

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: WEDNESDAY, 10 JUNE 2015
title: HEALTH & SAFETY
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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 2014 to March 2015.

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, managers and new managers to the council have generally shown commitment and a positive attitude towards the Health, Safety and Welfare of their staff and the overall culture remains at the level seen in previous years. In the 2015 staff survey 69% of staff thought that the Council provides a safe and healthy work environment, however, just 39% of staff thought that their Manager explained risk assessments to them to keep them safe at work and progress in this area should be targeted in the coming year. 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 was subjected to an intervention inspection by the Health and Safety Executive in 2012, with no intervention found to be necessary. However, the HSE are planning to revisit Local Authority Waste Services in the 2015/2016 period, it is therefore important that current standards in the management of this service are maintained.

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.

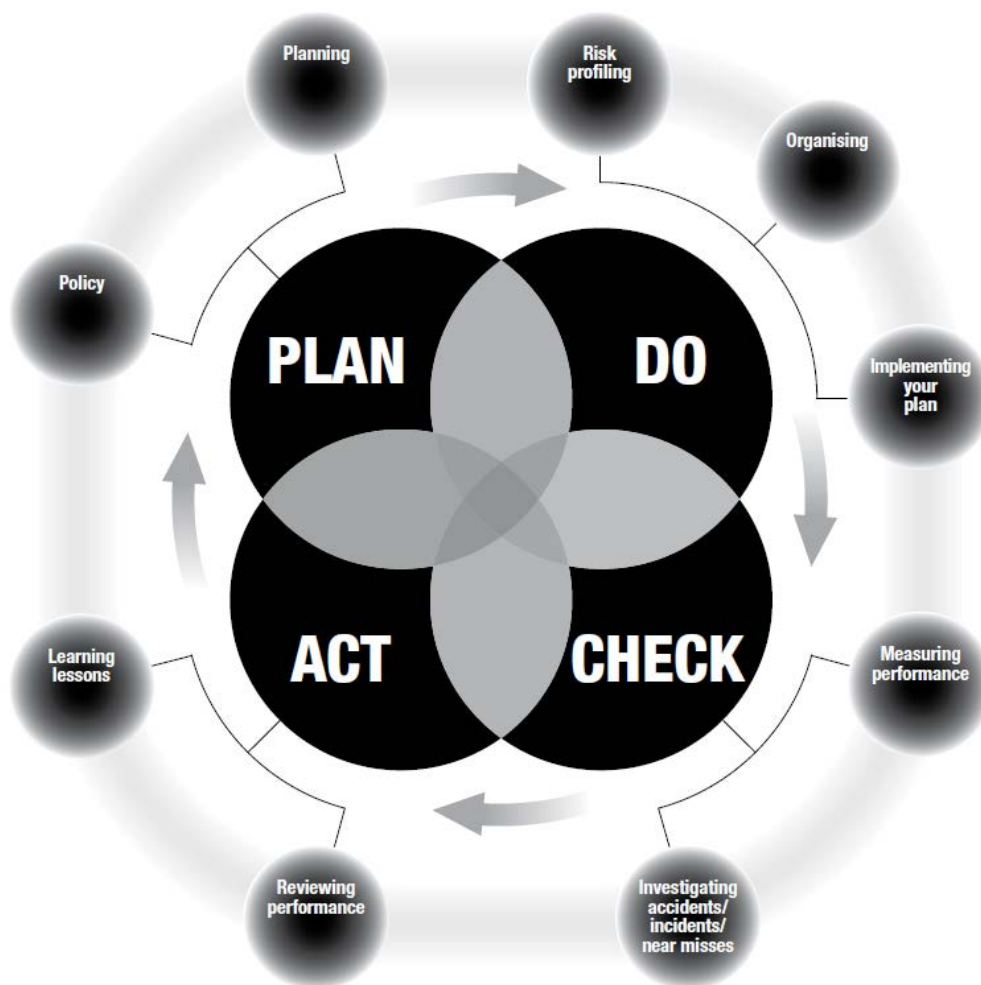


Figure 1. HSG65, 2013

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 AND PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 A new Procedure for the Excavation of Graves at the Cemetery has been produced to ensure the safety of staff, mourners and the public, risk assessments have also been reviewed to ensure that these activities are carried out and managed safely.

4 THE COUNCIL'S SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS

- 4.1 The new Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations 2015 came into force on 6 April, following a five-year evaluation of the CDM regulations 2007.

The biggest changes are the replacement of CDM co-ordinators by “principle designers”, full inclusion of domestic projects and overall attempt to reduce bureaucracy and communicate the key roles and responsibilities in a clearer manner.

RVBC must ensure that designers who take on the principal designer role have not only good technical ability but also sufficient skills, knowledge and ability in terms of design and construction health and safety risk management. When the new CDM Regulations ask for skills, knowledge and experience, it means health and safety skills, knowledge and experience not just technical design.

- 4.2 Transport – this includes waste transfer station and depot management, occupational road risk and vehicle operations and maintenance; every year, nationally, there are accidents involving transport in the workplace, some of which result in people being killed. People are knocked down, run over, or crushed against fixed parts by vehicles (e.g. HGVs, lift trucks and tractors), plant and trailers. People also fall from vehicles – whether getting on or off, working at height, or when loading or unloading. In 2014/15, 5 claims were made in respect of Own Damage, settled for £6301. 7 claims were made in respect of Third Party Damage – 6 of these were settled for £6093 and one claim is still under negotiation.

- 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. In 2014/15 there were two false alarms necessitating implementation of the Emergency Evacuation Plan for the council offices which were carried out effectively.
- 4.4 Mental health problems – these are the biggest cause of sickness absence in local government. Stress, anxiety and depression are the main issues, 367 working days were lost at Ribble Valley in the 2014/15 year involving 45 employees compared with 396 2013/14. It is estimated that a third of these incidences are work related.
- 4.5 The Health and Safety Advisor attended an Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, IOSH, one day seminar on the effective management of stress, mental illness, health surveillance, sickness absence and alcohol in the workplace.
- 4.6 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, 111 working days were lost at Ribble Valley in the year 2014/15 due to this type of injury.
- 4.7 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.

- 4.8 Following the previous inspection initiative with Local Authority (LA) waste and recycling collection activities, the HSE is to undertake a programme of further inspections to all LAs (England, Scotland and Wales) to re-assess health and safety standards in 2015/16. It applies whether the service is delivered in house or contracted out. Inspection will take place between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016.

This programme aims to:

- further improve health and safety standards during collection of household waste and recycling
- reduce the incidence of injury, ill health and days lost in the waste and recycling industry
- maintain a regulatory presence within LA waste and recycling services following:
 - i) the LA intervention that took place between 2009 – 2014 which focused on their roles as client and service provider in the procurement of waste and recycling services
 - ii) the inspection of targeted civic amenity sites in 2014/15
- focus on the most commonly identified areas for improvement by inspectors which have been published in "Summary of HSE's inspection initiative of household waste and recycling services"

- enable inspectors to assess whether LAs have learned and applied lessons from the previous inspection initiative, especially where the collection service is contracted out.
- 4.9 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. A material breach is where a Health and Safety law has been broken and an inspector judges this is serious enough for them to notify the organisation in writing. This will either be a notification of contravention, an improvement or prohibition notice, or a prosecution.
- 4.10 There were no contraventions, prosecutions, improvement notices or prohibition notices issued to RVBC by the HSE during 2014/15 and therefore no Fees for Intervention.

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, 2014/2015 was a positive year in terms of health and safety management and achievements include:
- 5.2.1 A proportionate approach to event safety management on council property including the Royal visit by the Duke of Kent, the Food Festival and the Bonfire. 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.
- 5.2.2 The procurement and siting of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) at Salthill Depot. The Public Access AED was part funded by RVBC, the British Heart Foundation and local businesses and serves the industrial estate 24/7/365 through the NHS 999 service.
- 5.2.3 Driver Assessments were carried out for RVBC staff and for the Mayoral Drivers, additionally, driving assessments were carried out for Preston City Council Mayoral Drivers in exchange for carrying out vibration measurements on our Grounds Maintenance equipment.
- 5.2.4 Risk assessments and procedures have been reviewed and updated for the Environmental Health Section Dog Wardens and Pest Control Operatives.
- 5.2.5 Refresher training in manual handling has taken place for the General Works and Refuse Collection services who additionally have received training in the use of reversing assistants. A vibration monitoring system has been set up for the grounds maintenance section to ensure vibration exposure when using trimmers and mowers is not above recommended guidelines.
- 5.2.6 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.
- 5.2.7 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 2014 – 2015 period there were 70 accidents, 27 involved RVBC employees, 43 involved members of the public, the majority being slips and trips at Ribblesdale Pool, and including 1 minor injury involving a contractor at Salthill Depot. The Refuse Collection service accounted for 7 of the accidents to RVBC staff however a considerable amount of lost time resulted from a road traffic collision involving a Loader. 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 6; there were 2 incidents of verbal abuse to staff with the remainder 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 Monitor compliance with the duties imposed by the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, (CDM 2015), 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 training and refresher sessions for all employees where appropriate and in particular in the Refuse Collection and General Works Service's to reduce the number of working days lost accidents and injuries.

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 intervention strategy of the HSE is to continue in the 2015/16 period, these interventions will include both in-house and contracted collection services. Voluntary health checks are to be carried out following the tragic waste collection vehicle accident in Glasgow in December 2014.
- 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 must therefore be carried out with instances of non-compliance with safe systems of work reported to 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 staff briefings for emergency use of defibrillators at the council offices and 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 undertakes Continuing Professional Development, CPD, with the above organisations and continues to Chair the Lancashire Local Authority Health and Safety Advisor's Forum, regularly attending 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.

8 RISK ASSESSMENTS

8.1 Managers are accountable to their Director for implementing the Council's Health and Safety Policy, encouraging and assisting in developing safety procedures and ensuring that risk assessments are in place and that established safe working practices are adhered to. They must also ensure that Supervisors are properly trained and receive the support they need to perform their duties. Staff can contribute to risk control by being involved in the development of policies, procedures and systems of work.

8.2 All managers need to remain aware of the importance of setting good examples in their own behaviour to promote positive health and safety performance by others and to nurture a positive health and safety culture by "doing things properly". Managers should encourage 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 Effective management and monitoring of safe working practices is essential in maintaining standards. The in-house collection and disposal of paper waste re-introduced manual handling of sacks to our systems and there were minor reported injuries in the service during 2014/2015, nevertheless close control and management will continue to be key 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. Senior managers have significant health and safety duties and responsibilities. These must be discharged effectively to maintain and improve safety standards and control the Council's risks to an acceptable level.

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