

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 20 JANUARY 2010  
title: HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY  
submitted by: HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISOR  
principal author: PHIL DODD

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To ask members to approve a revised Health and Safety Policy for the authority.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions – the Health and Safety Policy is the overarching document for Health and Safety and provides a comprehensive picture of how the Council complies with its legal obligations, the Policy therefore supports the council's ambition to make peoples lives safer and healthier for staff as well as for the community.
- Community Objectives - the Health and Safety Policy contributes to the promotion of health and well being within the community.
- Corporate Priorities - the Health and Safety Policy and incorporated policies and procedures are fundamental to ensuring a well-managed Council which takes responsibility for managing Health and Safety risks effectively using a structured and cost effective approach.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, section 2.3 requires "except in such cases as may be prescribed, it shall be the duty of every employer to prepare and as often as may be appropriate revise a written statement of his general policy with respect to the health and safety at work of his employees and the organisation and arrangements for the time being in force for carrying out that policy, and to bring the statement and any revisions of it to the notice of all his employees."

2.2 This document replaces pages 121 to 124 of the staff handbook.

2.3 In summary, the Health and Safety Policy is a snapshot of how the council manages health and safety. Within this there is an outline of the Safety Management System, see appendix 1, in the same way the policy must be integrated within the Safety Management System to ensure that they both reflect what is actually happening within the Council.

2.4 The Health and Safety Policy sets a clear direction for the Council to follow. The Policy will contribute to all aspects of performance as part of a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement and the Councils responsibilities to people and the environment will be met in ways which fulfil the spirit and letter of the law.

2.5 The Policy is arranged in 3 Sections: -

Statement of Intent

The statement of intent outlines the Councils overall philosophy towards the management of health, safety and welfare. This section will be published, signed and dated by the Chief Executive. (This section will be supplied to persons requesting a copy of our Health and safety Policy).

Organisation

This section demonstrates the distribution of safety responsibility throughout the council. It identifies individuals responsible at each management level by position and specifies duties and accountability.

Arrangements

The "arrangements" are the systems, procedures, standards and manuals necessary to put the policy into effect. This section outlines how health and safety will be achieved within the council and will cross-refer to internal systems, procedures, standards and other key documents.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 Prime responsibility for accident and ill health prevention rests with management. Accidents, ill health and incidents are seldom random events. They generally arise from failures of control and involve multiple contributory elements. The immediate cause may be human or technical failure, but they usually arise from organisational failings which are the responsibility of management. The aim of this Policy is to create an effective framework to maximise the contribution of individuals and groups to the achievement of Health and Safety objectives, in the same way as other Council objectives, this is recognised explicitly by making Health and safety a line management responsibility.
- 3.2 The approach has to start at the top. Visible and active support, strong leadership and commitment of the Chief Executive, Directors, Senior Managers and Elected Members are fundamental to the effective implementation of this Policy.
- 3.3 The consequences of not implementing the Health and Safety Policy.

The HSE have powers of entry, obtaining information, issuing improvement and prohibition notices and prosecution.

Offences are set out in section 33 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASWA) and maximum penalties are: -

- in a Magistrates Court the maximum penalty will be imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or a fine not exceeding £20,000, or both.
- in the Crown Court the maximum penalty will be imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or an unlimited fine, or both.

#### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

##### 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources: the revised Health and Safety Policy will ensure that council resources are directed appropriately when dealing with all Health and Safety matters.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal: the requirement for a Health and Safety Policy is set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Political: there are no political implications.
- Reputation: failure to implement an effective Health and Safety Policy could lead to the issue of improvement or prohibition notices or prosecution resulting in loss of reputation.

#### 5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

##### 5.1 Approve the revised Health and Safety Policy as attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISOR

For further information please ask for Phil Dodd, extension 4526.

# Appendix 1



