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Risk Health & Safety Policy (GP2)

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER

It is the policy of Bicester Town Council ("the Council") to comply with all UK legislation on health and safety and with all EC Directives insofar as they apply to the United Kingdom, by identifying those risks which pose a significant threat to the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others likely to be affected by its operations and to do everything that is reasonably practicable to:

- ✎ ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented and maintained so as to avoid or minimise such risks
- ✎ ensure that all employees are formally advised of the risks to their health, safety and welfare and of the measures taken by the Council to avoid or minimise such risks
- ✎ promote and provide a safe and healthy working environment
- ✎ ensure that premises are safe and provide adequate amenities for all those who are likely to use them
- ✎ provide safe means of access to and from places of work which are under the Council's control
- ✎ ensure safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of all equipment, products and substances used in connection with the Council's operations
- ✎ initiate and maintain safe plant and equipment and safe systems of work
- ✎ conduct regular inspections to ensure that the safest possible environment and work methods are maintained
- ✎ provide sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all staff to avoid hazards and contribute positively to the safety and health at work of themselves and others
- ✎ Periodically review its business activities and ensure that this policy and the procedures, risk assessments and control measures contained herein continue to be up to date and relevant to the Council
- ✎ Ensure effective line management and provide adequate resources for the implementation and monitoring of the policy.
- ✎ Employees have a duty to assist the Council in its health and safety objectives and it is essential that all staff read this written statement of safety policy and meet all the obligations imposed, with particular regard to the following:
 - ✎ staff must take all reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves or to other persons likely to be affected by their activities at work and to co-operate in meeting any duty or requirement imposed on the Council by any statutory provisions.
 - ✎ staff must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided by the Council in the interest of health and safety

This policy is reviewed annually and is next due for review by 20th July 2011.

Chief Officer

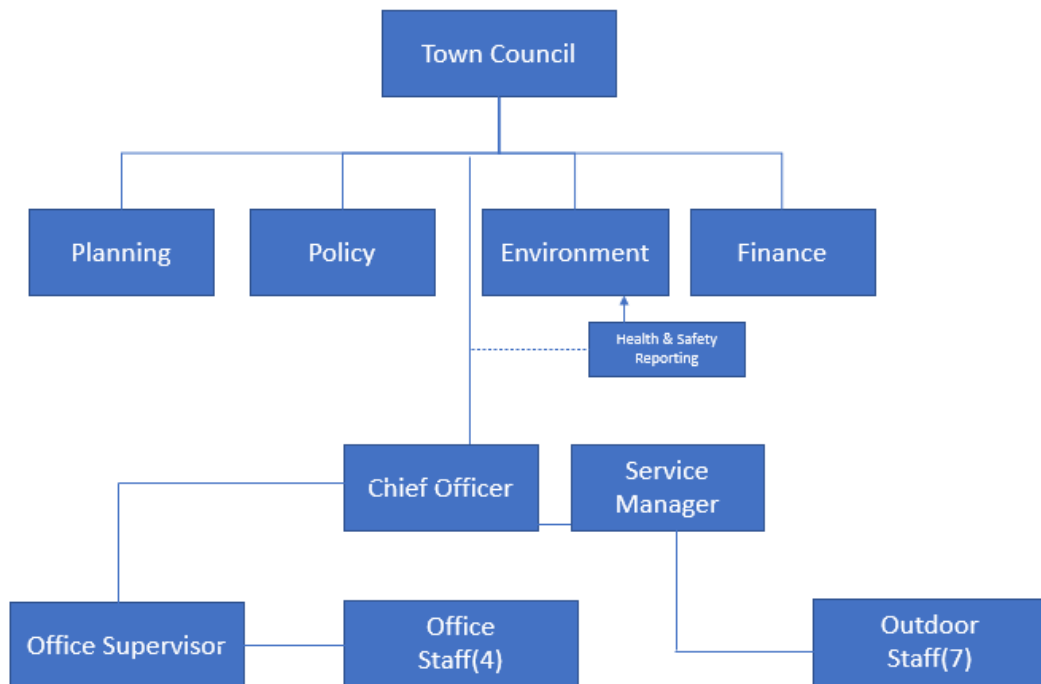
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ORGANISATION & RESPONSIBILITIES

Health and Safety Organisation Chart



RESPONSIBILITIES

THE CHIEF OFFICER

Will ensure that:

- ✚ adequate resources are available, that the policy is properly prepared, implemented throughout the Council's premises and is brought to the attention of Councillors and all employees
- ✚ the policy is kept under review, so that changes and improvements are incorporated and it remains relevant to all activities
- ✚ all individuals with delegated health and safety roles are aware of their responsibility and that all senior management is encouraged to show leadership by good example and to be enthusiastic advocates of the policy

In respect of operations and/or areas under their control they :

- ✚ are aware that they are directly responsible for the health, safety and welfare of any person who may be affected by the Council's activities and are therefore accountable for any accidents, illness or incidents that may occur as a result thereof
- ✚ ensure that they, and their staff (including new and temporary employees), are familiar with the hazards, risk assessments and the control measures implemented, and will actively encourage safety, and discipline any person who is in breach of the safety measures described
- ✚ ensure that good housekeeping standards are maintained
- ✚ take action to:
 - correct or contain any deterioration in conditions, or new exposures which increase risks on the premises
 - investigate any accident or incident, however minor
- ✚ ensure that any risk improvement, recommendation relating to defects, housekeeping arrangements and reassessment of risks is implemented as quickly as possible

MANAGEMENT

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- ✎ setting a personal example and fostering a positive culture within the Council towards health and safety
- ✎ ensuring that all those under their control understand and comply with the Council's safety policy provisions and that they are being effectively carried out and adhered to
- ✎ inspecting machinery, equipment and structures regularly and if there are faults, preventing access by any person to the defective apparatus until the faults have been rectified
- ✎ ensuring that all those under their control understand and comply with the Council's safety policy provisions for the use and maintenance of all safety/ personal protective equipment, first aid, fire and welfare facilities
- ✎ ensuring that employees are adequately instructed in the safe operation of equipment, machinery or apparatus
- ✎ advising staff of their responsibilities under this policy
- ✎ communicating with all those under their control to ensure the effective dissemination of health and safety information and attending any meeting as required in respect of health and safety
- ✎ ensuring that all persons under their control are given adequate instruction, information and training to carry out the health, safety and welfare requirements and responsibilities delegated to them and are able to effectively implement safe systems of work
- ✎ arranging for incidents, accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences to be reported
- ✎ ensuring that those under their control do not take unnecessary risks

- ↳ assisting the Council in carrying out the identification of all hazardous activities together with all hazardous substances used; assisting the Council in carrying out risk assessments of such activities and substances and producing safe systems of work to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury to the worker or any other persons who could be affected by the work activity

- ↳ ensuring that all those under their control understand and comply with the Council's safety policy provisions on the use and maintenance of all safety/ personal protective equipment, first aid, fire and welfare facilities

NOMINATED PERSONS

THE CHIEF OFFICER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- ✚ ensuring that the Environment Working Party is informed on all issues concerning the implementation of this policy, and other significant health and safety matters
- ✚ ensuring that all personnel are aware of, and instructed in, their responsibilities as imposed by health and safety legislation and the provisions of this policy
- ✚ ensuring that the Council fulfils its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 with particular regard to:
 - the provision and maintenance of safe plant and systems of work
 - ensuring safe and risk-free use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
 - the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety at work of its employees
 - the provision of a safe place of work
 - the provision and maintenance of a safe working environment for its employees together with adequate facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work
- ✚ ensuring that statutory test, inspection and maintenance regimes are followed
- ✚ ensuring that risk assessments are conducted (and reviewed annually) with copies being supplied to relevant staff for implementation of control measures
- ✚ ensuring the provision of suitable personal protective equipment is available, issued and used where required, that it is suitably stored and efficiently maintained and that a programme is in place for its replacement
- ✚ ensuring that fire precautions and fire-fighting equipment comply with current legislation and that all staff are aware of and conform to the Council's arrangements for fire precautions
- ✚ ensuring that reportable incidents are notified under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
- ✚ ensuring that all accidents and near-misses are investigated, records made and data analysed to identify means of avoiding possible recurrence
- ✚ ensuring that accident and near miss information is co-ordinated, analysed and where necessary, reported to the Environment Working Party and that any remedial measures are acted upon
- ✚ ensuring that meetings with the enforcing authority and insurers are suitably managed and that any recommendations flowing therefrom are actioned
- ✚ ensuring that a positive health and safety culture is actively promoted throughout the workplace
- ✚ keeping themselves up-to-date with best practice in health and safety management

EMPLOYEES

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees have legal responsibilities (under Sections 7 and 8 of the HSWA) which are to:

- ↳ take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions
- ↳ co-operate with management to meet the Council's legal duties; and
- ↳ not to intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare (eg fire extinguishers, fire doors, safety devices, alarm systems, emergency exits, first aid kits and/or protective clothing or equipment)

Employees must:

1. refrain from actions (or omissions) which might endanger themselves, or others
2. use all equipment safely, including that provided for their personal protection
3. comply with all safety instructions or procedures
4. follow safe systems of work and ensure that all work equipment is used in a safe and responsible manner
5. report to management any defects in equipment or other dangers (i.e. acts or conditions) immediately, or as soon as it is safe to do so and any accident, injury or incident, however minor
6. co-operate in the investigation of accidents and incidents
7. be familiar with, and comply with all safety procedures detailed in this policy document and with any specific instructions on safety matters given verbally or in writing by the Chief Officer or a health and safety specialist who, although they may not be an employee of the Council, is recognised by it for the purposes of this policy
8. familiarise themselves with the local first aid and fire emergency evacuation procedures, which are posted on notice boards and be prepared to comply with them in the event of an incident

ARRANGEMENTS

1 ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING

We will report all accidents, industrial diseases and dangerous occurrences in order to comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

Accidents to Employees

Employees must report all accidents immediately to their immediate supervisor and, if injury is involved, to a first aider. The first aider will make an assessment of the seriousness of the injury and whether they can give appropriate treatment. If the injury is of a serious nature or if there is any doubt, the injured person will be sent to the nearest hospital for treatment. The first aider will inform the Chief Officer of the accident as soon as possible.

After every accident however small, an entry must be made in The Accident Book BI 510 for all accidents/injuries incurred at work. This is the responsibility of the employee. If, because of their injury, employees are incapable of making an immediate entry, then their manager, the first aider or a nominated person must make that entry.

If the accident/incident qualifies as reportable, then the Chief Officer will ensure that the Enforcing Authority is notified and that form F2508/F2508A is completed either on site, or via the Central Reporting Facility at Caerphilly.

Following any accident that requires treatment, the first aider will complete an accident report form and send a copy to the Chief Officer who will carry out an accident investigation to identify if remedial action is necessary to prevent a recurrence.

Accidents to Non Employees

All accidents to non-employees, i.e. contractors, visitors or members of the public, who suffer injury as a result of either the Council's work activities or its provision of services to the general public should be reported immediately to a first aider and a senior member of staff. Details of the accident must be recorded in the accident book and the procedure outlined above should be adopted.

The Chief Officer will investigate all accidents to non-employees and will report their findings to the Chief Officer and the Environment Working Group if appropriate.

Near Miss or Damage Incident

All incidents resulting in damage to property, plant, equipment, etc. together with near misses should be reported to the Chief Officer who will conduct an investigation, particularly if the incident could have caused personal injury.

Accident Book

The Accident Book will be kept at Reception in Garth House.

Collation of Accident Data

The Chief Officer is responsible for collecting and collating data concerning all incidents once a quarter, whether or not they are reportable and whether or not they involve personal injury.

2. ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

The misuse of drugs and alcohol can put the health, safety and welfare of employees at risk. It can lead to poor performance at work, reduced efficiency, poor decision-making and lack of concentration, all of which can increase the likelihood of an accident.

Substances in this respect include alcohol, illicit drugs, prescription drugs or any other substance which is capable of impairing behaviour, judgment or job performance.

Abuse is the incorrect, improper or harmful use of any substance.

It is the Council's policy that no illegal drugs may be brought onto its premises. Breach of this rule will result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee, which may include summary dismissal.

Additionally, no employee should be working under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on the Council's premises or whilst conducting the Council's business at any other premises.

3. CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYEES

Legislation requires all employers to consult their employees on health and safety matters. This helps to create a safe working environment and strengthens the Council's health and safety culture. Consultation affords the opportunity to motivate staff and create health and safety awareness. This, in turn, makes a business more efficient, and reduces accidents, incidents and ill-health.

All employees are encouraged to contribute to the management of health and safety. Any employee who does not understand our existing policy, wishes to raise a concern or wishes to suggest an alternative course of action, may do so by contacting the Chief Officer.

Statutory notices and emergency procedures are displayed on notice boards, and all employees are encouraged to read these on a regular basis. Developments in legislation and information specific to the Council's business will be notified to staff.

4. CONTRACTORS

We will follow procedures designed to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that we only engage contractors who are competent.

Prior to the engagement of any contractor who tenders for work at Council premises, they will be required to complete a detailed questionnaire and provide supporting evidence covering:

- ✎ their arrangements for health and safety
- ✎ how they achieve safe working practices
- ✎ skill levels of staff (training records, qualifications etc.)
- ✎ evidence of health and safety awards
- ✎ details of any prosecutions or enforcement notices issued against them
- ✎ details of their accident/incident records
- ✎ information on the controls they impose on any sub-contractors they may engage
- ✎ contractors will be required to work under a permit-to-work system in particularly hazardous situations (hot work, live electrics etc.)

Before we embark on any project which may be subject to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007, we will ensure that we obtain competent advice on how to meet their requirements.

5 THE CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH

Whilst the nature of our business makes it unlikely that staff will encounter hazardous substances in the workplace, we recognise that some substances have the potential to cause ill-health. We will ensure that such substances are assessed and that, so far as is reasonably practicable, we will replace them with suitable and less hazardous substances wherever possible.

Where the Council is aware that its staff may be visiting third-party premises where hazardous substances are present, the Council will seek relevant information from the third party which will be provided to the Council employee.

We will complete COSHH assessments for those operations in which hazardous substances or materials are used, or places in which items are stored (including waste products) to identify and evaluate the risks associated with their use, storage and disposal and to implement control measures to limit exposure to employees and others who may be affected by those operations.

We will obtain from supplier's safety data sheets for all substances used at our premises. These will be kept centrally by the Chief Officer who will provide copies to H&S Representatives and First Aiders when required.

If, as part of a control measure and only as a last resort, personal protective equipment is deemed necessary, employees will be provided with the appropriate equipment, which will be stored, maintained, repaired and tested as required by the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. Training will be provided for all staff who may need to use such equipment.

We will assess the use of all new substances introduced into the workplace.

COSHH assessments will be carried out by the Chief Officer or by such other suitably qualified persons as he/she may direct.

Unless experience or circumstances dictate otherwise, we will review our COSHH assessments and control measures at least once a year, to ensure that they remain appropriate and effective.

We will provide information, instruction and training for all employees who may be exposed to hazardous substances including information on the results of risk assessments.

Appropriate information and training will also be provided to any non-employees who may be exposed to hazardous substances.

No hazardous substances may be introduced to the workplace without the prior written approval of the Chief Officer.

All contractors bringing chemicals or hazardous substances onto Council premises will be required to declare that they are doing so and to supply the Council with a copy of their COSHH assessments and appropriate safety data sheets.

6 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE)

Health risks to display screen operators may include postural problems and visual fatigue, in addition to the other hazards of the workplace, such as tripping over cables or carpets, lifting injuries e.g., picking up boxes of paper, etc.

Postural problems often manifest themselves in the form of back and neck ache as well as sprains and strains of such areas as fingers, hands, wrists, elbows and shoulders.

Contributory factors include:

- ↳ sitting in an immobile position for long periods
- ↳ high rates of repetitive finger movements, with the wrists bent
- ↳ poor circulation to the legs
- ↳ pressure from the seat/chair upon the thighs caused by incorrectly adjusted seating

Visual fatigue can result in eyestrain, headaches or other related symptoms and can be caused by:

- ↳ poor screen display, such as low contrast or flickering
- ↳ high levels of ambient light compared to the screen display
- ↳ reflections or glare
- ↳ the need for a document holder

To reduce the risks to DSE operators an assessment (formerly recorded) of each user of a workstation will be undertaken to identify and evaluate the risks associated with that workstation.

Employees will conduct assessments of their own workstation and will forward results to the Chief Officer. Where an assessment discloses potential problems for the employee, a second assessment will be undertaken by the Chief Officer or other suitably qualified person, and remedial action will be taken as necessary.

The Council will follow the advice contained in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 (DSE) and where assessment indicates a need, it will offer staff free eyesight tests and a contribution towards corrective spectacles. It will also provide footrests and document holders where their need is recognised, and the opportunity for staff to take rest-periods away from the workstation.

Workstation users will be provided with suitable and sufficient training and information regarding their workstation and will be given a copy of HSE Guidance Note INDG 36 "Working with VDU's".

7. ELECTRICITY AT WORK

Fixed Wiring

In order to maintain the fixed wiring installation which supplies electrical sockets, lighting and other hard-wired equipment, the Council will follow the guidance contained in the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and BS 7671 which recommend that the system be inspected by a competent specialist electrical contractor at least once every five years.

Portable Appliances

All portable appliances will be given a thorough electrical test by a competent person on installation or commission and thereafter will be subject to further testing to be determined by the nature of the equipment and the use to which it is put. The frequency of such tests will be determined by reference to HSG 107 "Maintaining Portable And Transportable Electrical Equipment". At the very least, it will undergo a visual inspection every 12 months.

Electrical Contractors

We will ensure that any electrical contractors employed to carry out electrical work on wiring or equipment are competent, belong to an appropriate body, eg NICEIC and comply with all relevant safety standards.

ELECTRIC SHOCK

If there is any accident involving electrical injury to an employee, a first-aider should be summoned immediately.

General

Electrical equipment must not be tampered with.

Employees should report loose wires or defects in equipment to the Chief Officer who will decide what action to take.

Employees who wish to bring their own electrical equipment onto the Council's premises must not do so until they have obtained prior permission from the Chief Officer.

7. FIRE SAFETY

We have a legal duty to safeguard our employees and others against exposure to the hazards associated with fire. Exposure to fire can result in burns and inhalation of smoke, either of which can be fatal. Fires can also cause massive destruction to the building structure, services, equipment, and contents.

This section of the Health and Safety Policy defines the responsibilities that we have and the procedures we must follow in order to ensure fire safety at work.

TRAINING

All our employees will receive fire safety training at induction which will include:

- ↳ fire awareness
- ↳ the means of escape from the premises
- ↳ what to do in the event of fire
- ↳ location of fire extinguishers
- ↳ fire assembly points
- ↳ measures for disabled employees where applicable
- ↳ no smoking policy

8.FIRE EQUIPMENT/EXTINGUISHERS

Extinguishers may be found at fire points which are clearly signed and usually located on exit routes. They are checked regularly by a competent contractor who services them on an annual basis.

Training in the use of extinguishers will be given as appropriate. All employees are instructed never to take unnecessary risks and only to fight a fire with equipment provided they have been trained to use the equipment and it is safe to do so.

Evacuation

Detailed fire evacuation procedures are displayed on notice boards.

For reference, the procedure is as follows:

- ↳ On being informed of a fire, all employees should evacuate the premises immediately, without stopping to pick up belongings. Staff should use the nearest available exit and proceed to their designated assembly point as quickly as possible without panicking or running and await the roll call.
- ↳ Following evacuation, staff must not re-enter the building to collect personal belongings or leave the assembly area until told to do so by management, acting under instruction from the senior fire officer at the scene.
- ↳ Designated persons will check the premises to ensure that every employee and visitor is accounted for.

Evacuation drills will be undertaken at least twice a year to familiarise staff with the procedure and test the effectiveness and suitability of the arrangements. The Chief Officer will evaluate fire safety systems after each drill.

'Actions in the Event of Fire Notices' are prominently displayed throughout the office.

FIRE DOORS

All fire doors are suitably marked and should be kept shut and clear of obstruction at all times including the area immediately outside any external fire exit. The doors should not be kept open by wedging or propping anything against them. Any employee finding a fire door blocked or locked should report it immediately to the Chief Officer.

FIRE ESCAPE ROUTES

These include all fire escape corridors and staircases. They must be kept clear at all times. Any employee finding a fire escape route blocked or obstructed should report it immediately to the Chief Officer.

FIRE ALARM

Smoke detectors are provided throughout the office area and are regularly tested by the Chief Officer

Tests are conducted weekly.

Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting conforms with fire safety legislation and is maintained and tested every 6 months by an approved contractor. Records of all tests and maintenance activities are kept by the Chief Officer.

Fire Risk Assessment

We will undertake an assessment of the risks presented by fire and put in place appropriate control measures to minimise the risks identified. These measures will include:

- ↳ a regular inspection for general fire safety

- ↪ checking that fire detection equipment and emergency lighting is inspected and maintained regularly
- ↪ placing fire extinguishers at clearly labelled fire points and ensuring they are maintained
- ↪ keeping emergency exit routes and signs clear at all times
- ↪ training of nominated staff in the use of extinguishers, procedures for fire drills and evacuation
- ↪ supervision and monitoring of visitors, including contractors
- ↪ implementation of precautions in respect of disabled people

These arrangements will be reviewed at least annually and on any significant change affecting the Council's premises.

Employee Responsibilities

All employees are reminded that:

- ↪ fire fighting equipment must not be tampered with or removed under any circumstances; interfering with safety equipment is a criminal offence under S.8 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- ↪ electrical equipment should be switched off at close of business wherever practicable
- ↪ fire exit routes must remain free from obstruction at all times and fire doors and exits must not be either locked or propped open
- ↪ smoking is not permitted anywhere within the Council's premises
- ↪ personal electrical equipment should not be used on the premises unless it has been authorised by the Chief Officer.
- ↪ all waste materials must be placed in metal bins or other designated receptacles provided
- ↪ all workplaces should be kept tidy at all times.

9. FIRST AID

We have a legal duty to make adequate provision for first aid in respect of employees should they sustain injury or become ill at work, including those travelling or working away from our premises.

We will assess risks to employees and make appropriate first-aid provision to deal with the risks taking into account the number of people employed, the size of the establishment and the hazards and risks involved in our activities.

We will reassess the first-aid provisions annually, or whenever there is a relevant change in the workforce or the hazards to which they are exposed. When there have been significant changes, we will revise our arrangements accordingly.

Additionally, we will ensure that contractors on our premises either have sufficient first-aid provision, or if their work involves no special risks, the contract may include their use of our facilities, by agreement.

In assessing the need for first aid facilities we will comply, as a minimum, with the provisions of the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.

First Aid Box

A first-aid box is kept by the first-aider at each of the Council's offices. It is checked regularly to ensure that its contents are legally compliant and adequate to fulfil the needs recognised by risk assessments.

10. HOME WORKING

Most of the Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act apply to home workers as well as to employees working at an employer's workplace.

Before permission for homeworking is granted to any employee they will be required to complete a questionnaire regarding work conditions at their home, following which the Chief Officer may undertake a further detailed risk assessment to ensure their health and safety, having particular regard to the provisions of:

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

11. HOUSEKEEPING

All employees have a responsibility to ensure their own work area and the workplace in general is kept free from hazards, particularly those which may give rise to fire or to slips, trips and falls.

All work areas are cleaned on a daily basis by an approved contractor.

Carpeting and floor coverings will be selected for their appropriateness to area usage and will be maintained in a condition suitable to prevent the risk of slips, trips and falls.

Materials must not be allowed to encroach onto designated pedestrian walkways. Stacking should be avoided but where this is not possible, materials should be stacked in a stable manner so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of them falling is reduced to a minimum.

Any spillage or leakage of liquids or solids which may give rise to a slip hazard must be cleaned up immediately.

The Council will promote good housekeeping by positive supervision and through a system of regular workplace inspection.

Waste or surplus materials should be placed in a waste bin or returned to their source and not left lying around to cause a hazard.

12. LONE WORKING

There is no general legal prohibition on working alone but the broad duties placed on us by the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations still apply. These require identifying hazards of the work, assessing the risks involved, and putting measures in place to avoid or control the risks.

Staff who wish to work at any of the Council premises outside normal office hours must first of all seek the permission of their manager so that arrangements can be made to ensure their safety.

The Council will avoid putting lone workers at any greater risk than other employees by introducing control measures which take account of normal work and foreseeable emergencies, eg fire, equipment failure, illness and accidents.

Control measures may include:

- a 'buddy system' by which regular contact is maintained between the lone worker and a nominated person who is advised of the action to take in the event of failed or lost contact
- automatic warning devices which operate if specific signals are not received periodically from the lone worker
- other devices designed to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency and which are operated manually or automatically by the absence of activity
- checks that a lone worker has returned to their base or home on completion of a task

13. MANUAL HANDLING

Manual handling can be defined as the transporting or supporting of a load including:

- ↳ lifting and lowering
- ↳ putting and taking
- ↳ pushing and pulling
- ↳ twisting, turning and stretching
- ↳ carrying or moving by hand or bodily force.

Injuries are likely to be caused through incorrect lifting techniques or by not taking account of the weight, size, shape of the load, or the environment.

We will undertake assessments for all manual handling operations to identify any risks to employees from manual handling of loads (other than those which are clearly not significant).

Employees are reminded that manual handling should be avoided where reasonably practicable and employees must not engage in manual handling activities that are beyond their capabilities, due to the size, weight or nature of the item to be moved.

The results of risk assessments will be communicated to employees and where appropriate, suitable training will be given to staff in correct lifting techniques.

Manual handling operation assessments will be carried out by the Chief Officer or such other competent person appointed by the Council.

Hierarchy of Measures

- i) avoid or eliminate the hazardous manual handling task
- ii) if it is unavoidable, assess the manual handling task for risk
- iii) introduce measures to reduce the risk of injury from the task to the lowest reasonably practicable level

14. MONITORING AND REVIEW

To ensure that the various procedures and policies set out in the arrangements section of our Health and Safety Policy are being adhered to and being implemented as intended, we will undertake an audit once a year. These audits will be conducted by the Chief Officer and other relevant staff, aided by external health and safety professional(s) where their assistance is considered appropriate.

The findings of the audits will be communicated to the Environment Working Group, management and staff together with a review of the effectiveness of the arrangements contained in this section of the policy.

In addition, the Health and Safety Policy together with all risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that they remain valid, and they will be updated to reflect any necessary changes.

15. NURSING AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS

We recognise the extra vulnerability of nursing and expectant mothers and additional risk assessments will be made when a female employee notifies her manager that she is pregnant; they will be informed of any additional risks they may face in our workplace as a consequence of their condition.

As required by law, if additional risks to nursing and expectant mothers cannot reasonably be reduced, we will find alternative work with no loss of terms or conditions, or we will authorise paid leave if alternative work is not available.

The Council is only required to take extra precautions for nursing and expectant mothers if it is notified of their condition. It follows therefore that staff must inform the Council of their condition, supported by confirmation from their medical practitioner. In the absence of supporting medical evidence, the Council reserves the right to request medical confirmation.

16. OTHER OCCUPIERS

We will fulfil our obligations under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to co-operate on health and safety matters with other organisations

which share the premises we occupy by keeping them fully informed of any risks specific to our business to which their staff may be exposed.

We will also ensure that such other organisations advise us of any specific risks associated with their work activities and will provide our staff with all relevant information.

17. RISK ASSESSMENTS

The management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require that we make suitable and sufficient assessments of the significant hazards in the workplace that could affect our staff or others, arising from our business activities. Certain work activities require separate, specific assessments.

Risk assessments will be conducted in all areas but with particular reference to the following Regulations:

- ✎ Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – General risk assessments
- ✎ Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – fire prevention, detection, alarm systems, evacuation procedures
- ✎ Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 – PPE assessments
- ✎ Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 – DSE assessments
- ✎ Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 – Manual handling assessments
- ✎ Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 – COSHH assessments

The findings of the assessments will be readily available to all staff upon application to the Chief Officer. Information, instruction and training will be given to employees following an assessment where appropriate.

All our assessments will be reviewed annually or upon any significant change in circumstances or following an accident/incident.

18. SMOKING AT WORK

Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the Company's premises.

All employees who are working away from the Company's premises are reminded that they must observe the smoking restrictions which apply at remote sites and in particular, to observe the requirements of the Smoke-free (Premises & Enforcement) Regulations 2006.

19. STRESS

Stress is defined as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. This makes an important distinction between the beneficial effects of reasonable pressure and challenge (which can be stimulating, motivating, and can give a 'buzz') and work-related stress, which is the natural but distressing reaction to demands or pressures that the person perceives they cannot cope with at a given time.

If stress is not identified and addressed, it can lead to both physical and mental health problems.

The effect of stress on performance is well established and in the interests of both the health of employees and the efficiency of the Council, it should be minimised.

Symptoms of stress include, inter alia, headaches, depression, raised blood pressure, insomnia, irritability, nervous break-down, psoriasis, eczema, hair loss, panic attacks, palpitations and loss of appetite.

If employees believe that they have a problem with stress, they are encouraged to seek confidential assistance from the Chief Officer.

20. TRAINING

We have a responsibility under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to provide training for employees to ensure their health and safety at work.

It is our policy to ensure that all employees are adequately trained in our health and safety policies and procedures as well as being trained to undertake any task they are expected to carry out and for any emergency that may arise during their employment.

We will ensure that all new employees are given a copy of the full version of the Health and Safety Policy. They must sign an acceptance note to state they have read and understood the document and will implement its rules and procedures.

Safety induction training will be provided for all new employees and on the job training will be provided for specific tasks as identified by the person responsible for their area.

Safety induction training will include (where applicable):

- ↳ employees duties and responsibilities
- ↳ safety notices
- ↳ good housekeeping
- ↳ fire safety
- ↳ accident reporting and first aid arrangements
- ↳ hazard reporting
- ↳ need for personal protective equipment
- ↳ hygiene
- ↳ manual handling
- ↳ hazardous substances
- ↳ display screen equipment

On successful completion of any training the employee will be required to complete a form indicating that he/she has received and understood the training. This form will be countersigned by the employee's immediate line manager.

All employees have a legal responsibility to co-operate with the Council's training programme so that its objectives can be met. Employees are expected to attend training courses and must put into practice any new instruction or guideline provided.

Employees must also follow any revised working procedures once they have been given the appropriate information, instruction and training.

21. TEMPORARY WORKERS

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 make specific provision for the health and safety of temporary workers employed by the Council.

Managers will ensure that all temporary workers are given health and safety induction training covering identified hazards, together with the emergency procedures and the management controls appropriate to those risks before they commence their duties.

Persons working less than one week in total will always work under the supervision of an experienced full-time employee.

We appreciate that temporary employees will be exposed to the complete range of risks to which other employees are exposed and that they will also be unfamiliar with many of the procedures and will need extra supervision for a period after their induction.

Agencies which provide temporary staff will be required to provide evidence that they have a safety policy as a matter of contract between our business and the agency. The policy must include a statement that their workers will comply with our safety procedures whilst on our premises or whilst working under our direction.

We have a duty to advise agencies which provide temporary staff of any specific risks associated with the Council's activities of which the agency would be otherwise unaware.

Agencies which provide temporary staff will be required to provide evidence of their Employers' Liability insurance.

22. VISITORS

As far as possible, visitors will always be accompanied by an employee. Visitors will not be permitted to wander freely around working areas.

In cases where visitors are not accompanied at all times (e.g. auditors) the Chief Officer will give them a brief induction in the emergency procedures applicable to the premises which they are visiting.

Should a fire occur, the person who is accompanying the visitor will assume responsibility for them and will escort him/her to the fire assembly point.

Should an incident occur involving the visitor which results in injury, this will be recorded in the Accident Book and a thorough investigation carried out as soon as possible.

If the injury is of a serious nature or is fatal, the incident must be reported to the enforcing authority and the Council's accident reporting system must be followed.

All visitors must:

- ✎ sign in and out in the Visitors' Book at Main Reception
- ✎ be issued with a visitor's pass, which must be worn
- ✎ be advised of the basic fire procedures

23. WORK AWAY WORKERS

The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 apply to our employees who visit other premises in the course of their work.

Employees who are working at remote premises must conform to all arrangements made by the dutyholder of the premises regarding compliance with regulations covering health and safety, the environment, fire, security and liaison, such as signing the visitors' book, observing no smoking areas and reporting to named managers before starting or leaving work or moving to a different area.

24. WORK EQUIPMENT

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 apply to the functioning and safety of our work equipment.

In order to minimise the risk of injury from work equipment, we will put in place arrangements for the assessment of risks and then create appropriate control measures to minimise the risks identified. These measures will include the following arrangements and procedures:

- ✎ an assessment of all new or second-hand equipment purchased
- ✎ all equipment purchased will comply with any relevant product safety standards
- ✎ all hired or rented equipment will be required to comply with the regulations, and will include the provision of comprehensible information on its safe use
- ✎ inspection of the equipment (including statutory inspection if applicable) and testing where necessary
- ✎ maintenance of a log for all equipment that could give rise to serious injury

- ✍ provision of adequate and identifiable means of isolation, where appropriate
- ✍ ensuring equipment is safeguarded to prevent risks from mechanical and other hazards
- ✍ provision of suitable and effective safety devices and controls
- ✍ provision of suitable and readily comprehensible signs and warnings
- ✍ provision of suitable general, task and emergency lighting
- ✍ ensuring that machinery and equipment are maintained in efficient working order and in good repair
- ✍ ensuring that the suitability of equipment is matched to the tasks involved
- ✍ ensuring that adequate and effective training, information and instruction is provided for operators
- ✍ ensuring that maintenance is carried out safely by competent maintenance contractors
- ✍ ensuring that only trained operators use the machinery
- ✍ maintenance of a reporting system for any difficulties, hazards or defects encountered or identified with work equipment
- ✍ a full list of all equipment and the frequency with which it needs to be maintained (and statutorily inspected if applicable) will be held by the Chief Officer who will also ensure that all necessary statutory inspections and/or maintenance activities are carried out at the appropriate time, and will keep safe the records, certificates and documentation.

These arrangements will be reviewed at least annually and on any significant change in the type, nature or use of equipment.

25. YOUNG PERSONS

We will carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for all work involving young persons (16 to 18 years old) prior to their employment, and will communicate the result of this to them on their commencement of work.

The risk assessments for work involving young persons will take into account their:

- ✍ lack of experience or awareness due to their immaturity
- ✍ physical and psychological capacity to carry out the work effectively
- ✍ potential exposure to toxic or harmful substances or agents (including radiation)
- ✍ inexperience in the recognition of potentially hazardous situations, or lack of training
- ✍ potential exposure to extremes of heat or cold, noise or vibration

Where young persons or children who are below the minimum school-leaving age (on work experience or other work placement schemes) may be exposed to risk, their parent(s) or guardian will be advised of all identified risks and the measures we have introduced to contain them. This information will be provided before the young person starts work with the Council.