

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2010
title: FIRE SAFETY POLICY
submitted by: HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISOR
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Members of the new Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Plans for the Council Offices and the Civic Suite.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The Fire Safety Policy is the overarching document covering the Council's strategy for the management of fire risks and provides a comprehensive picture of how the Council complies with its legal obligations; the Policy therefore supports the Council's ambition to make people's lives safer and healthier for staff as well as for the community.
- Community Objectives - The Fire Safety Policy contributes to the promotion of health and well being within the community.
- Corporate Priorities - The Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Plans are fundamental to ensuring a well-managed Council, which takes responsibility for managing fire risks effectively using a structured and cost effective approach.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (hereinafter referred to as the "Fire Safety Order") together with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and other associated fire safety legislation and Codes of Practice, impose duties on all employers in respect of fire safety at work.

2.2 The Fire Safety Policy is structured along the same lines as the Council's Health and Safety Policy, ie it contains a statement of commitment, roles and responsibilities of persons charged with implementing the Policy and detail arrangements. It is critical that those persons nominated in the Organisation section of the policy are aware of the arrangement for which they have responsibility (see Appendix 1).

2.3 Fundamental to the success of this policy is the responsibility and co-operation of all employees and Members for fire safety at work.

2.4 The Fire Safety Policy sets a clear direction for the Council to follow. The Policy will contribute to fire safety performance as part of a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement and the Council's 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 Policy Statement outlines the Council's overall philosophy towards the Management of Fire Safety and can be seen as the Council's mission statement

setting the direction the organisation will take and setting standards upon which to measure performance.

Organisation

This section demonstrates the distribution of fire 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 fire safety will be achieved within the Council and will cross-refer to internal systems, procedures, standards and other key documents.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRFSO), replaces or amends 118 pieces of fire-related legislation, the most significant being the repeal of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the revocation of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 (as amended).

3.2 The RRFSO places a duty on the responsible person and outlines all the measures that must be taken to ensure the safety of all that the responsible person is directly or indirectly responsible for. At the same time it allows the enforcing authority to ensure that it is enacted and sets penalties if it is not.

It requires the responsible person to:

- carry out a fire risk assessment;
- develop and produce a policy;
- develop procedures (particularly with regard to evacuation); and
- provide staff with information and training and carry out fire drills.

The responsible person must also provide and maintain:

- clear means of escape;
- signs;
- notices;
- emergency lighting;
- fire detection and alarm; and
- fire fighting equipment.

3.3 The consequences of not implementing the Fire Safety Policy.

The enforcing authority is the Local Fire and Rescue Service.

An "alterations notice" may be served by the Fire and Rescue Service when in their opinion any changes may increase the level of risk significantly.

An "enforcement notice" may be served when the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order has not been complied with, such as providing adequate fire fighting equipment or emergency lighting.

A "prohibition notice" may be served when the enforcing authority is of the opinion that the premises pose a serious threat to life.

Failure to comply with Articles 8 through 21 and 38 of the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order can result in a fine or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

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

- Resources - The new Fire Safety Policy will ensure that Council resources are directed appropriately when dealing with all Fire Safety matters.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal - The requirement for a Fire 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 Fire 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 Fire Safety Policy and Emergency Plans as attached at Appendix 1-3 of the report.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISOR

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