1. **Introduction**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (the Council) has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 and the Control of Asbestos Regulations (NI) 2012 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and others who may be affected by its activities.

This policy statement and associated Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) has been developed to manage the risk associated with asbestos materials; prevent exposure and the spread of asbestos; and to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidance.

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral that possesses several useful properties such as heat and electrical insulation; chemical resistance; fire resistance and high tensile strength. Consequently, it was used widely as a material in buildings, structures, plant and services in the UK up until 1999.

Exposure to asbestos fibres can lead to serious health consequences as all types of asbestos are classified as Category 1 carcinogens. There are three main asbestos-related diseases: asbestosis (a form of pneumoconiosis with scarring and inflammation of lung tissue), lung cancer and mesothelioma (a cancer of the pleura – the lining of the lung or the peritoneum). In addition, asbestos can cause a number of other conditions, including pleural thickening and effusions. These conditions may result in the death of the person affected and symptoms are often latent

Groups at higher risk of exposure to asbestos fibres include those working in maintenance, construction, demolition and allied trades and professions. These workers could come across asbestos containing materials (ACMs) during their normal work and potentially disturb them if they do not know they contain asbestos. ACMs which are managed and monitored to ensure that they remain intact and are not releasing fibres into the environment do not pose a risk of harm. However, it is only through the careful management of ACMs that the risks associated with asbestos will be controlled to acceptable levels.

1. **Policy Statement:**

The Council recognises that exposure to asbestos fibres can present a serious risk to health and is committed to effectively manage asbestos occurrences within its buildings to protect the health and safety of its staff, contractors, clients and visitors who may be affected by their activities, along with ensuring compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation.

# Policy Objectives

The Council is the “Duty Holder” for all properties within its estate as defined under Regulation 4 “the duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises” of the Control of Asbestos Regulations (NI) 2012 and, as such, has responsibilities to:

1. Identify asbestos containing materials at their premises;
2. Assess the risk that these materials pose;
3. Carry out any required remedial actions; and
4. Design and implement a plan to manage the ongoing risk, including;

* Ensuring ACMs are maintained and construction / maintenance works are controlled;
* information is provided to those who require it; and
* procedures are put in place to manage incidents and emergencies.

The Council through the successful implementation of its AMP will meet these policy objectives.

# Scope

This policy applies to all Council owned and leased premises constructed prior to 2000, to any extent, under the Council’s control. The policy and associated AMP sets down the framework by which the Council, all employees, contractors and visitors will be expected to meet their legal duties.

The AMP details the requirements and standards that must be complied with to prevent uncontrolled disturbance of ACMs resulting in possible exposure affecting employees, visitors and external contractors; to prevent the spread of any asbestos contamination and to achieve and maintain compliance with all applicable health and safety legislation.

The AMP provides a standardised approach for all persons who are responsible for managing workplaces, premises and facilities and work activities, thus ensuring consistency across the Council.

# Definitions

**Duty Holder** – Organisation responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant legal duty.

**Carcinogen** – a substance capable of causing cancer in living tissue.

**Asbestos containing materials (ACMs)** – is any material containing more than one percent asbestos.

# Related Policies and Guidance

This document should be read in conjunction with the following: -

* Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Health & Safety Policy
* Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Health & Safety Policy Organisational Procedures
* Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Asbestos Management Plan (AMP)

Other relevant statutory regulations and documents to be consulted as part of the policy include: -

* Health & Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978
* Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000
* Control of Asbestos at Works Regulations (NI) 2012
* HSE (2013), Managing and working with asbestos: Approved Code of Practice and guidance, L143 (2nd ed).

1. **Equality Screening & Good Relations**

The policy has been equality screened and the outcome is that it not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required).

1. **Rural Impact Assessment**

Due regard to rural needs has been considered and a rural needs impact assessment has been completed.

# Document Owner

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# Document Authorisation

SMT 3rd March 2020

CMT 28th February 2020

Corporate Health & Safety Committee 28th February 2020

Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee (for noting) 12th March 2020

# Effective Date

12th March 2020

# Review Date

Review of Policy at least biannually.