



Title of meeting: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 5th March 2024
Subject: Water Safety Management Policy
Report by: Director of Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services
Wards affected: All
Key decision: No
Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to formally adopt the Water Safety Management Policy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to formally adopt the Water Safety Management Policy.

3. Background

3.1 As the country's only island city the close proximity of water is a high risk all around the city and, as the Council is responsible for the majority of the interface between the land and the water with a small number of exceptions, a Water Safety Policy is felt necessary to ensure that we are putting in place the best practice to a common standard across all areas of open water. The Council remains responsible for the management of the land to the mean highwater mark.

3.2 The purpose of the Water Safety Management Policy is to establish a foundation for managing all council open water environments and to demonstrate a pro-active and responsible approach to water safety. By having a Water Safety Management Policy within place we anticipate it will help the Council mitigate against risk and potential future challenges.

3.3 The policy includes a systematic analysis of drowning risks across zones of the city coastline and inland open water bodies and the activities taking place within that zone. The policy references the recognised water safety organisations from which best practice guidance is obtained in relation to risk assessment and appropriate control measures at open water locations



3.4 The Water Safety Management Policy will sit above the existing operational practices for areas such as lifeguard provision, beach risk assessment and water safety signage and provide a reference framework for other directorates in order to ensure the highest quality provision across all our areas of responsibility.

3.5 Following approval by Cabinet in October 2023 to publish the draft WSMP and Risk Assessments for consultation documents were shared with 10 identified key stakeholder organisations active in water safety management and rescue services, and with the Parks Department who have responsibility for managing inland water bodies. These organisations are listed in Appendix 4. The policy was also published on the 'Your Say' section of the PCC website.

3.6 Consultation feedback was received from PCC Parks Department, Langstone Harbour Board, King's Harbour Master, Portsmouth & Southsea Volunteer Lifeguards, and National Coastwatch Institution.

3.7 The consultation feedback led to some minor revisions to the draft policy and risk assessments. These revisions are listed in Appendix 5.

3.8 A notable addition is an updated Water Safety Education approach in section 9.1 highlighting the Council's support for education delivery programmes by water safety specialists such as the RNLI.

4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 Internal audit report PCC-2122-018 Water Safety (Coastal & Inland waters) highlighted that whilst PCC has an informal strategy for water safety management it has no definitive guidance as to responsibility for water safety across all coastal and inland open water bodies across the city.

5. Integrated impact assessment

5.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 6

6. Legal implications

6.1 The Legal requirements surrounding this policy are set out at Section 5 of the Policy itself and identify the key areas of legislation that relevant to the Council's obligations and responsibilities as owners of water sites.

6.2 There are no further legal implications.



7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 The recommendations contained in this report will be implemented within the existing approved budget resource for Water Safety.

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Signed by: Stephen Baily - Director of Culture, Leisure, & Regulatory Services

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Water Safety Management Plan
- Appendix 2 - Risk Assessment for Coastal Zones
- Appendix 3 - Risk Assessment for Inland Water Bodies
- Appendix 4 - List of organisations consulted
- Appendix 5 - List of post consultation revisions
- Appendix 6 - Integrated Impact Assessment

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Cabinet Report - Water Safety v3 - Oct23	Cabinet Report - Water Safety v3 - all items present.docx

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, & Economic Development