

ANGUS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE – 7 AUGUST 2001

THE HELA STRATEGIC PLAN – 2001-2004

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

ABSTRACT

The Council has recently received an advanced version of the Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) Strategic Plan 2001-2004 for consideration. The Health and Safety Commission (HSC) are asking Local Authorities (LAS) to consider the Plan and in particular, to consider the extent to which they might set local targets to achieve the Plan's objective.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommend that:

- a) the Committee note the contents of this report, and,
- b) support the inclusion of the priorities defined in the Strategy into the present health and safety enforcement regime.

2. BACKGROUND

This Strategic Plan for 2001-2004 has been developed to meet the targets defined within the revitalising Health and Safety Strategy Statement launched in June 2000 by the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. The Commission has focused on this revitalising agenda in the Plan. All Local Authorities should consider the Strategic Plan and use it to inform and guide their own health and safety enforcement objectives and priorities.

The key to this approach outlined in the Plan are the newly defined targets for health and safety enforcement and these are as follows:

- Reduce the number of working days lost per 100,000 workers from work-related injury and ill health by 30% by 2010.
- Reduce the incidence rate of fatal and major injury accidents by 10% by 2010.
- Reduce the incidence rate of cases of work related ill health by 20% by 2010.
- Achieve half the improvement under each target by 2004

3. THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE

It is clear from the health and safety statistics that Local Authorities have a pivotal role to play in this new Plan. Local Authorities are responsible for enforcing health and safety legislation in over 1.2 million premises employing in excess of ten million employees. Each year, the equivalent of 1,200 health and safety Local Authority enforcement officers make approximately 330,000 visits, investigate 60,000 complaints and requests for advice and serve approximately 6,500 formal notices.

To achieve the targets it will be essential that Local Authorities respond to the Revitalising Agenda. Work carried out by Local Authorities in the opinion of the Health and Safety Commission should be oriented towards these priorities.

In terms of the new Strategic Plan the Health and Safety Commission has proposed that it will be necessary to tackle the following work place hazards.

- Falls from height
- Work place transport
- Muscularskeletal disorders
- Stress
- Slips and trips.

The Health and Safety Commission expects that Local Authorities will have regard to these priorities where appropriate in the development of their inspection programmes and will focus in on these issues in the context of individual inspections.

4. ACTION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Health and Safety Commission has identified as a particular priority the need for Local Authorities to concentrate on a reduction in slips and trips since this form of hazard has accounted for approximately forty percent of major injuries in recent years.

Local Authorities will therefore, ensure that slips and trips are given an adequate focus and priority in inspections, accident and complaint investigations.

With regards to the other hazards listed above Local Authorities will:

- Prioritise their inspection effort to tackle these issues and contribute with the Health and Safety Executive to national programmes to maximise improvements in health and safety.
- Contribute to the work place transport priority programme to segregate vehicles and pedestrians and eliminate reversing movements where reasonably practicable.
- Consider the role of other local Authority enforcement functions and roles, in improving health and safety through working with other departments and agencies to improve awareness of work place hazard management.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2001-2004

The Environmental and Consumer Protection Department will endeavour through its enforcement staff to promote greater awareness of health and safety and will emphasise the hazards to safety defined within the Plan.

The Department through its Core Safety Group will endeavour to provide advice and guidance to its staff with regards to the hazards identified in the Plan.

It is also the intention that the work commenced in health and safety through the Council's Community Safety Steering Group will continue and that where applicable the stakeholders represented on the Group will be involved in this area of enforcement. Finally, the Central, Fife and Tayside health and Safety Liaison Group has been requested by the Health and Safety Executive's Enforcement Liaison Officer to undertake a number of initiatives before March 2002 relating to workplace transport and Manual handling. These initiatives will be undertaken as part of the normal inspection regime carried out by the Department.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The defined targets for health and safety enforcement are ambitious and the Strategic Plan fails to make any reference to Local Authorities receiving additional funding to meet these targets. The department will however, endeavour through working with our partner authorities on the liaison group and with other agencies etc on the Council's Community Safety Steering Group to support the Health and Safety Commission's efforts to attain these targets.

However, this additional work will be undertaken within the present and future budgets set by the Council.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The present demands of this new Strategic Plan will be met within the Budget. There will therefore, be no financial implications in implementing the Plan within the present enforcement activity.

8. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration, Director of Finance and Director of personnel have been consulted on the contents of this report.

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

S R Heggie
Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection