

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: WEDNESDAY, 28 MAY 2014  
title: ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES  
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## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report presents a review of the management of health and safety by the Council during the period April 2013 to March 2014.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – Effective management of health and safety risks supports the Council's ambition to make people's lives safer and healthier for staff as well as for the community.
- Community Objectives – Effective risk control systems for staff, contractors and members of the public supports the Community Strategy theme to promote health and well-being within the community.
- Corporate Priorities – Health and safety reports provide the information needed by people in the Council who have particular responsibilities within the health and safety management system; these people include directors, senior managers, managers, supervisors, health and safety professionals and employees/safety representatives.
- Legal – To ensure legal compliance with the Health and safety at Work etc. Act, applicable Regulations and Approved Codes of Practice and, in particular, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 5, (health and safety arrangements).

## 2 OVERVIEW

2.1 Senior managers have again shown commitment and a positive attitude towards the Health, Safety and Welfare of their staff and the overall culture continues to improve. In the previous staff survey 73% of staff thought that the Council provides a safe and healthy work environment, however, just 37.8% of staff thought that their Manager explained risk assessments to them to keep them safe at work and good progress has been made in this area. Health and Safety continues to be an agenda item at all staff meetings and features appear regularly in Backchat and on Health and Safety Notice Boards. The Chief Executive and Senior Managers attend the Health and Safety Committee meetings, which serve as a forum for consultation with Unions and employees, the meetings are well attended and effective. The Health and Safety Management of the Refuse Collection Service has been subject to an intervention inspection by the Health and Safety Executive with no intervention found to be necessary.

2.2 Effective management of health and safety risks helps the Council to:

- maximise the well-being and performance of its employees;
- stop people being killed, injured or suffering ill-health by their work;
- prevent damage to its reputation in the eyes of customers, suppliers, other stakeholders and the wider community;

- encourage better relationships with contractors, and more effective contracted activities; and
- minimise the likelihood of prosecution and consequent penalties.

2.3 The Ribble Valley Borough Council Health and Safety Management System utilises the model provided in HS(G)65 1997, POPMAR, (Policy, Organising, Planning, Measuring performance, Auditing and Review). This guidance was refreshed and simplified in December 2013 and explains the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach showing how a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management can be achieved.

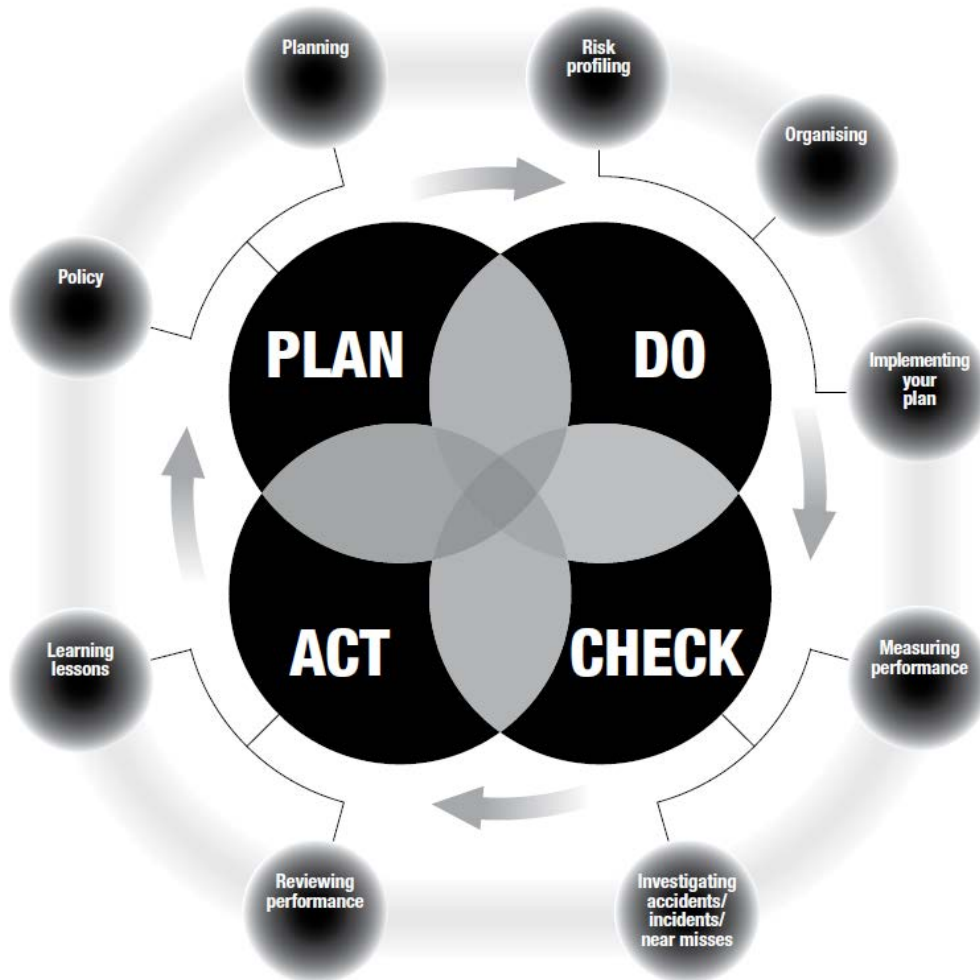


Figure 1. HSG65, 2013

2.4 The simpler “Plan, Do, Check, Act” approach treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system, however, Ribble Valley Borough Council will continue with the POPMAR model of managing health and safety as this system is still appropriate for the risk level and complexity of the organisation and already incorporates the core elements identified in the refreshed guidance.

2.5 HSE encourages a common sense and practical approach as part of the everyday process of running an organisation and an integral part of workplace behaviours and attitudes, as does Ribble Valley Borough Council. The core elements, underpinned by an understanding of the profile of risks the organisation creates or faces links back to wider risk management and is pictured below.



### 3 POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 A new Policy and Procedure for the Reporting and Investigation of Accidents and Incidents has been produced. Carrying out health and safety investigations provides a deeper understanding of the risks associated with the Council's work activities. Blaming individuals is ultimately fruitless and sustains the myth that accidents and cases of ill health are unavoidable when the opposite is true. Well thought-out risk control measures, combined with adequate supervision, monitoring and effective management ensures that work activities are safe. Health and safety investigations are an important tool in developing and refining our risk management system.
- 3.2 The Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) policy outlines the procedures that are to be adopted when any employee, visitor or contractor experiences an accident or incident whilst working on, or visiting, Council premises. This includes Council employees working at other locations on Council business.
- 3.3 In order to implement this policy effectively it is important that all accidents and incidents, irrespective of the resulting or potential injury or damage, be reported according to these procedures.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, the Council has defined accidents and incidents as:

**Accident:** any unplanned event that results in personal injury, ill health or damage to property, plant or equipment as a result of work activity.

**Incident:** the term **incident** includes **near-misses** and **undesired circumstances**, where there is the potential for injury or the incident has resulted in threats to staff, damage to Council property or a financial loss.

**Dangerous occurrence:** one of a number of specific, reportable adverse events, as defined in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).

This procedure establishes a systematic process to ensure that accidents, incidents and resulting absences are reported in a timely manner and that, following investigation, appropriate corrective actions are identified and implemented.

## 4 THE COUNCIL'S SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS

4.1 Construction – this covers a range of operations including property maintenance and management, refurbishment, demolition and excavation, as well as specific hazards such as asbestos and legionella. Consultation on proposals to replace the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 (CDM 2007) is taking place. Key changes being proposed include:

- replacement of the CDM co-ordinator role with a principal designer role within the project team;
- introducing a duty on information, instruction, training and supervision to replace the duty to assess competence;
- removal of the domestic client exemption and transfer of these limited duties to the contractor/designer; and
- replacement of the Approved Code of Practice, ACoP, with tailored guidance.

4.2 Transport – this includes waste transfer station and depot management, occupational road risk and vehicle operations and maintenance; In 2011/12 7 claims were made in respect of Own Damage, settled for £4400; and 1 in respect of Third Party Damage, settled for £1650. In 2012/13 1 claim was made in respect of Own Damage, settled for £550; and 3 in respect of Third Party Damage, settled for £1200. In 2013/14 3 claims were made in respect of Own Damage, settled for £2370; and 2 in respect of Third Party Damage, settled for £4520.

4.3 Fire – this is an important area due to the potential severity of any incidents and the size of the authority's property portfolio.

4.4 Mental health problems – these are the biggest cause of sickness absence in local government. Stress, anxiety and depression are the main issues, 396 working days were lost at Ribble Valley in the year 2013/2014 compared with 173 working days lost the 2012/2013 year, a considerable increase. This is an area where improvement should be prioritised.

4.5 Musculoskeletal injuries – bad backs, muscle damage and sprains are not just caused by lifting or moving heavy things, repetitive tasks such as intensive keyboard use can also be to blame along with slip or trip accidents, 31 working days were lost at Ribble Valley in the 2012/2013 year due to this type of injury, this compares with 585 in 2011/2012.

4.6 Waste Management – Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum. WISH is a multi-party forum made up of representatives from the HSE, main trade associations, trade unions, recycling organisations, and national and local governing bodies. The WISH Forum has created a blueprint which outlines 24 immediate action points under 5 strategic themes:

- Providing strong leadership;
- Involving the workforce;
- Building competence;
- Creating healthier and safer workplaces;
- Providing support for small to medium sized employers.

The blueprint is intended to cover the five-year period up to 2018; WISH will be reviewing the plan on a yearly basis.

- 4.7 On Tuesday 17th September 2013 two Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive, Field Operations Directorate, Shellie Bee, (Lead) and David Myrtle arrived at Salthill Depot at 09.30 to conduct the first part of their planned intervention inspection visit.

The HSE inspection is to evaluate and assess the performance of Ribble Valley Borough Council when procuring and managing municipal waste and recycling contracts or services as client, the management of in-house waste services and the implementation of policies, procedures and safe systems of work on site.

A file containing relevant evidence of compliance for all sections of the inspection proforma was provided to the inspectors, they took the file away for examination and returned the next day to spend time with the crews to confirm that policies and procedures were being implemented "on the ground".

In their summing up, later that day, the inspectors said that RVBC's standards for managing and implementing the safe operation of the waste and recycling service were satisfactory and that there would not be any intervention required by them.

- 4.8 The HSE Fees for Intervention (FFI) scheme began on Monday, 1 October 2012. The scheme places a duty on the HSE to recover its costs for carrying out its regulatory functions. Inspectors who identify material breaches at the sites they visit and are required to intervene will charge organisations £124.00 an hour for the time they spend investigating and resolving the breaches.
- 4.9 There were no prosecutions, improvement notices or prohibition notices issued to RVBC by the HSE during 2013/14.

## 5 SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

- 5.1 The Council's Health and Safety Policy clearly sets out how the Council will manage the Health, Safety and Welfare of all employees and others who may be affected by its undertakings, therefore the health and safety goal of the Council is to effectively implement all sections of the Policy.

- 5.2 Overall, again, 2013/2014 was a positive year in terms of health and safety management and achievements include:

5.2.1 Adoption of the new Policy and Procedure for the Investigation of Accidents and Incidents. Management of Occupational Road Risk Policy setting out the Council's commitment to effectively manage "at work driving" activities and setting out the goals and arrangements for putting the policy into effect.

5.2.2 A positive result from the HSE Inspection/Intervention of the Refuse Collection Service where no "Fees for Intervention" were incurred.

5.2.3 The Ribble Valley Borough Council Drivers Handbook has been revised and updated to include all drivers including fleet, lease, casual and essential car users and has been issued to all staff who drive for work.

5.2.4 The Health and Safety Advisor continues to play a proactive role in advising event organisers in the management of event safety and the production of Event Management Plans. Notable successes in 2013 were the Clitheroe Food Festival, The Clitheroe Bonfire and the Circus Funtasia on the Castle Field.

5.2.5 The Environmental Health Service, including Building Control Officers, attended a 1 day course in Lone Working and Personal Safety which enables them to:

- examine risk Assessments and lone working practices;
- understand the threat to personal safety;
- identify some conflict management models including signs of escalation;
- understand the law relating to self-defence;
- practice some non-aggressive physical intervention skills to protect themselves and others from assault.

5.2.6 8 members of staff were trained in “Asbestos Awareness”, which included:

- the properties of asbestos and its affect on health, including the increased risk of lung cancer for asbestos workers who smoke;
- the types, uses and likely occurrence of asbestos and asbestos containing materials, ACMs, in buildings and plant;
- the general procedures to be followed to deal with an emergency, for example an uncontrolled release of asbestos dust into the workplace;
- how to avoid the risks from asbestos, for example for building work no employee should carry out work which disturbs the fabric of a building unless the employer has confirmed that ACM are not present.

5.2.7 Joint Workplace Inspections with Safety Representatives from Unison have taken place regularly throughout the year. Any issues raised were speedily resolved and a positive working relationship with the union continues.

5.2.8 Significant proactive and reactive work has been undertaken providing a wide range of support both corporately and operationally.

## 6 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT STATISTICS

### 6.1 Accidents

In the 2013 – 2014 period there were 64 accidents, 48 of which involved members of the public, of the 16 involving RVBC staff 2 of the accidents resulted in 18 lost working days. All of the accidents to members of the public occurred at the pool mostly involving slips and trips and collisions. The Refuse Collection service accounted for 9 of the accidents to RVBC staff however only 3 days lost time resulted in this service. (See appendix 1.) The Health and Safety Advisor will continue to investigate accidents and incidents, along with managers, supervisors and safety representatives in accordance with the Policy and Procedure for the Reporting and Investigation of Accidents and Incidents in order to prevent reoccurrence and further lost time incidents and associated losses.

### 6.2 Incidents

The total number of “incidents”, no loss events, reported by employees was 3, the most serious involving a racial abuse aimed at one of the Civil Enforcement Officers carrying out his duties at Edisford Car Park, the Police continue to investigate this incident. The remaining incidents were of a minor nature.

## 7 TARGETS FOR 2013/2014

### 7.1 Construction

- 7.1.1 Monitor the implementation of the Policy for the Health and Safety Management and Control of Contractors and Consultants to ensure compliance at procurement stage and during works on site.
- 7.1.2 Continue to implement the Council's Control of Asbestos and Legionella Bacteria Policies and carry out monitoring, sampling and testing as appropriate.
- 7.2.3 Ensure the duties imposed by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007, are carried out for all applicable design and construction works.

### 7.2 Transport

- 7.2.1 Implement the Council Policy for the Management of Occupational Road Risk, (MORR), reviewing and revising the Council's risk assessments for driving vehicles including, the "grey fleet", and carry out driving assessments where appropriate.
- 7.2.2 Continue to monitor the number of incidents resulting in damage to refuse collection vehicles and implement an initiative to reduce the number of incidents and lower the burden of repair costs for vehicles and property.

### 7.3 Fire

- 7.3.1 Implement the corporate policy for Fire Safety which identifies roles and responsibilities for those employees with duties in the event of Fire and Emergency in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005.
- 7.3.2 Carry out basic fire safety refresher training for employees and further specific Fire Safety training for all Fire Marshals in accordance with the Fire Safety (Employees' Capabilities) (England) Regulations 2010.
- 7.3.3 Ensure fire alarm testing and practice evacuations of public buildings are carried out regularly and liaise with the Fire and Rescue Service during statutory inspections and audits.

### 7.4 Mental Health Problems

- 7.4.1 Monitor instances of work related stress symptoms including anxiety and depression and assist Managers and Personnel Section in the risk assessment process for individual cases.
- 7.4.2 Work alongside the Personnel Section in developing strategies for reducing the number of working days lost due to work related stress through implementation of the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards and the Ribble Valley Borough Council Policy on the Management of Stress at Work.

### 7.5 Musculoskeletal Injuries

- 7.5.1 Review workstation risk assessments for all users of display screen equipment in accordance with Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002).
- 7.5.2 Conduct Advanced Display Screen Assessments where musculo-skeletal disorders have been identified and ensure ergonomic adjustments are carried out and monitored.
- 7.5.3 Continue to monitor manual handling activities carried out by Council employees and where necessary conduct risk assessments where appropriate.
- 7.5.4 Provide in-house manual handling training and refresher sessions for all employees where appropriate and in particular in the Refuse Collection Service to reduce the number of working days lost due to musculo-skeletal and work related upper limb disorders.

## 7.6 Waste Management

- 7.6.1 Waste collection and recycling continues to be one of the highest risk activities undertaken by the Council. Transport operations associated with collection activities (municipal and commercial) and at a range of waste management and recycling sites represent the most significant risk of serious or fatal accidents to workers and members of the public. 'Struck by moving vehicle' accounts for about only 4% of all reported accidents, however, over 40% of all fatalities fall within this category. The new strategy of the HSE is one of targeting and reducing inspections, however waste and recycling is one of the comparatively high risk areas where proactive intervention will be retained, these interventions will include both in-house and contracted collection services.
- 7.6.2 Continue to liaise with the HSE and monitor the progress of the WISH strategy, guidance and blueprint development.
- 7.6.3 The teams continue to operate on a "Group Task and Finish" basis. This type of system is recognised by the HSE as requiring a greater level of management and supervision as it may encourage workers to rush the job and take dangerous short cuts, robust monitoring of the service, in-house and contracted, must therefore be carried out with instances of non-compliance reported to supervisors, managers and contract managers and appropriate enforcement action applied.

## 7.7 Events

Provide Health and Safety support and input for events including the Clitheroe Food Festival and the Clitheroe Bonfire alongside the Clitheroe Bonfire Committee.

## 7.8 Accidents and Incidents

Implement the Policy and Procedure for the Reporting and Investigation of Accidents and Incidents.

## 7.9 First Aid

Provide a defibrillator for emergency use at Salthill Depot following the campaign by the NHS and the British Heart Foundation.



## 7.10 Professional Development

- 7.10.1 The Health and Safety Advisor will be continuing his professional development by attending courses and seminars arranged by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, IOSH, The Institution of Civil Engineers, ICE, both of which he holds Graduate Membership and the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management of which he is a full member.
- 7.10.2 The Health and Safety Advisor continues to Chair the Lancashire Local Authority Health and Safety Advisor's Forum and regularly attends evening meetings of the Manchester and District IOSH Branch and Public Services Section.
- 7.10.3 The Health and Safety Advisor continues to chair the RVBC Health and Safety Committee meetings.
- 7.10.4 The Health and Safety Advisor is to attend an Emergency Planning Course at the Emergency Planning College.

## 8 RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 8.1 Reviews of risk assessments for the operations carried out at Salthill Depot will take place and further development of the process will be implemented for the remaining sections at the Council Offices to ensure that the risk assessment database is complete. Risk assessment sessions where staff and managers are able to get involved in the production of their own risk assessments and where any necessary training can be carried out by the Health and Safety Advisor are key elements to the RVBC Health and Safety Management System.
- 8.2 All managers need to remain aware of the importance of their personal behaviour in supporting positive health and safety performance and act accordingly. Encouraging supervisors and staff to take ownership of the risk assessment process and to actively implement the control measures identified.

## 9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Chair of the HSE, Judith Hackitt, has previously stated that the waste management and recycling industry has grown rapidly over the past decade in response to the environmental challenge. Unfortunately, it remains an industry with a poor health and safety performance – with fatality rates reaching over ten times the all industry average – second only to agriculture.
- 9.2 Local authorities continue to have a major role to play in reducing these high rates of fatal injury, and the high rates of other injuries which accompany them. They are the clients for this work if it is contracted out, and are the direct employers if the service is delivered in-house. HSE is very aware of the competing pressures on local authorities. One key principle is that there is no need for this to be seen as a trade off – meeting recycling targets and achieving improvement in health and safety performance are compatible and complimentary goals.
- 9.3 At Ribble Valley Borough Council Accident/incident rates are improving with a corresponding reduction in lost working days due to accident injuries, down from 83 to 3. Effective monitoring of safe working practices is essential in maintaining this standard. The in-house collection and disposal of paper waste re-introduced manual handling of sacks to our systems and there were no reported injuries in the service

during 2013/2014, nevertheless close control and management will continue to be important in managing this risk.

- 9.4 Health and Safety leadership must continue at the top, the attitude, behaviour and example of leadership at Chief Executive and Director level must continue to permeate throughout management and supervisory levels so that everyone knows what they need to do and that they have the skills, abilities and resources to do their jobs safely.

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PD/PERSONNEL/280514

### Accidents split between members of the public and staff 2013/2014

