

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	10.11.05
Subject:	Revised Health and Safety Policy
Responsible Officer:	Executive Director Business Development.
Contact Officer:	Health and Safety Service Manager.
Portfolio Holder:	Sanjay Dighe
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

That the revised health and safety policy be approved.

Reason for report

Following the HSE audit during January/February 2005 a number of recommendations were made including revision of the health and safety policy for health and safety at Harrow. These recommendations were also incorporated into the health and safety post inspection action plan.

Benefits

Successful implementation of health and safety policy will enable better use of resources by reducing the incidence of work related ill health and injury. Further benefits include;

- Improvement to the council's management of health, safety and welfare

across all services

- Giving the assurance that all employees and managers know what is expected of them to carry out their work on behalf of the council in a safe and healthy way.
- Position the council as a beacon and exemplar of excellence in health and safety with a positive impact on other areas of the council and wider community such as local businesses.
- Assisting the council in meeting the duties laid down in health and safety statutes.

Cost of Proposals

Staff in directorates will implement the proposals with the assistance of the Health and Safety Service within existing budgets.

Risks

Failure of the council to successfully implement this recommendation from the HSE audit would lead to an increased risk of prosecution and compensation claims.

Specific risks to successful implementation are;

- Lack of leadership and commitment to implement the policy.
- Mistaken priorities leading to insufficient staff time for effective implementation of the policy.
- Lack of identified competent staff to effectively implement the policy.

Implications if recommendations rejected

In the short term, lack of action being taken to raise awareness and promote health and safety across the council. In the longer terms increased potential for accidents and ill health, and staff demoralised and stressed. Increased risk of enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive against the authority and individuals.

Brief History

The overarching reason for the HSE's inspection and audit programmed is built around central governments "Revitalizing Strategy" and government targets for reductions in cases of work-related ill health and injury. Harrow Council, along

with other local authorities in London, has been targeted for audit by the HSE because we are;

- A major employer of labour.
- Enforcers of health and safety legislation in the community.
- A major client of other sectors as a procurer of goods and services.

Hence Harrow Council is in a strong position to influence and to be lead businesses in their communities, particularly small and medium sized organizations to help them improve their own health and safety standards.

Additionally, a number of other criteria may have influenced their decision to audit Harrow during the first wave of local government audits including;

- 1) They had not carried out a major inspection of the borough for over 10 years;
- 2) A fatality occurred in 2002: (no legal action was taken against the borough or its major contractor).

Consultation

UNISON were involved at every stage of the process. They had opportunities to meet with inspectors in the course of the audit and to receive feedback afterwards. UNISON is also represented on the Council's Health and Safety Partnership Board and contributed to the development of the action plan.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for this report.

Legal Implications

The Legal team are advisers in the development of health and safety policy in the organisation. This team also fed into the action planning process that was used to respond to the HSE feedback. The work outlined in the report will ensure Council compliance with statutory requirements under the health and safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Equalities Impact

Since initial development of the post inspection action plan, a review of Health and Safety under the Race Equality Scheme and an Equality Impact assessment have been carried out and these are currently being consulted on. The feedback and recommendations arising from those will be incorporated into the post inspection action plan along with targets for service delivery

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Appendix 1 – Draft Health and Safety Policy. – circulated in the Cabinet Supporting Documents Pack