



## **STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **COSHH Policy**

**VERSION: 1.0**

#### **1. Purpose**

Stotfold Town Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees, volunteers, contractors, councillors and members of the public who may be affected by the Council's activities.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) and to establish safe systems of work for the purchase, storage, handling, use and disposal of hazardous substances used by the Council.

The policy applies to all hazardous substances used by the Council, including cleaning chemicals, disinfectants, paints, oils, fuels, lubricants, pesticides, herbicides, graffiti removers and any other substance capable of causing harm to health.

#### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all Stotfold Town Council employees, volunteers, contractors and councillors who may be required to handle, store, transport or use hazardous substances as part of their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, Town Rangers, caretakers, cleaners, administrative staff who handle chemicals, volunteers undertaking work on behalf of the Council, contractors carrying out works at Council sites, and councillors, where their activities bring them into contact with hazardous substances.

The policy applies to all Council-owned, managed or occupied premises and land, including the Memorial Hall, Greenacre Centre, public conveniences, allotments, recreation grounds, workshops, storage facilities, offices, open spaces and any other property for which the Council has responsibility. It also applies to work undertaken off-site on behalf of the Council that involves the use or storage of hazardous substances.

#### **3. Policy Statement**

Stotfold Town Council is committed to preventing ill health and injury arising from exposure to hazardous substances used or stored as part of its activities. The Council will identify all hazardous substances used within its operations and undertake suitable and sufficient COSHH assessments to identify the risks associated with their use. Current Safety Data Sheets (SDS) will be obtained and maintained for all hazardous substances, and wherever reasonably practicable the Council will seek to eliminate the use of hazardous substances or replace them with less hazardous alternatives.



The Council will provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), information, instruction and training to employees and others who may be affected using hazardous substances. Hazardous substances will be stored safely and securely, and compliance with this policy will be monitored through inspections, audits and regular reviews. COSHH assessments will be reviewed whenever there is a significant change to a substance, process, location or method of work.

No employee, volunteer or contractor shall use a hazardous substance unless a suitable COSHH assessment has been completed, they have received appropriate instruction and training, and the required control measures and personal protective equipment are available and being used correctly.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **4.1 Town Council**

Stotfold Town Council has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 and for providing sufficient resources to implement this policy effectively. The Council will monitor health and safety performance and ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe management of hazardous substances.

##### **4.2 Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that COSHH assessments are completed, reviewed and maintained for all relevant hazardous substances used by the Council. The Town Clerk will maintain a central COSHH register, ensure that current Safety Data Sheets are obtained and retained, arrange appropriate training for employees and investigate incidents involving hazardous substances where required.

##### **4.3 Managers and Supervisors**

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees follow COSHH assessments and safe systems of work. They must monitor working practices, ensure that suitable PPE is available and maintained, and report any defects, incidents, near misses or concerns relating to hazardous substances.

##### **4.4 Employees**

Employees have a responsibility to follow COSHH assessments, risk assessments and safe systems of work at all times. They must wear any provided personal protective equipment, attend relevant training, report damaged containers, spillages, or unsafe conditions immediately, and avoid any misuse of hazardous substances. Employees must also report any symptoms of ill health that may be linked to exposure to hazardous substances.



## **5. Procedures**

### **Purchasing**

Only authorised employees may purchase hazardous substances on behalf of the Council. Before any new substance is introduced into the workplace, a current Safety Data Sheet must be obtained and reviewed, a COSHH assessment must be completed, suitable storage arrangements identified and any required personal protective equipment specified. Consideration should also be given to whether a less hazardous alternative is available.

### **Storage**

All hazardous substances shall be stored safely and securely in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the relevant Safety Data Sheet. Wherever possible, substances shall remain in their original containers, and all containers must be clearly labelled. Hazardous substances shall be kept in locked cupboards, stores or designated storage areas that are inaccessible to members of the public. Chemicals that may react dangerously with one another shall be stored separately, and all substances shall be protected from conditions that may cause deterioration, including excessive heat, frost or direct sunlight. Food and drink must never be stored in areas designated for hazardous substances.

## **6. Safe Use of Hazardous Substances**

Cleaning products such as bleach, antibacterial sprays, antibacterial wipes, floor cleaners, toilet cleaners, bathroom cleaners and descalers are routinely used by Memorial Hall cleaners, Greenacre Centre caretakers, public toilet cleaners and Town Rangers. Employees must read and follow the manufacturer's instructions before use and must never mix chemicals. Adequate ventilation must be maintained whilst cleaning, and suitable PPE, including nitrile gloves and eye protection where appropriate, must be worn. Wet floor warning signs must be displayed during cleaning activities and hands must be washed thoroughly after handling cleaning products. Any adverse reaction to cleaning chemicals must be reported immediately. Particular care must be taken when using bleach, as mixing bleach with acidic cleaning products can produce toxic chlorine gas.

Spray products, including antibacterial sprays, graffiti removers, degreasers, aerosol lubricants and paint sprays, must only be used in well-ventilated areas. Employees should avoid inhaling spray mist and ensure that members of the public are not exposed to airborne chemicals. Respiratory protective equipment must be worn where identified by the COSHH assessment, and outdoor spraying should not be undertaken in conditions where wind may cause chemicals to drift onto people, property or the environment.

Town Rangers using oils and lubricants during equipment maintenance must avoid prolonged skin contact and wear suitable protective gloves. Any contamination of the skin should be cleaned promptly, and drip trays should be used where appropriate to prevent pollution. Waste oils must be disposed of through an approved waste contractor and must never be discharged into drains or onto land.



Paints, varnishes, wood preservatives and other coatings must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and the relevant COSHH assessment. Work should be undertaken in well-ventilated areas and suitable PPE worn where necessary. Measures must be taken to prevent public access to work areas whilst painting activities are being undertaken, and all products must be stored securely after use.

Graffiti removers may contain solvents capable of causing skin irritation, eye irritation, respiratory irritation, dizziness and other adverse health effects. Such products must only be used by trained employees who have read and understood the relevant COSHH assessment. Appropriate PPE must be worn, adequate ventilation must be maintained, and members of the public must be excluded from the work area until the task has been completed safely.

## **7. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Council will provide suitable personal protective equipment where risks cannot be adequately controlled by other means. Depending on the nature of the task and substance involved, this may include gloves, chemical-resistant gloves, safety goggles, face shields, protective overalls, aprons, respiratory protective equipment and safety footwear. Employees are responsible for wearing PPE as instructed, inspecting equipment before use, reporting defects immediately and storing equipment appropriately after use.

## **8. Health Surveillance**

Where COSHH assessments identify a significant risk to health, the Council will implement appropriate health surveillance arrangements. This may include monitoring for dermatitis, respiratory conditions or sensitisation arising from exposure to hazardous substances. Employees are required to report any symptoms that may be related to workplace exposure so that appropriate action can be taken.

## **9. Training and Support**

All employees who use, handle, transport or store hazardous substances will receive appropriate information, instruction and training. Training will cover the requirements of the COSHH Regulations, the use of Safety Data Sheets, COSHH assessments, safe storage arrangements, handling procedures, emergency arrangements, PPE requirements and incident reporting procedures. Refresher training will be provided periodically and whenever significant changes occur to substances, equipment or working practices.

## **10. Compliance**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in informal management action, formal disciplinary action or other measures considered appropriate by the Council. Serious breaches of this policy that place individuals at risk of harm may be treated as gross misconduct and dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures.



## 11. Monitoring and Review

The Town Clerk will monitor compliance with this policy through workplace inspections, reviews of the COSHH register, investigation of incidents and near misses, monitoring of training records and periodic audits. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if required by legislative changes, significant incidents, organisational changes or the introduction of new hazardous substances

## 12. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Health and Safety Policy, Lone Working Policy, Risk Assessment Policy, Accident Reporting Procedure, PPE Procedure, COSHH Assessments and relevant Safety Data Sheets. It also supports compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 2022.

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### Version History:

| Version No | Date Approved/ Reviewed | Author/ Owner | Summary Of Changes | Responsible Committee    | Review Date |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1          | June 2026               | Deputy Clerk  | Adoption           | Governance and Resources | June 2028   |