

OUR  
**SAFETY, HEALTH  
AND WELLBEING  
STRATEGY  
2019/22**





# OUR FUTURE IN SAFE HANDS

The 2019-22 strategy builds on the previous nine years, describing Suffolk County Council's (SCC) approach to managing safety, health and wellbeing.

It sets out the priorities and plans for SCC over the next three years and includes how the Council will go about doing this work and how health and safety performance will be measured and reviewed.



# Introduction

This strategy will assist in the delivery of the Council's safety, health and wellbeing (SHAW) vision of "Everyone Home Safe and Well" which the Council holds as being applicable to our staff, contractors, service users, pupils and the public we serve.

The Council is operating in a rapidly changing environment and SHAW management, as with all aspects of the Council's operations, does not operate in isolation from this. It is impacted by the changing political and economic environment. Achieving a safe working environment, in this climate, has to be dynamic, proactive and comprehensive, yet at the same time, pragmatic. Health and safety must, therefore, be justifiable, appropriate, flexible, proportionate and commensurate with the risk.

This strategy focuses our SHAW arrangements to ensure they are effective in today's environment where working with contractors and partners is the norm and where services are increasingly delivered with and through partner organisations. It also seeks to ensure that the ongoing reductions in funding do not translate into shortcuts in SHAW.

This strategy supports the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) strategy "Helping Great Britain Work Well" and their specific Health Priority plans.



# Principles

The approach to health and safety management within SCC is stated in the Council's Safety, Health and Wellbeing policy documents SHAW1, 2 and 3. This strategy supports the Council's policy by providing the focus for the primary activity of the Council to develop and improve the management of SHAW. This strategy has an annual action plan which is implemented and monitored through the SHAW Board on behalf of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) of the Council.

The SHAW Board meets regularly and is chaired by the health and safety lead on CLT. The vice chair is the Cabinet member lead for health and safety. Regular updates on the progress of the strategy are provided to CLT and Full Council.

The Council is organised into six directorates and each is represented at the SHAW Board by an Assistant Director (AD). Each AD is responsible for ensuring that the relevant actions and improvements are implemented in their directorate. The AD chairs their Directorate's SHAW Steering group and this is the forum through which SHAW is managed and monitored in their directorate. Progress is then reported to their respective Directorate Management Team (DMT) on a regular basis and to the SHAW Board at each of its meetings. The Council also provides specific health and safety advice and support to the Local Authority maintained schools in Suffolk.

Every three years each directorate identifies its top risks, and these are then aggregated to provide an assessment of the top corporate risks. This is used in turn to inform the strategy development and annual action plan.

The SHAW Board and each directorate SHAW Steering group provide a forum for Trade Union safety representatives' involvement in, and consultation on, the management of SHAW within the Council.

This strategy and its associated action plan are reviewed annually to ensure that it remains current as the organisation undertakes ongoing transformational change. The Annual SHAW report is produced each May, approved by the SHAW Board and endorsed by the CLT. It is then presented to the Full Council meeting in July before being published on the Council's website.

The Chief Executive and the CLT acknowledge their individual and collective responsibilities to ensure the effective implementation of this strategy and its supporting annual action plan. They recognise that they have choices in the context of how they effectively manage health and safety, and in the areas of what can, and should, be delegated. They are also aware that they are ultimately accountable for the health and safety performance of their directorate and the Council as a whole.

Elected members and the Cabinet in particular, are aware of the need to support the implementation of this strategy and they are committed to ensuring that there is effective strategic SHAW governance.



# Priorities and plans

In the context of the changing environment the Council needs to ensure that this strategy has impact, is effectively targeted and sufficiently flexible to meet changing demands. To support this, the strategy has two key strands:

- **Corporate Themes**
- **Directorate Risks**

There are four **corporate themes** which provide a clear focus for the work of the SHAW Board in managing changes to the way it provides for safety, health and wellbeing across the Council. This will build upon the work already undertaken in previous years and provide a clear focus of activity:

- **Procurement and contract management**
- **Schools**
- **Supporting Wellbeing Culture within SCC**
- **Assurance**

The themes are set out on the following pages along with the SHAW Board members responsible for leading them.

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Each theme is supported by a working group which includes the theme lead(s), one or more member of the Corporate Health and Safety Team and directorate and service representatives as required. The Schools theme also includes relevant schools' representatives.

Each of the corporate themes has objectives and activities which will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the relevant SHAW Board lead, and then formally at the SHAW Board once a year. There is a separate annual SHAW Strategy action plan which details the work to be done for the year.

The **directorate risks** are determined through each directorate SHAW Steering group. The group is responsible for ensuring that specific work takes place to address and reduce these risks.

As new issues emerge, the SHAW Board will review this strategy and action plan and, when appropriate, advise the CLT accordingly.



### PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

*Gavin Bultitude and Bryn Griffiths*

#### **CONTEXT**

A significant proportion of the Council's overall spend and activities are carried out by external contractors and are not in-house services. The Council therefore must ensure, through effective procurement and contract management practice, that these services retain the good levels of health and safety that are expected of a public service.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To be an exemplar organisation with regard to the procurement, commissioning and management of services provided by other parties, creating accountability and ownership for SHAW amongst our staff, partners and contractors.

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### SCHOOLS

*Joy Stodart and Tracy Lindeman*

#### **CONTEXT**

As with the Council, schools in Suffolk are working in a changing environment. SHAW management has become more complex in respect of providing support for staff and pupils with mental health issues and for staff dealing with challenging pupil behaviour.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

Strong assurance that Suffolk maintained schools are well managed from the SHAW perspective along with improved involvement and support particularly with regard to staff and pupil mental health and pupil behaviour. Where applicable share learning with all schools in Suffolk.



### SUPPORTING WELLBEING CULTURE WITHIN SCC

*Lynda Bradford and Dan Fearn*

#### **CONTEXT**

A healthy, motivated and resilient workforce is essential to ensuring the organisation can deliver its services particularly as demand increases whilst resources reduce. There are benefits to the Council through improved attendance, increased productivity, improved service delivery, fewer instances of work related ill-health, incidents and injuries and therefore fewer claims and potential prosecutions. These equate to a reduction in costs, a reputation as a good employer to work for, resulting in higher retention and lower turnover of staff.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

Recognised as a 'good practice' employer who invests in staff health and wellbeing and sees this as key to helping them enjoy healthier, happier and well-balanced working lives whilst delivering good quality services across Suffolk.

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### ASSURANCE

*Paul Butcher and Tim Ryder*

#### **CONTEXT**

The Council has a duty to ensure it carries out its activities in compliance with current health and safety legislation to provide a safe environment for staff and service users. Therefore staff and managers need to understand their duties and responsibilities to one another and our service users and need to ensure all their work activities are compliant with the Council's SHAW policy and guidance.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

We need assurance at each level of the organisation that our work activities are compliant with current legislation and SHAW guidance and that the organisation and its component parts are working effectively to enable "Everyone Home Safe and Well".



# Performance, reporting and review

The SHAW strategy includes a core set of performance measures which have been developed in the previous strategy cycles. These reflect most of the corporate top ten risks identified in 2018-19. This provides a mechanism for monitoring the ongoing performance of our key corporate risks. There are also performance measures for each corporate theme as required and are detailed in the action plan alongside the relevant theme.

Performance review is a standing item at the SHAW Board and at the directorate SHAW Steering groups. The progress of each corporate theme is reported regularly to the SHAW Board by the theme lead.

The Signs of Safety style of reporting is used to capture what is happening in each directorate from the perspective of each SHAW Steering group and is reported regularly to the SHAW Board. The reporting is in terms of what is working well, what are the concerns and what are the actions, and allows the Board to share good practice, see common issues as well update on directorate activity.

Headline performance and progress is reported to CLT through its quarterly corporate performance report. This report also goes to the Leadership Team (CLT and Cabinet). Regular updates are provided to Full Council.

The strategy is reviewed in quarter four of each year and a full progress report provided in the annual SHAW report in the May of that year. The refreshed annual action plan is provided at the same time along with any amendments to the strategy themes and/or their activities.

Suffolk County Council is committed to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of its staff and other persons who may be affected by its activities. The SHAW Board and CLT fully commend this SHAW Strategy as the Council's approach to the strategic management of safety, health and wellbeing.