and maintained as appropriate. Employees must not use defective or unsafe equipment and must report any defect or safety concern promptly.

**5.3** The Council will take reasonable steps to keep its premises and work areas safe. Employees and councillors should report hazards such as slips, trips, damaged fixtures, blocked fire exits, unsafe storage or other concerns as soon as possible.

## **6. Consultation**

**6.1** The Council will consult employees on health and safety matters where appropriate and will encourage staff to raise concerns, suggestions and incidents promptly so that issues can be addressed early.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

**7.1** Health and safety will be monitored in a proportionate way through supervision, incident reporting, review of risk assessments, inspection where appropriate and periodic policy review.

**7.2** This policy will normally be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if there is a significant change in the law, the Council's activities, staffing arrangements, premises or after a serious incident.