

## Health & Safety Policy

### Policy Statement

1. It is the policy of the Council to provide and maintain as far as reasonably practical, a safe and healthy working environment (to include plant, equipment, the safe storage and handling of articles and substances, the provision of welfare facilities and systems of work) for all employees. The Council will strive to continually improve its health and safety performance and systems.
2. Through this policy, the Council intends to reduce the risk to employees and others who could be affected by work activities to as low a level as is reasonably practicable. This will be achieved through the Council's risk assessment process, as required by The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 s3.
3. The Council recognises the need to provide suitable and sufficient information, instruction, supervision, and training to ensure that workers are competent for the health and safety of themselves, other workers and any other person who could be affected by work activities. It will understand the risks and endeavour to control them through good management.
4. The Council will encourage co-operation and involvement in Health and safety at all levels in the Council. This will be conducted through staff induction & relevant Health & Safety updates and training.
5. The Council will provide adequate resources to manage the risks.
6. This Council will take steps to minimise accidents and occurrences of work-related ill-health.
7. The Council will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of all their employees and workers as defined in Sections 2(3) and 2(4) of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
8. The Council will take steps to protect the environment in the implementation of this policy.

## **1. Statement of General Policy on Occupational Health & Safety**

- 1.1 Regulation 5 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 2015 requires that appropriate arrangements be made for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures for health and safety.
- 1.2 The Council recognises its obligations to meet this requirement by producing a general policy Statement which is to be made available to every employee. Employees will be expected to familiarise themselves with the Statement, which should be read in conjunction with the Council's Risk Management policy (Appendix A).

## **2. Safety Management**

The Town Clerk is to ensure that a systematic approach is adopted to the management of health and safety including:

Health and safety within the Council is ultimately the Town Clerk's/CEO responsibility, they may appoint a nominated person whose duty it is to complete the health & safety for the Council. - In this instance this person will be the Buildings & Maintenance Manager. Line Managers in conjunction with the Town Clerk will be responsible for:-

- a) Control – management procedures, disciplinary procedures, checks and monitoring of procedures
- b) Co-operation – consultation and involvement with staff, development of performance standards.
- c) Communication – about the policy, information about safety and how it is managed.
- d) Competence – training.

## **3. Objectives**

Periodically the Buildings & maintenance Manager will, based on the outcome of risk assessments, set specific objectives to be met for continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

## **4. Risk Assessment**

Safety management will be built on a careful assessment of risks of all the activities carried out by all sections of the Council workforce. The Buildings & Maintenance Manager is responsible for carrying out assessments, identifying what training and specialist equipment is required, and to identify ways to minimise risk through risk assessments.

## **5. Measuring Performance**

The Maintenance Manager is to measure safety performance against the objectives. Monitoring should involve checking safety management against the Council's policy ensuring it is adequate and is being fully implemented. Reactive monitoring e.g., accident statistics, ill-health records, insurance claims, defect reports should also be measured.

## **6. Audit and Reviews**

All components of safety management should be subject to review from time to time to ensure they remain valid and effective. Changed factors should be considered e.g., new legislation, new working practices, availability of equipment, new personnel, audit results, etc.

## **7. Assessment, Control and Monitoring**

The Town Clerk/CEO is responsible for ensuring the Council's obligations are met in respect of assessment, control, and monitoring of:

- a) HEALTH AND SAFETY ADMINISTRATION – including the appointment and support of competent persons, basic documentation, and records.

- b) EMERGENCY PROCEDURES – accidents, first aid, fire risk assessment and evacuation procedures.
- c) GENERAL RISKS AND CONTROLS – manual handling, display screen equipment, personal protective equipment, portable electrical appliances, managing visitors, work equipment, slips trips and falls, substances hazardous to health.
- d) PREMISES MANAGEMENT – electricity, gas and water supply, the work environment, lifts and mechanical lifting equipment, ladders, waste disposal, vehicle inspection and maintenance.

## **8. Risk Assessment (see also separate Risk Management Policy)**

The Town Clerk/CEO has a responsibility to ensure that all areas of risk within their area of responsibility are covered. A schedule of activities and potential areas of accident in the workplace will be produced by the Building & Maintenance Manager to include:

- a) The potential risks (hazards which might be identified and associated with causes of accidents).
- b) The persons at risk.
- c) The risk rating.
- d) Action already taken to control risk.
- e) Action/procedures to be taken to minimise risk.
- f) All risk assessments are to be checked yearly to ensure they are still relevant for the Council and adhere to current legislation.

## **9. Workplace/Equipment Inspections**

An Inspection Log for each building/open space should be compiled by the Maintenance Manager, which is to be made available to the Health and Safety Executive and other officers on request. The log gives details of:

- a) Workplace areas that require inspection.
- b) Equipment and, in particular, safety equipment.
- c) The frequency of inspections of workplace/equipment.
- d) The dates of inspection with the signature of the person undertaking the inspection.
- e) Maintenance contracts with dates of inspection.

## **10. Accident Reporting**

- 10.1 Every accident, no matter how minor, is to be reported. For safety monitoring purposes and with a view to accident prevention, “near miss” accidents should also be reported.
- 10.2 The Town Clerk/Buildings & Maintenance Manager is to ensure that an accident reporting system is in place and is understood by all employees. Reports are to be completed immediately after emergency treatment of the injured person and must be signed by the injured person, if possible, and/or by the person making the report.
- 10.3 These reports should be examined when completed and recommendations made to prevent a recurrence. The recommendation(s) are to be noted on the accident report file & reported to the Executive committee.
- 10.4 Fatal accidents, major injury accidents, dangerous occurrences and accidents causing more than three days incapacity for work are “reportable” to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), these will be reported by the Town Clerk/CEO to RIDDOR.

## **11. Procedures**

- 11.1 After an assessment of the potential hazards in the workplace, the Town Clerk/CEO will draw up a procedure’s manual/code of safe practice as part of the information,

instruction, training, and supervision to be given to employees to enable them to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety at work.

11.2 The manual/code of practice shall cover:

- a) Fire precautions
- b) Emergency evacuation
- c) First aid
- d) Manual handling
- e) Waste disposal
- f) Electrical appliances
- g) Mechanical equipment
- h) Chemicals, solvents, detergents, etc
- i) Workshop and open spaces
- j) Use of vehicles and maintenance
- k) Lone and isolated working
- l) Working at height
- m) Exposure to asbestos fibres
- n) Noise
- o) Personal protective equipment provision
- p) Use of display screen equipment
- q) Managing visitors
- r) Legionnaires.

11.3 Fire Precautions

- a) The Town Clerk is responsible for compliance with fire legislation, specifically the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) Precautions.
- b) Fire safety inspections and analysis of potential fire hazards are completed by competent, suitably qualified contractors on a regular basis and appropriate action taken as a result of those inspections. Fire Risk assessments will be reviewed every two years and will be redone every four years by the Buildings and Maintenance Manager
- c) Fire extinguishers are provided and correctly sited to meet statutory and insurance requirements. All fire equipment is regularly tested and serviced by specialised contractors.
- d) All fire exits and emergency paths of egress are marked using the standard symbols.
- e) Awareness training is arranged yearly, and all employees are expected to attend sessions.
- f) See also Fire Safety Policy.

11.4 First Aid

- a) In order to comply with The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, the Maintenance Manager should assess all premises and areas of work and ensure there are adequate first aid supplies in convenient and accessible places to meet the emergencies that may arise.
- b) On commencement of employment all staff are to be informed of the first aid provision and any changes, as they arise, are to be brought to the attention of all employees.
- c) The names of suitably trained personnel are to be posted at the Council Offices, the Maintenance Team Workshop. The minimum requirement for trained first aiders for the Council is two within the maintenance team and two within the Council Offices.

11.5 Manual Handling

In order to comply with The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, the Town Clerk/CEO takes all reasonable practical steps to ensure sufficient information, instruction, training, and supervision is available to staff to avoid back injury. To this end the requirements of staff are assessed as far as moving/lifting is concerned. Employees should note:

- a) Staff must ask for help and/or training if there is any risk of injury to themselves or the object to be handled.
- b) Where handling aids are provided, they must be used.

#### 11.6 Electrical Appliances

Arrangements will be made by the Buildings & Maintenance Manager for all electrical appliances to be inspected and tested on a regular basis by a competent person in accordance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

Before using any appliance, the user should check:

- a) All safety guards which are a normal part of the appliance are fitted and in working order.
- b) Power supply cables/leads are intact and free of cuts and abrasions.
- c) The electrical appliance carries a valid Electrical Safety Tested label.
- d) Defective equipment must never be used and must be reported immediately.

#### 11.7 Equipment

Regular monitoring ensures that work equipment is maintained in efficient working order and in good repair. Where machinery/equipment has a maintenance log, it is kept up to date, this is the responsibility of the Buildings & Maintenance Manager.

- a) Employees must not perform modifications to work equipment.
- b) Employees using equipment will be given adequate training for health and safety purposes before use.
- c) Employees using equipment will wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment provided by the Council.

#### 11.8 Chemicals, Solvents, Detergents

- a) In accordance with The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), the Maintenance Manager has assessed the health risks due to hazardous substances. Safety data sheets are supplied with all such materials and employees using these materials will be informed accordingly.
- b) Employees should familiarise themselves with the hazards associated with the materials and precautions to be taken in the event of spillages, splashes, etc. Employees will use the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment provided by the Council when using hazardous substances. All Data Sheets and COSHH for substances are kept in a folder by the Maintenance Manager and accessible to all staff to remind themselves.

#### 11.9 Display Screen Equipment

- a) To ensure compliance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, The Buildings and Maintenance Manager will check all employees' workstations who use a visual display unit (VDU) for continuous periods of more than one hour and make the necessary changes required in regard to:
  - i. The design of workstations.
  - ii. Visual problems due to work.
  - iii. Work routine to reduce eye and body fatigue.

- b) Corrective measures are taken as a result of these consultations. The Council shall ensure that these employees are provided with an appropriate eyesight test to be carried out by a competent person (see also Eye Test & Glasses Policy).

#### 11.10 Lone and Isolated Working (see also Lone Working Policy)

- a) Under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act all employees have their own duty to take reasonable care for their own safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by what they do or do not do (acts or omissions).
- b) Regulation 3 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) places a duty on the Council to assess the risks involved with all work activities, these are available and kept by the Maintenance Manager.

## 12. Welfare

Employees are reminded that:

- a) Any person who is under medical supervision or on prescribed medication and who has been certified fit for work, should notify their supervisor of any known side effects or temporary physical disabilities which could hinder their work performance, and which may be a danger to either themselves or others. The supervisor will arrange or assign appropriate tasks for that person to carry out in the interim.
- b) Drug and alcohol abuse – employees or councillors will not attend the premises or any meetings or carry out any duties whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Any member of staff found breaking this rule may be liable to disciplinary action, if a Councillor breaks this rule they will be reported to the Monitoring Officer at District Council.

## 13. Training

- 13.1 All new employees will be shown the location of first aid equipment, fire exits and fire equipment and are to be well instructed on safety issues. They may not undertake any professional duties until instruction has been completed. The member of staffs Line Manager will ensure that a health and safety awareness programme is incorporated into the induction programme which will be carried out by the Buildings & Maintenance Manager.
- 13.2 Safe working practices as laid out in the procedures/code of practice manual must be explained and demonstrated where necessary prior to the new employee carrying out full duties.
- 13.3 All staff must be made aware of their responsibilities for health and safety as defined in this document and the codes of practice drawn up for each area. They must be instructed that failure on their part to act in accordance with health and safety policies and procedures is subject to disciplinary action
- 13.4 Employees' health and safety awareness must also include the fact that under their duty of care they are bound to report any equipment or premises defects they discover, and/or any malpractice they identify in the course of their work. (See Whistle Blowing Policy for reporting of Malpractice).
- 13.5 Safety training, such as fire awareness and prevention, moving and handling, first aid, are to be considered as essential training for all employees and must be built into the overall training and staff development programme. Training in the identification of hazards in the workplace should also be given to staff at all levels, while formal risk assessment training is to be organised for all persons in supervisory or management posts.

- 13.6 Attendance at all health and safety training/instruction is to be well documented and recorded on employees' personnel files.

#### **14. Information and Communication**

- 14.1 It is mandatory that the statutory poster "Health and Safety Law – What You Need to Know" is displayed in the office and in the workshop and is shown to new personnel. In order to promote a safe and healthy workplace, a supply of the numerous health and safety leaflets published by the Health and Safety Executive should be made available to staff if they require them.
- 14.2 The Town Clerk/CEO must ensure that all employees, including temporary and casual workers, are provided with comprehensive and relevant information on any health and safety risks identified by assessments and the necessary preventative and protective measures.
- 14.3 The Town Clerk and Buildings and Maintenance Manager must ensure that they keep up to date with changes in health and safety legislation, e.g., by obtaining regular updates from the Health and Safety Executive.

#### **15. Disciplinary Action**

- 15.1 The Town Clerk/CEO must make it clear to all employees that contravention of the Health and Safety Policy and related documentation will constitute a disciplinary offence which may lead to termination of employment for serious or repeated breaches.
- 15.2 Any employee leaving their workplace because of serious, imminent, or unavoidable danger, will not be dismissed or placed at any disadvantage.

#### **16. General Safety**

- 16.1 The Council aims to provide a healthy and safe working environment. This can be achieved with the support of all employees by:
- a) Complying with the general rules of safety.
  - b) Using all plant, machinery, and equipment in a safe and proper manner.
  - c) Employing the proper procedures when carrying out tasks and ensuring that no practices are used which may act as a source of danger to themselves or to others.
  - d) Keeping work areas clean and tidy always.
  - e) Making sure all corridors and passageways, particularly those leading to escape routes, are kept free from obstruction at all times.
  - f) Taking care that fire points are not blocked or covered up with any way and that they are ready for use if the need arises.
- 16.2 The Council reminds all employees of their own duties under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to take care of their own safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions, and to co-operate with the Council to enable it to carry out its own duties and/or statutory requirements successfully.
- 16.3 Employees also have additional duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to use any equipment, material or substance provided to them in accordance with any training and instruction, and to report any risk situation or shortcoming in protection arrangements to management.

#### **17. Legal Implications**

- 17.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 places a general duty and responsibility on all employees, volunteers and elected and co-opted Members of the Council.

- 17.2 Any employee, volunteer, elected or co-opted Member who behaves in a way which endangers the health and safety of others may be prosecuted by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). These can include:
- 17.3 Fines of up to £5000 may be imposed on a summary conviction for offences under the Act. In addition, imprisonment for a period of up to two years or unlimited fine, or both, may be imposed in certain cases
- 17.4 "Improvement Notices" or "Prohibition Notices" can be served in respect of a "person". This term includes an individual person as well as the Council.
- 17.5 An Improvement Notice will specify the change required to secure adherence to any relevant statutory provisions and the time allowed to meet this obligation.
- 17.6 A Prohibition Notice would be issued if, in the opinion of the inspector appointed under the Act, activities or would involve a risk of personal injury, or may give rise to such a risk in the future.
- 17.7 Any employee, volunteer or elected or co-opted Member receiving an Improvement Notice, or a Prohibition Notice issued under Sections 21, 22 or 23 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 must immediately inform the Town Clerk.

## **1. Diss Town Council**

Health and safety legislation generally recognise persons as employers and employees; it does specify individual job titles. The following paragraphs define the Health and Safety responsibilities of employees within the Council.

## **2. The Elected Council**

The Council will ensure that it has an effective policy for health and safety within areas under its control and that all liabilities are covered by adequate documentation and insurance. Further the Council acknowledges its intent to ensure sufficient resources to implement the policy are budgeted for annually.

## **3. Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk/CEO is ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is up to date and implemented. The Town Clerk is also responsible for ensuring that

- a) all employees have the necessary information, instruction & training to enable them to carry out their work without risk to their selves, or to any other person who could be affected.
- b) sufficient funds and resources are allocated within budgets by the RFO under the which should meet any of the requirements of the policy.

## **4. Safety Officer**

The Buildings & Maintenance Manager, under the overall direction of the Town Clerk, is the Safety Officer who will be responsible for ensuring that the health and safety policy of the Council is implemented. The responsibilities cover:

- a) Assessing, controlling and regular monitoring of all safety aspects of the Council's service to ensure they meet current health & safety legislation.
- b) Ensuring that appropriate safety education and training are co-ordinated and carried out.
- c) Ensuring that adequate fire protection and prevention measures are provided.
- d) Maintaining safety records.
- e) Ensuring that all accident reports are completed promptly, and an investigation of accidents and dangerous occurrences is carried out, with a view to prevention of future occurrences and to ensure that appropriate statutory notifications are properly completed.
- f) Providing staff with relevant information on risks to health and safety.
- g) Completing risk assessments for all Council facilities and activities.
- h) Regular monitoring of all Council facilities for defects or health and safety issues and recording, reporting, and acting on them.
- i) Any health or safety problems which cannot be resolved immediately are raised quickly with the Town Clerk/CEO.
- j) Providing regular reports to the Town Clerk particularly any health and safety problems which cannot be resolved immediately.

## **5. Employees, Volunteers and Elected or Co-opted Members**

All employees, whether permanent or casual, volunteers and elected and co-opted members have a duty as laid down in Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 to:

- a) Make themselves familiar with the Health and Safety Policy of the Council and health and safety literature which is posted on Notice Boards in the workplace, or which is drawn to their attention by their immediate supervisor. If, for any reason there is a problem with understanding these documents, the supervisor will ensure that employees understand what they contain.
- b) Take reasonably practicable care for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst at work.
- c) Co-operate with the Council to enable it to carry out its responsibilities fully and comply with relevant statutory legislation.
- d) Make full use of the appropriate safety equipment, protective clothing and safety devices provided by the Council and not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any such items.
- e) Carry out all duties in accordance with training and instructions to ensure compliance with legal requirements.
- f) Report to their Line Manager all accidents. Volunteers to report any injuries or damage to the Town Clerk/CEO.
- g) Report to the Buildings & Maintenance Manager any faults or defects in premises, site, or work equipment.

For the purposes of the above:

- a) A Line Manager is any person who exercises any level of supervision or control over other members of staff or responsibility for any sites.

- b) An employee includes all persons employed by The Council on a full time, part time or occasional basis.

## **6. Visitors and Contractors**

- 14.1 All visitors and contractors must be informed of any hazards or dangers on Council premises, and the precautions they should take to minimise risks to their health and safety
- 14.2 All contractors, hirers and users of Town Council facilities will be required to complete a site-specific risk assessment to the Buildings & Maintenance Manager's satisfaction. Where appropriate, meet with the Contractor before work begins in order to discuss how any risks to employees or visitors can be avoided/minimised, and/or oversee works to ensure Health and Safety compliance.
- 14.3 A copy of the completed risk assessment from both parties will be kept in the Council Offices with a signed copy to be supplied to the other party.
- 14.4 All contractors undertaking building works to Council facilities will be provided with access to the Asbestos Register and shown the location of the accident book.