

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY 2010  
title: GENERAL REPORT  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
principal author: JAMES RUSSELL, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MANAGER

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of relevant issues which have arisen since the last meeting.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The following reports generally relate to the Council's ambitions to make people's lives healthier and safer.

## 2. PANDEMIC FLU – UPDATE

2.1 Since the report to the last meeting of this Committee, there have been the following developments

2.2 Death attributable to Pandemic Flu in the UK remains low, the current UK total is believed to be 298 (as of 18 December) . For England it is 203, Scotland 55, Wales 26 and N. Ireland 14;

- At the time of writing this report, the majority of cases continue to be mild. There is no sign that the virus is changing. It is not becoming more severe or developing resistance to anti-virals.
- The main burden of flu-like illness nationally remains in the 1-4 and 5-14 years age groups.
- There has been a further rise in related hospitalisations. In the order of 523 patients being in hospital in England (@18/12). The proportion of hospitalised patients in critical care was 113.
- The H1N1 vaccination programme for priority groups and healthcare workers continues to progress. To date, 3 million doses have been given to Phase 1 priority groups. This includes 101,00 doses given to pregnant women, and 343,000 doses to front line health workers.
- Advice remains 'people should still speak to their GP if they are concerned. In fact - it is important to stress that people with underlying health conditions, pregnant women, and parents with children under the age of one should speak to their GP if they have symptoms'.
- Some people find that they get better by staying in bed, drinking plenty of water and taking over the counter flu medication.

2.3 The Corporate Pandemic Flu Working Group consisting of a number of key officers

continues to meet on a 4 weekly basis to monitor developments. Staff receive updates on the current situation in Backchat.

## 2. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY LIAISON MEETING

- 2.1.1 A liaison meeting was held on 7 December 2009. A copy of the minutes are attached as Appendix A to this report.

## 3 DOG FOULING UPDATE

- 3.1 In the past 12 months I am please to report considerable ongoing effort and dedication by our Dog Warden Officers. A significant number of high profile and out of hours/weekend patrols are being undertaken. Following the return of Adele Scott, the service has also recommenced school visits/education and has already achieved the annual target of 5.

- 3.2 In the past 12 months, a total of 7 fixed penalties have been issued.

## 4 FOOD SAFETY UPDATE

- 4.1 As required by the Food Safety Plan, I need to advise you that the current annual inspection programme is behind in relation to achieving the annual target. Unfortunately, there has been an abnormal rise in the usual number of 'significant' gastro-enteric events within the Borough since April 2009. The Food Team has been required to investigate 8 incidents involving between 20 and 50 persons reported with clinical symptoms, which is well above the number we normally investigate. This work naturally takes priority and by necessity involves significant officer time. Every effort will be made to achieve the annual food premise target by the yearend but will, by necessity, be at the expense of other pro-active work.

## 5 ANNUAL REPORT – DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

- 5.1 The above report has recently been published by the East Lancashire NHS/PCT. For your assistance, I attach the introduction and Chapter 1 titled 'Saving a Million Years of Life' as Appendix B to this report. The full document can be obtained form the East Lancs. PCT website –

[www.eastlancspct.nhs.uk/about-us/annual-reports/additional/](http://www.eastlancspct.nhs.uk/about-us/annual-reports/additional/)

## 6 RADIOACTIVITY IN FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT 2008

- 6.1 This is the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the monitoring of radioactivity in food and the environment. The report focuses on key information that shows that food is safe and the public's exposure to ionising radiation around the 39 nuclear sites around the UK is within legal limits.

- 6.2 The report generally concludes that levels monitored are either stable or continuing to reduce.

- 6.3 The environmental effects of Chernobyl continued to be monitored in 2008. There remain a total of 373 farms or part farms which are subject to restrictions (9 in England, 5 in Scotland and 359 in Wales). There are approximately 190,000 sheep within these restricted areas.

## 7 EVENT SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP – UPDATE

7.1 I am pleased to report the conclusion of another successful year by the Event Safety Advisory Group in the effective co-ordination of the multi-agency group who dealt with 65 significant outdoor events occurring over 95 days within the Borough. This group operates in accordance with the Ribble Valley 'Event Safety Policy' to ensure safe, compliant and considerate events.

## 8 RECENT CHANGES TO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

8.1 I am pleased to report that as of the New Year, and for the foreseeable future, the Domestic Environmental Health service has been combined with the Commercial Environmental Health Section for the duration of Rachael Stott's maternity leave.

8.2 As a result, Matthew Riding has relocated to Level D but remains contactable on the same telephone extension.

## DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For further information please ask for James Russell, extension 4466.

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