

General Statement

The Council is committed to achieving a positive and effective health and safety culture throughout the Council. This document sets out our policy for protecting the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by the way we conduct our activities and services.

The size and complexity of the Council's activities present many varied health and safety risks, however our major risks involve musculoskeletal injuries, stress, anxiety and depression and injuries from slips, trips and falls. It is essential therefore that we have effective health and safety management throughout the organisation.

Our aim is to achieve a level of excellence in managing health and safety above and beyond mere compliance with legal standards. It is our intention to ultimately eliminate all preventable work-related accidents, injuries and illnesses to any person, or damage to property that may result from our activities. Unsafe events, whether or not they result in property damage or injuries, may represent failures in control systems. All such instances will be investigated in order to improve controls and measure performance.

Elected Members, Directors, Heads of Service, managers, supervisors and all employees are encouraged to develop a culture, which promotes a safe and healthy working environment; by working together we can create a safer and healthier environment for ourselves and others.

Since 2004 we have had considerable success in reducing our work-related major and over-three-day injuries, with approximately 20% reduction over 2 years, this has only been achieved through the focus and considerable efforts of management, employees and trade unions.

In order to achieve our objectives we will:-

- Work on the principle that work-related accidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences and ill-health conditions can be prevented, and promote actively amongst all those associated with the Council's activities, the high standards of health and safety consciousness, discipline and individual accountability that this principle demands.
- Recognise the vital importance of the continued commitment of all employees to the highest standards of health and safety, and ensure that they have the necessary skills and support to achieve this.
- Actively promote employee participation and co-operation in establishing and maintaining measures to improve health and safety at work.

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- Ensure through systematic risk assessment programmes, that risks associated with the Council's activities are identified and then eliminated, reduced or adequately controlled.
- Implement the Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards and supporting approach.
- Revise and implement a new system for managing risks from musculoskeletal disorders and actively promote our physiotherapy service.
- Provide adequate finance and resources to successfully achieve our aims.
- Recognise that an effective health and safety culture and management system will benefit the Council, reducing financial and resource losses.
- Require that any company contracted to work for the Council applies health and safety standards that are fully consistent with our own.

The Council recognises that for this policy to be effective, the management of health and safety must be fully integrated into, and treated with at least equal status to, any other area of our work. Before making decisions at Committee and Executive Management Team we will consider any health and safety implications associated with our actions.

The Deputy Chief Executive has been appointed as Director of health and safety and he will ensure that Elected Members, Chief Executive and Directors are informed of any health and safety ramifications of any decisions and will keep the Council apprised of relevant changes to best practice and legislation.

In addition to providing competent technical advice to the Council and it's officers, the Deputy Chief Executive will ensure that an annual report is produced on the overall safety performance of the Council, from which the Executive Management Team will develop targets and objectives for the following year.


This policy will be reviewed annually to establish its effectiveness and amended where appropriate.

Signed ... 

Acting Chief Executive

Signed ... Councillor Susan Watson

Chair – Personnel Committee

Signed ... 

Corporate Head of Personnel

Date:.....September 2008.....

Council Health and Safety Policy

Organisation and Management Arrangements

This part of the policy explains how we develop and implement our organisation and arrangements for health and safety. It describes the way we manage the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring, review, and auditing of preventative and protective measures.

This is achieved by securing management control of the organisation; encouraging the co-operation of employees and safety representatives; ensuring the communication of necessary information throughout the organisation; and securing the competence of employees and the provision of adequate specialist advice.

Management Arrangements

The Elected Members of the Council

Elected Members have a collective role in providing health and safety leadership to the Council.

In order to provide this leadership Elected Members will ensure that they address all of the health and safety implications of their decisions and ensure adequate resources are provided to eliminate or manage risks within their portfolios.

Acting Chief Executive

The Acting Chief Executive has overall responsibility for health and safety within the Council and particularly for the Council Health and Safety Policy. He is responsible for major policy decisions, and arranging adequate provision of finance and resources, based upon developed risk assessment principles.

Specifically the Acting Chief Executive will:-

- Ensure that all actions reinforce the objective of eliminating all unsafe acts.
- Address all the health and safety implications of his decisions.
- Be kept informed about any significant health and safety failures, and the outcome of the investigations into their causes.
- Regularly monitor the performance of Directors to ensure they have carried out their health and safety responsibilities.

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The Corporate Head of Personnel

The Acting Chief Executive has given the Corporate Head of Personnel responsibilities for the organisation and arrangements for health and safety for the whole Council.

The Corporate Head of Personnel will:-

- Report to Elected Members, the Chief Executive and EMT any relevant changes to best practice, legislation, and corporate policy.
- Ensure that health and safety risk management issues are properly addressed, both by EMT and the wider Council.
- Review the Council Health and Safety Policy to ensure that it is a living document, which remains effective and reflects the current priorities of the Council.
- Ensure that health and safety management is fully integrated and implemented throughout the Council
- Act upon matters related to health and safety that cannot be resolved within Directorates, and/or are related to problems that are outside the control of a Directorate.
- Ensure the establishment of and implementation of an audit process throughout the Council to determine the efficiency, effectiveness and reliability of the total health and safety management system and that where necessary, plans are drawn up for corrective action.
- Ensure that a detailed annual corporate health and safety report is produced and that it's agreed recommendation are effectively implemented. This will highlight initiatives and areas where improvements are sought and will form the framework for Directors when devising their Directorate annual plans.
- Ensure that relevant Council Committee and portfolio holders are informed of all health and safety matters with resource implications and any significant failing and enforcement action taken by statutory agencies.
- Actively seek employee co-operation on health and safety systems.
- Manage a high quality health and safety team and occupational health service.
- Co-ordinate and proactively lead the Central Health and Safety Forum.
- Act as the first point of contact with health and safety enforcement agencies, and co-ordinate all non-routine interactions with them.

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Directors

Directors have overall responsibility for health and safety within their Directorate. In order to discharge this responsibility they will demonstrate a genuine commitment to pursuing high standards of health and safety by integrating the principles of risk management into general business activity.

Specifically Directors will: -

- Have a Directorate health and safety policy which establishes strategies to implement the policy and specifies a structure for planning, measuring, reviewing and auditing the Directorate management system.
- Review the Directorate policy when significant changes may affect the implementation and/or effectiveness of the policy, but at least annually.
- Have a Health and Safety Working Group made up of management representatives from each service area or division of the directorate.
- Produce detailed annual plans, performance standards to achieve Corporate, and Directorate objectives. This will include the provision of adequate finance and resources and the identification of training needs.
- Allocate adequate resources and recommend the provision of necessary finance to improve and maintain health and safety standards when compiling annual budget.
- Have a systematic programme of risk assessment, ensuring that assessments are undertaken and reviewed in all service areas on an annual basis.
- Comply with the requirements of the Council Health and Safety Policy;
- Consult with employees to ensure a joint approach to health and safety in the workplace and co-operation with recognised trade union health and safety representatives to enable them to fulfil their function.
- Ensure that all employees are competent to fulfil their designated duties, and provide training and supervision to support the development of competence.
- Inform the Corporate Head of Personnel immediately by telephone regarding any correspondence (not routine notification forms) and/or visit by the Health and Safety Executive or Employers Medical Advisory Service, in matters relating to the Health and Safety of the Council's operation, and any intended or served Improvement Notice, Prohibition Notice or prosecution made by a HSE or other Enforcement officer.
- Appoint the Director of Development and Regeneration to act as CDM client on all projects requiring notification under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

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- Bring this policy to the attention of all employees.

Director of Development and Regeneration Directorate

In addition to the duties outlined above for all Directors the Director of Development and Regeneration has the additional responsibility for acting as CDM client for all Council projects to which the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 apply and he will ensure all officers acting as duty holders under the regulations are competent to undertake the functions assigned to them.

Heads of Service

Each Head of Service is responsible for ensuring the health and safety standards within their service area are exemplary.

Specifically they must: -

- Operate effective health and safety policies and procedures;
- Monitor the service areas progress in achieving the annual plans and targets of the Directorate;
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken and reviewed as appropriate;
- Ensure employees are competent and have sufficient resources allocated to discharge their health and safety duties;
- Undertake health and safety training needs analysis for all employees. Ensure all employees receive induction, job specific, and refresher training;
- Comply with the Corporate and Directorate health and safety policies;
- Ensure all accidents, assaults, dangerous occurrences and near misses are reported and investigated in line with corporate procedures;
- Implement key health and safety responsibilities into individual job descriptions and objectives, indicating individual levels of responsibility;
- Ensure health and safety systems and procedures are periodically monitored;
- Inform the Corporate Head of Personnel immediately by telephone regarding any correspondence (not routine notification forms) and/or visit by the Health and Safety Executive or Employers Medical Advisory service, in matters relating to the Health and Safety of the Council's operation, and any intended or served Improvement Notice, Prohibition Notice or prosecution made by a HSE or other Enforcement officer;

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Section Heads

All Section Heads have responsibility to ensure the implementation of this policy within their areas of responsibility.

Specific duties include: -

- Ensuring assessments are undertaken and control measures are adequate to prevent realisation of risks.
- Allocating adequate resources for the management of health and safety risks.
- Identifying the training needs of employees and ensuring relevant training is provided.
- Investigating incidents and identifying appropriate remedial action.
- Monitoring the health and safety performance of employees within their areas of responsibility and considering the recommendations of supervisors and employees to improve performance.
- Ensuring their Head of Service is informed of any relevant health and safety issues, especially those that have resource implications and for those that cannot be resolved at local level.

Managers and Supervisors

All managers & supervisors are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy within their areas of responsibility.

Specifically, managers and supervisors are responsible for: -

- Undertaking risk assessments, with the involvement of employees and ensuring the risk assessments are implemented.
- Communicating the content of risk assessments and safe methods of work to employees.
- Ensuring employees have adequate training in order that they may undertake their tasks safely without endangering themselves or others.
- Ensuring that all plant and equipment used is adequately tested, maintained and that comprehensive records are kept of all tests.
- Ensuring that all employees are aware of the action to take where equipment becomes defective.
- Monitoring the health and safety performance of employees and resolving any inappropriate working methods.

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- Investigating all incidents with the aim to identifying the cause, and the appropriate remedial action to prevent a reoccurrence.
- Consulting and co-operating with appointed safety representatives.
- Ensuring that senior managers are informed of any relevant health and safety issues, especially those that have resource implications and for those that cannot be resolved at local level.

All Employees

All employees are responsible for: -

- Adhering to the requirements of risk assessments and also complying with all safe working rules or codes of practice, and quality procedures relating to health and safety.
- Making full use of the appropriate equipment, personal protective equipment and all safety devices.
- Reporting to their supervisors any unsafe practices or systems of work, unsafe working conditions, damage to plant, machinery or equipment, accidents or violent incidents.
- Taking reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of any other person who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work.
- Co-operating with managers and supervisors so as to enable them to carry out their own responsibilities.
- Not to intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.
- Co-operating in all consultations regarding health and safety.

Safety Representatives

To ensure the Council and its employees co-operate effectively in promoting and developing its health and safety agenda, the appointment of safety representatives by recognised trade unions and non-union elected representatives will be supported.

Safety representatives will be encouraged to actively participate in improving the performance of the Council and will be fully consulted and provided with suitable and sufficient resources to enable them to undertake their functions. Consultation must be conducted as an open and honest exercise with the aim of ensuring the fullest input from all interested parties. It must take place at the earliest opportunity to be fully effective.

The functions of safety representatives are: -

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- To make representation to managers about health and safety in respect of their members interests.
- To draw managers attention to health and safety deficiencies.
- To carry out inspections of the workplace.
- To investigate accidents, assaults and dangerous occurrences to identify the underlying cause and make recommendations to prevent a recurrence.
- To *support* managers in the production of risk assessments, formulation of policy, implementation, monitoring and review of health and safety performance.
- To be involved in the planning and implementation of health and safety, particularly in the introduction of any changes to the workplace, working practices or new technology that may affect health and safety.
- To attend safety committees and forums in the capacity of safety representative
- To represent their members in consultations at the workplace with inspectors of the HSE and any other enforcing authority.

The Health and Safety Manager

The Health and Safety Manager provides assistance to the Elected Members, the Chief Executive and other Directors in meeting their health and safety responsibilities to employees and others.

The Health and Safety Manager will:

- Lead and manage the Corporate Health and Safety Team to ensure the development and review of corporate policies and practices to support the Council's objectives and to meet legislative requirements.
- Allocate lead health and safety officers for each Directorate.
- Give advice on Council and Directorate health and safety policy formulation and development.
- Give advice in structuring and operating all parts of the organisation in order to promote a positive health and safety culture and to secure the effective implementation of policy.
- Give advice in planning for health and safety, including the setting of realistic short and long term objectives, deciding priorities and establishing adequate performance standards.
- Seek to reduce/minimise accidents, industrial injuries/diseases, dangerous occurrences, "near misses" and hazards in order to reduce injuries to employees and others and to minimise costs.

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- Maintain up-to-date information systems on relevant law and on guidance and developments in health and safety management practice.
- Assist the Deputy Chief Executive in the annual review of this health and safety performance.
- Monitor the implementation of Corporate and Directorate annual plans and provide the Executive Management Team and the Central Health and Safety Forum with information obtained by that monitoring.
- Co-ordinate health and safety training to support the successful implementation of this policy and supporting systems. Liaise with Directorate management in respect of associated training needs, course content and competence of health and safety training providers.
- Assist the Chief Executive in developing and maintaining monitoring systems to ensure Directors have carried out their responsibilities.
- Represent the Corporate Head of Personnel on corporate/cross-service working groups or meetings of external organisations.
- Manage the audit process across the Council to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability of the total health and safety management system, and assist the Deputy Chief Executive in drawing up plans for corrective action.
- Maintain procedures for the reporting of accidents, assaults, injuries and dangerous occurrences and ensure proper notification and consultation with relevant enforcing authorities.
- Conduct investigations into incidents and where necessary, report to the Chief Executive, and recommend and monitor remedial action and interim measures where necessary.
- Analyse accidents, ill health and incident data, to identify immediate and underlying causes, trends, and common factors and report to Executive Management Team, Personnel Committee, Directorate Health and Safety Groups, Central Health and Safety Forum and Joint Consultative Committees as appropriate.
- Develop and maintain liaison with Directorates, the Occupational Health Unit, Construction (Health and Safety) Group, trade unions, health and safety enforcement agencies and other external bodies.
- Co-ordinate and monitor the provision and implementation of safety policies, codes of practice, and procedures for all Directorates.

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Occupational Health Physician

The Occupational Health Physician provides an occupational health service to the Council with the aim of developing a healthy workforce.

The Occupational Health Physicians Role includes:-

- Assisting in the research, development and review of corporate health policies and procedures in conjunction with the Corporate Health and Safety Team and providing advice and information in support of their implementation.
- Maintaining and developing standard absence codes to assist in attendance management.
- Providing a pre-employment health screening service to determine suitability of all candidates for employment with the Council including, if appropriate, a full medical examination.
- Medically examining those employees who are absent on long term sick leave, to advise management as to future prospects and to examine the possibility of redeployment or, if appropriate, retirement on the grounds of ill health.
- Reviewing and supporting individual employees whose general health status is affected by specific medical conditions and providing both managers and employees with appropriate advice on the management of such conditions at work.
- Reviewing Directorate sickness absence statistics with a view to ascertaining trends and identifying and advising on areas of special concern.
- Performing special medical examinations in order to comply with various Health and Safety statutory requirements.
- Undertaking vision screening for the purposes of The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment Regulations, in relation to the Council's updated policy.
- Developing appropriate medical standards for specific occupational groups.
- Providing hearing and respiratory testing/assessment as required.
- Promoting health education and training, and promoting examples of good practice on issues such as smoking, alcohol, lifting, stress, diet, noise, exercise, HIV/AIDS, and skin care.
- Undertaking a supportive role in respect of employees qualified to administer first aid in the workplace and assisting with the development of special skills required for high risk areas of work.

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- Providing a basic confidential counselling service for employees on health related issues and referral, where necessary, to specialist support groups.
- Providing and developing vaccination programmes for employees working in areas where there is an assessed risk e.g. Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A, Tetanus etc.
- Providing advice and information on other health related issues e.g. clinical waste disposal for individual units, decontamination procedures for specific units and substance abuse.

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Supporting Organisation

Executive Management Team

Executive Management Team (EMT) is composed of the Acting Chief Executive and Directors and is the management team for the Council. It provides the opportunity for the Acting Chief Executive to consult with other Directors regarding the Council's health and safety management system, and the development of corporate objectives.

EMT may receive advice directly from the Corporate Head of Personnel, the Health and Safety Manager and Occupational Health Physician, but the Acting Chief Executive will have ultimate responsibility for all decisions taken.

EMT will:

- Assist the Acting Chief Executive in his responsibilities for major policy decisions, the adequate provision of finance, resources, and management arrangements.
- Review health and safety performance at least annually.
- Ensure that the Council Health and Safety Policy reflects the current priorities of EMT.
- Be kept informed about significant health and safety failures and the outcome of the investigations into their causes.

Personnel Committee

Personnel Committee is composed of Elected Members and officers. It is the forum in which the Acting Chief Executive and Corporate Head of Personnel consults with Elected Members regarding the Council's health and safety management system, and the development of corporate objectives.

Personnel Committee may receive advice directly from the Acting Chief Executive, Corporate Head of Personnel, the Health and Safety Manager and Occupational Health Physician, but the chairman will have ultimate responsibility for all decisions taken.

Personnel Committee will:

- Review health and safety performance at least annually.
- Be kept informed about significant health and safety failures and the outcome of the investigations into their causes.
- Agree relevant Council Health and Safety Policy initiatives and codes of practices.

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Central Health and Safety Forum

This group is made up of management representatives and trade union representatives from all Directorates and all trade unions. The Corporate Head of Personnel, who reports directly to the Acting Chief Executive, chairs the group. Meetings are held quarterly, however emergency meeting can be convened with the agreement of the Chairperson.

The main objectives and functions of the Central Health & Safety Forum will be:

- To keep under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of the Council's employees.
- To promote co-operation between managers and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health and safety at work of employees.
- To act as a forum for the exchange of information, the sharing of views and the development of ideas on health & safety issues between managers and trade unions.
- To consider any relevant general or corporate issue referred to it by a Directorate Health and Safety Forum and make recommendations to the Forum on matters of a general or corporate nature.

Directorate Health and Safety Groups

Each Director will establish a health and safety working group made up of management representatives from all divisions of the Directorate. The primary purpose of the Directorate Health and Safety Working Group will be to develop and review the Directorate health and safety management system in line with corporate policy and legislative requirements.

Specifically the Directorate Health and Safety Working Group will be responsible for: -

- Developing and reviewing the Directorate health and safety policy, procedural arrangements and generic working practices.
- Monitoring the implementation of the risk assessment process throughout the Directorate.
- Developing a health and safety training strategy.
- Receiving information from the Corporate Health and Safety Team and Central Health and Safety Forum, commenting on and implementing new policies/procedures within the Directorate.
- Monitoring the quarterly accident statistics, identifying trends and implementing accident reduction programmes where appropriate.

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- Devising a monitoring scheme for health and safety performance within the Directorate.
- Formulating annual objectives for health and safety within the Directorate for agreement with the Directorate Management Team.
- Ensuring dissemination of relevant information within the Directorate.

Directorate Joint Consultative Forums

Directorate Joint Consultative Forums (JCF) have been established to provide a regular method of communication and consultation between the Council and Trade Unions.

The main objectives and functions of the JCF in respect of health and safety will be:

- To keep under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety at work of Directorate's employees.
- To promote co-operation between managers and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health and safety at work of employees.
- To act as a forum for the exchange of information, the sharing of views and the development of ideas on health & safety issues between managers and trade unions.
- Receiving information from the Corporate Health and Safety Team and Central Health and Safety Forum, commenting on and implementing new policies/procedures within the Directorate.
- Resolving health and safety issues that cannot be resolved at a local level.

Construction Health and Safety Group

This group's primary role is to develop health and safety policies and codes of practice directly relevant to the construction and engineering activities of the Council. It also monitors the health and safety performance of construction and engineering contractors and will, in cases of poor performance make decisions regarding suspension of contractors from use in Council activities.

The group will be chaired by the Head of Land and Property Services. The vice chair will be the Council's Health and Safety Manager.