HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

For Information

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update Members on the Authority's Health & Safety Policy as attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Members note the Authority's revised Health & Safety Policy as attached at Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 applies to all activities of Fire and Rescue Authorities as the employer of fire and rescue personnel. The Act requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and that their activities do not adversely affect the health and safety of other people.

3.2 The application of health and safety law is challenging for the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to operational activities, because the nature of the work requires firefighters to be sent into dangerous situations in order to save lives, when everyone else would be seeking to get away from the danger.

3.3 It is vital that the Brigade prepares individual employees to be able to make decisions in dangerous, fast moving, emotionally charged and pressurised situations, even when there may sometimes be incomplete or inaccurate information about the incident.

3.4 It is widely accepted and recognised that firefighters and their operational managers often face difficult moral dilemmas and have to act in what are sometimes extremely hazardous and dynamic situations.

3.5 A primary focus of the Brigade's health and safety management systems is to take account of the wider context in which staff operate, so that:

- An effective and realistic service is delivered; and to
- Enable staff to take appropriate care of their own, their colleagues' and the public's health and safety

3.6 Safety is the number one value of the Fire Authority and as such the Authority strives towards excellence in health and safety standards and workforce competence. Ensuring the maintenance of safety in a critical environment represents a key priority.

4. HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

4.1 The reviewed Health & Safety Policy attached at Appendix 1 was considered by the Brigade's Executive Leadership Team on 19 December 2019 and is presented to the Executive Committee for information.

4.2 The policy statement and objectives are provided below:

- The Cleveland Fire Authority recognises its duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Regulations made under it.

- Cleveland Fire Authority also recognises its duty to comply with the above legislation and accepts its responsibilities for the health, safety, and welfare at work of all its employees, and others who may be affected by their operations and activities.

- It is the aim of the Fire Authority to meet those legal obligations by conducting its business in a safe and healthy working environment. In addition, it also aims to promote a positive health and safety culture, achieved by the suitable and sufficient management of risk.

- The Fire Authority, The Chief Fire Officer and the Executive Leadership Team consider it to be a binding commitment that health and safety will rank as a prominent, permanent and integral feature of all Authority activities.

- Our objective is not just to meet all of our legislative duties. Through a programme of education, training and committed safety management at all levels, we will strive to continually improve our performance, thus reducing risk to the lowest levels, eliminating or reducing injury and loss events.

4.3 This policy will be delivered against the Authority's strategic goal of maintaining a Professional Workforce. Underpinning this key organisational goal are specific strategic objectives to:

- Provide assured safe systems of work
- Promote employee health and wellbeing
- Ensure employee competence

4.4. Legislation requires that every Organisation must have a health and safety policy, and for those organisations who employee five or more staff, it must be in a written format. The Authority's Health and Safety Policy is set out in three sections:

- The statement of general policy on health and safety at work sets out our commitment to managing health and safety effectively, and what we want to achieve.
- The responsibility section sets out who is responsible for specific actions.
- The arrangements section contains the detail of our health and safety framework.

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