Agenda Item 974
Appendix A

East Sussex Fire Authority
Constitution

G06
Health, Safety and Well-being Strategy

Health, Safety & Well-being Strategy (2017 – 2020)

Responsible Officer	First Section Issue Date	Section Amended/Updated	Review Date
Assistant Director Training & Assurance	October 2005	December 2007 May 2009 May 2010 February 2012 May 2013 October 2016	December 2020

Index

1. **Our Health, Safety and Well-being vision**

To ensure that our staff remain safe and well whilst providing a first-class service to our community, we will ensure that East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA) meets all of the legislative requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act. In addition, we will also meet all of the moral requirements for maintaining a fit, safe and healthy workforce.

Further to this, we want our employees to have a safe, healthy environment to work in, where they enjoy a good work-life balance and look after their general health and fitness. A culture where everyone feels involved in making changes for the better by taking a sensible approach to risk, which will in turn assist in the provision of excellent services.

We will implement a holistic approach to health and well-being that is preventative and proactive, as well as reactive with a focus on rehabilitation back to work when it is required. Our approach will promote good physical health, good lifestyle choices and good mental health, as well as taking on board the importance of 'best practice' in enhancing employee well-being.

"Health and well-being is not just about initiatives; it's about aspiring to position employee well-being as a continuous thread that runs through every decision, a cultural lens that guides everything we do and how we do it – in business terms, a systems approach." (CIPD, 2016)

To deliver this vision we need to:

*   Ensure our approach to employee well-being is sustainable and linked to both the organisation's corporate strategies and workforce needs and integrated within every aspect of its people management activities;
*   Commit to continual improvement and develop, both through innovation and a willingness to change and adapt;
*   Have effective leadership;
*   See commitment and co-operation at all levels;

2

- Continue working in partnership with our internal and external colleagues to make improvements and develop workable policies;

- Promote greater employee involvement and engagement;

- Continue to recognise the valuable contribution our Trade Unions make to the health, safety and well-being of our workforce;

- Improve communication links that support everything we do;

- Manage the health and safety risk effectively, enabling the delivery of quality services to the Communities we serve in support of the Service's Purpose and Commitments;

- Consider best practice and national guidance;

- Increase awareness and understanding through sharing information and campaigns;

- Provide appropriate facilities, services and protective equipment.

2.   Key Element & Themes

Our strategy for health, safety and well-being has five key elements within two main themes, all of which have many important links between them:

Health & Safety

1.   Continuing to build the positive health and safety culture
2.   Reducing work-related injury and ill-health
3.   Firefighter safety

Well-being

4.   Contributing to the future health and mental well-being of all employees
5.   Organisational well-being

3.   Themes

3.1 Continuing to build the positive health and safety culture

"Health and safety should not be a responsibility assigned to a particular individual or part of an organisation, but an integral part of everyone's role" (HSE, 2016). To be truly effective, health and safety has to be an everyday process and an integral part of the workplace culture. The behaviours and actions within an Organisation influence the culture through attitudes and perceptions. Promoting safe behaviour at work is a critical part of the management of health and safety, as behaviour turns systems and procedures into reality.

This strategy will help us to:

- Demonstrate commitment to effective health and safety management and the benefits this has;

- Communicate and involve the workforce in a common understanding of risk and control measures, ensuring a sensible approach to risk assessment;

- Promote a 'don't walk by / see it – sort it' culture whilst developing the role of the Workplace Safety Representatives to embed this culture;

- Demonstrate both leadership and ownership of health, safety and well-being from the top of the Organisation.

3.2   Reducing work-related injury and ill-health

Effective health and safety is a collective responsibility where everyone in the workforce must play their part. Our aspiration is to prevent all work-related injuries and ill-health, both mentally and physically.

We will ensure that:

- We identify the health and safety risks and put measures in place to control these, meeting current legislation;

- We record and investigate accidents / incidents (which include near misses), learning from these by communicating relevant findings and taking appropriate action (encouraging employees to look at new ways of tackling old problems);

- We use feedback from the H&S audits / inspections and operational debriefs to make appropriate changes to both the work environment and the incident ground, which can support safe behaviour and reduce accidents;

- Through the risk assessment process, reduce the likelihood of an incident, thus avoiding injury/ill-health, and the potential for prosecution or claim for compensation;

- We review and consider national reports and sector learning.

3.3 Firefighter Safety

ESFA recognises that operational incidents present the highest risk environment encountered by its employees. Whilst there is a degree of risk foreseeability it is acknowledged that each incident will have its own specific hazards and associated risk, due to unique and unforeseeable environmental factors. To manage this risk to firefighters, the ESFA endorses and promotes the Health, Safety & Welfare Framework for the operational environment, and the safe person principles contained within.

Within an operational environment, there is a balance between ensuring firefighter safety and carrying out the role of a Fire & Rescue Service. It is the Authority's policy to adopt the Firefighter Safety Maxim to control health and safety risks to our firefighters
"At every incident, the greater the potential benefit of fire and rescue actions, the greater the risk that is accepted by commanders and firefighters.

Activities that present a high risk to safety are limited to those that have the potential to save life or to prevent rapid and significant escalation of the incident."

This Strategy will support this philosophy and ensure that:

- Our staff remain safe when responding to emergency calls;
- We reduce risk to firefighters by effectively managing operational risk information;
- Our staff are properly equipped and protected for the environments in which we expect them to operate;
- Our staff are competent to perform the role or task they are being asked to do:
- The Authority has regard to the Health, Safety & Welfare framework for the Operational Environment, published in June 2013, when developing its IRMP;
- The Service has due regard to the key principles of fire risk management and the impact of HSE's 'Heroism' and 'striking the balance' publications.

3.4   Contributing to the future health and mental well-being of all employees

A healthy, fit and motivated workforce is essential to ensuring the Organisation can deliver its services. Investing in employee health and mental well-being is key, helping employees enjoy healthier, happier and well balanced working lives.

There are benefits to the Service through investing in the physical and mental well-being of staff: improved attendance, less cover required, increased productivity, improved service delivery, and fewer instances of work related ill-health / accidents and injuries and, therefore, fewer claims / prosecutions. These equate to a reduction in costs in the short and longer term and contribute to a reputation as an Employer of Choice.

This strategy will help us:
o   Provide information creating opportunities for employees to support their engagement in a healthy lifestyle;
o   Encourage employee participation;
o   Create a supportive environment that enables employees to be proactive when and if possible to protect and enhance their own health and mental well-being;
o   Develop policies to support the workplace culture, such as work-life balance;
o   Continue to improve on the Occupational Health provision and Employee Assistance Programme;
o   Develop a robust and accessible Trauma Risk Management & Diffusing process;
o   Continue to develop the role of the work-based Physical Training Instructors;
o   Identify and support specific areas where sickness absence levels are high or have unusual patterns;
o   Support employees who have health problems to remain at work or return to work earlier;
o   Reduce sickness absence and the associated costs.
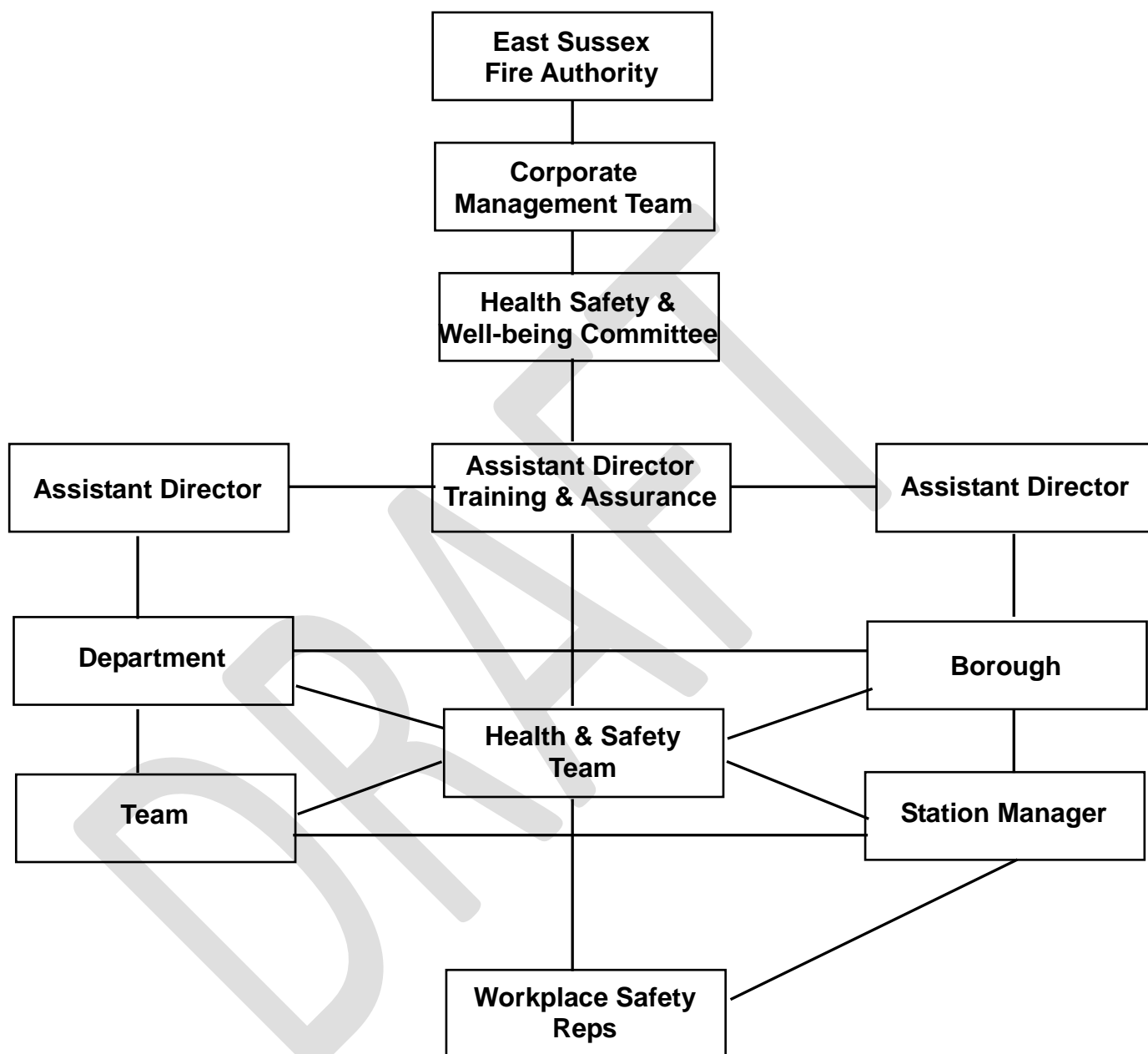
3.5   Organisational Well-being

Ensuring individual well-being, both mentally and physically, will support the overall health of the Organisation. Research has shown that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between health and mental well-being and employee engagement (CIPD, 2016). "Commitment and trust between managers and staff and between staff is a basic ingredient of a healthy organisation." Mowbray, D.(2008). Workplace culture and job satisfaction have a big impact on wellbeing.

This strategy will ensure that:

- We continue to build a culture that promotes well-being and performance amongst our staff, based on commitment and trust, and strengthening corporate resilience;
- Health and mental well-being remain a core priority for both CMT and the Fire Authority, valuing the strategic importance and benefits of a healthy workplace.
- We encourage employees to have a voice and actively seek their contribution in decision-making through staff-engagement forums and by staff surveys.
- There is ownership at all levels of the Organisation.

4. Health, Safety & Well-being organisational governance structure

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                    │ Workplace Safety │
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Lead Member

The Fire Authority will designate a Lead Member for Health, Safety & Well-being who will act as the champion for health, safety and well-being issues on the Authority.

Corporate Management Team (CMT)

The Health, Safety & Well-being Committee (HSWC) will be held to account by CMT and will review the quarterly Leading & Lagging Indicators report following input from the HSWC. CMT will also ratify decisions.

CMT will embed the principles of the Leading Health & Safety at Work guidance as produced by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as part of the decision-making process at strategic level. CMT will be cognisant of the 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' model within this guidance, ensuring the essential health and safety principles are embedded and thus demonstrating strong and active leadership from the top and the integration of good health and safety management with business decisions.

Health, Safety & Well-being Committee

The HSWC, chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, reports directly to CMT, whose key role is to provide assurance that:

- The Service is managing the delivery of all its responsibilities in respect of health, safety, welfare and risk management;
- The Service has the necessary systems, policies and staffing to ensure adoption of good practice and compliance with its statutory responsibilities; and
- It supports ESFRS Strategic Aims as approved by CMT and they are being implemented effectively by the Service.
- The HSWC shall review and discuss corporate health, safety and welfare strategy prior to being submitted to CMT for approval by the ESFA;
- Advise CMT on matters of safety policy and assist in the development of guidance notes, codes of practice and safe systems of work;
- The HSWC will review and discuss corporate health, safety and welfare performance, specifically against the pre-determined leading and lagging indicators that are to be adopted;
- Provide a link with the inspectorate of the enforcing authorities (i.e. the Health & Safety Executive,) by reviewing recommendations in inspectors' reports and discussing any Enforcement Notices.

- The HSWC will provide the governance structure around outcomes of any accidents or audits specific to health, safety and welfare issues.
- The HSWC will review and discuss the annual health, safety and welfare report that will be submitted to this Committee by the Strategic Health & Safety Manager.

5. Monitoring and Reviewing of the Health, Safety & Well-being Strategy

The policies, processes and action plans that underpin this strategy will be monitored and reviewed at the quarterly Health, Safety & Well-being Committee (see Appendix A) or where major change occurs which would require revision to particular actions.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Strategy will be carried out through the following:

- Performance Indicators (on sickness absence, accidents/incidents)
- Benchmarking
- HSE targets
- Health, Safety & Well-being Committee
- Auditors – internal and external
- Employee Surveys
- Peer Reviews
- Self-Assessment against the Standards within the Workplace Wellbeing Charter
- Quarterly reports to the Fire Authority via the Scrutiny & Audit Panel.

The Assistant Director – Training & Assurance, in consultation with the Health, Safety & Well-being Committee, will review the Strategy every three years and monitor its implementation annually.

6. **References**

The following reference documents support this Strategy:

- ESFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan;
- CIPD Policy Report – "Growing the health and well-being agenda: from first steps to full potential" – January 2016;
- ACAS – Health, Work and Well-being booklet;
- HSE – Helping Great Britain work well – A New Health & Safety System Strategy Workplace Wellbeing Charter;
- IOSH – Working Well – guidance on promoting health and wellbeing at work;
- DCLG – Health, Safety & Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment;
- NICE Workplace – health: management practices – 24 June 2015