

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE OPEN WATER SAFETY STRATEGY

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To obtain approval of a strategy for the management of council owned water courses and open water areas, which will also provide advice and guidance for others external to the council with similar areas under their control

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As a result of a number of tragic accidents at Ashby Ville Ponds, a Working Group was established to consider the risks and proposed options for managing the site more effectively.
- 2.2 The Working Group was chaired by the Service Director Highways and Planning, with representation from the council, Humberside Police, Humberside Fire and Rescue and other organisations with an interest in the site.
- 2.3 The Working Group proposed a number of actions which were quickly put in place. These included: six larger permanent signs, colour coded and numbered to warn of the dangers; an emergency plan which identifies clear access and rendezvous points; more formal site supervision, including the use of volunteers; information leaflets to be distributed; and schools were consulted in the neighbourhood.
- 2.4 As a result of this successful outcome for Lakeside, it was agreed to consider other bodies of water within North Lincolnshire, to improve their safety and raise the awareness of the dangers. The group was therefore extended to include Children's Services and Leisure.
- 2.5 In the first instance this group identified the number of bodies of water within North Lincolnshire, which was massive. As a result it was decided to categorise these into three distinct areas: high, medium and low risk. Every Town and Parish Council in North Lincolnshire was consulted to gather local information on specific areas of concern.

- 2.6 The designation of sites into the three categories is dependent upon a formal risk assessment process. The recommended risk reduction measures will reflect the relevant dangers and in the case of low risk sites may only consist of awareness raising, provision of information and education, through to treatment along the lines of the Lakeside project for higher risk sites.
- 2.7 The Strategy covers many issues associated with open water safety, from responsibilities, risk assessments, landscaping and land management, signage and the provision of appropriate safety equipment through to forms of management.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Water Safety Strategy has been put together and agreed by a number of experienced and interested organisations and should serve to raise awareness of the dangers associated with open water and also provide practical advice to mitigate the associated risks. The only option therefore is whether or not to adopt the policy.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

4.1 Staffing

- 4.1.1 Council activities covered by the Strategy will be jointly managed by the Head of Health, Safety and Welfare and the Environment Team Manager, using the existing Environment Team Wardens and additional volunteers provided by the Fire & Rescue Service in a monitoring role, together with officers of the council's Health & Safety Team.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 Most of the monitoring work will be undertaken by existing officers. However, the Fire & Rescue Service volunteers have only been recruited for an initial twelve months and it is not known whether funding and support will continue beyond April 2011. Thus the manpower situation may need to be addressed at that point and there may be some financial implications with regard to continuing support for the volunteers. In addition there is currently no proper budget allocation with regard to the cost of the initial purchase and replacement of safety signage and equipment in connection with open water safety. These costs have hitherto been met out of a variety of existing budgets on an ad hoc basis. The implementation of the strategy is likely to bring about an increase in these costs and consideration should be given to the establishment of proper funding.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

- 5.1 If the strategy is not adopted there is a risk that the council may be subject to civil compensation claims and subsequent damage to its reputation and finances.
- 5.2 With regard to criminal litigation it is possible that the council could become embroiled in 'Corporate Manslaughter' proceedings, if in the event of a fatality, it has been seen to be negligent in not taking reasonable steps to warn and protect the public with regard to the dangers presented by open water areas that are under its control.
- 5.3 Following the tragic fatality at Ashbyville in 2008 the Coroner recommended that the council should take an in depth look at the water areas for which it was responsible and seek to improve the risk control measures that were in place at that time.

6. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The report has been presented to the Local Strategic Partnership Resilience Board, who strongly support the Strategy.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Open Water Strategy be approved and implemented immediately and that the need for basic funding for safety equipment and signage be accepted.

SERVICE DIRECTOR HIGHWAYS AND PLANNING

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: Nil

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE **OPEN WATER SAFETY STRATEGY**

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Foreword

North Lincolnshire Council is keen to encourage its citizens to enjoy water-based activities. However, the Council together with the emergency services, recognises that open water areas are potentially dangerous and that there is a need to provide guidance aimed at reducing the risk to both employees and members of the public. Potentially dangerous open water areas should be subject to appropriate risk assessment. The assessment should be aimed at determining the level of risk to all persons and the measures that need to be taken to minimise that level. Such measures should include an appropriate combination of the following; education, instruction and training, signage, life saving equipment, edge protection and fencing.

In general, when members of the public go to an open water area they are aware of the potential risks that are likely to be encountered and will normally take extra care, particularly when supervising young children. However, there are open water areas in North Lincolnshire where unaccompanied young children may venture unsupervised and it is here that a higher degree of protection is necessary. Where it has acquired that responsibility historically, the Council will maintain existing life saving equipment and will take all reasonable steps to protect people from the dangers in those areas for which it is responsible. As a community leader the Council will also seek to encourage and use its best endeavours to persuade riparian landowners to adopt a similar approach to open water safety.

Open water can remain extremely cold, even during the summer months. Some waters are deep and/or have strong currents. For those persons who get into difficulty in such waters the outlook is bleak. Suddenly being immersed in cold water can cause shock, distress and a lack of mobility. The bottom of lakes and waterways can be soft, uneven and changeable. Submerged objects (eg. wire or cables, household debris, glass etc) and reeds and undergrowth, can create unseen hazards.

Statistics show, that amongst young people, drowning is often the result of risk taking behaviour or misjudgement as a result of consuming alcohol. Swimming, diving and playing water sports requires coordination and clear judgement, capabilities that can be impaired by alcohol. Children are naturally curious about water, whether it be a pool, a lake or a river. Many drown or are left impaired by brain damage through preventable accidents. By following often simple, safety precautions, it is possible to prevent many such tragedies.

Successful rescue attempts often depend upon the presence of a skilled rescuer, serviceable rescue equipment and the ability of the victim to interact. Such optimum conditions are seldom found, especially in those first few vital seconds before a drowning occurs. If lives are to be saved, there must be early intervention in the chain of events that leads to a drowning.

Drowning occurs when people are ignorant or misjudge the danger presented by the water. They may be non-swimmers or over-estimate their ability to swim away from the danger, they may fall from an unprotected edge, children may be left unsupervised and in sub-zero temperatures, people may be tempted to walk on ice.

All open water areas within the boundary of the authority, should be considered to be likely to be contaminated and thus not suitable for swimming.

Employees of the Council and contractors engaged by the council should abide by the safety provisions detailed within this document when working, in, on, adjacent to or above water areas.

This strategy aims to provide appropriate council managers and others in control of, or involved with, open water areas, with sufficient information to guide them through assessing and controlling the risks presented by open water.

1. Statement of Intent

The Council through the relevant Directors and Heads of Service, will provide in co-operation with the emergency services and other stakeholders, appropriate arrangements for the management of areas of open water or land adjacent to it, which are under the control of the Council and accessible to the public. These measures should ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all open water areas are maintained in a safe condition for the benefit of the users and the safety of staff and may include an emergency plan if appropriate.

The Council will only approve the use of an area of open water under its control for recreational activity if the activity is organised by the Council or by a suitable/qualified organisation/individual, who is recognised as having the competence and knowledge to ensure that acceptable health safety arrangement and risk assessments are in place.

The Council's approach to water safety will follow hierarchy of measures listed below, with regard to the level of risk posed;

- (i) The provision of general water safety education, training and information
- (ii) Provision of warning and information at high and medium risk sites
- (iii) Provision of supervision and/or appropriate rescue equipment
- (iv) Denial or restriction of access to high risk areas

2. Legal Responsibilities

Various pieces of legislation place statutory duties on the Council for the management of the waters under its control and for the safety and the well being of visitors, which includes members of the public.

Both statute and common law have a relevance to the management of such open water areas.

The following legislation is pertinent;

Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;

Section three, in particular specifically requires every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that he/she takes the necessary steps to ensure the safety of non-employees affected by his/her activities.

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999;

These regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act require that adequate and suitable assessments of work related hazards should be carried out to determine the preventative and protective steps that should be taken.

Public Health Act 1936;

This is enabling legislation offering local authorities the power to regulate water users (for example; to prohibit swimming).

Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 & 1984

These Acts place a liability on the occupier to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of visitors to his/her land or premises. This duty is particularly onerous where children are concerned. The occupier owes a duty of care not only to visitors, but to trespassers as well.

The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996:

This legislation implements the European Directive 92/58/EEC, which standardised safety signs throughout member states of the European Union. (This should be consulted in conjunction with BS5499, published in 2002, which is specific to water safety signage).

3. Competence and Capability

The Council and the emergency services recognise the need, where appropriate, for the provision of suitable and adequate information and training on water safety, to staff and others such as school pupils, together with the provision of information to members of the public, as key to the development and implementation of a water safety strategy and for the prevention of drowning and accidents.

Should circumstances arise where employees of the Council are directly responsible for the safety of areas of open water, or for the execution of work where a water safety hazard exists, they should be provided with suitable and sufficient training and information.

4. General Responsibility

Neither the council or the emergency services will have any direct responsibility for the management and control of some areas of open water, but they will still however, encourage a pro-active approach to water safety. This should particularly be the case where an area of privately owned open water is close to a public right of way, a leisure attraction or other public facilities.

Those people wishing to engage in private water based recreational activities, eg fishing, rowing, sailing, canoeing etc have a personal responsibility for their own health and safety and for the safety of others for whom they are supervising or who may be affected by their activities. In all cases they should consider the potential hazards and take the necessary action to control the risks.

5. Risk Assessment

The principle means of assessing the risk of danger to members of the public is via established risk assessment processes. The risk assessor should first take into account the type of activity, which is likely to take place on, over or adjacent to the water. This may include work activity such as installation and maintenance or public activity, both legitimate and as a result of trespass.

Consider who is likely to be involved in the activities or be present at the location; staff, contractors, anglers, joggers, cyclists, children, disabled persons, elderly persons etc.

Consider also the hazards present;

- (v) Is the bank stable?
- (vi) Is the ground adjacent to the water uneven or slippery
- (vii) Is the water deep or fast flowing?
- (viii) Does the nature of the activity itself create any hazards?

Consider what control measures should be introduced; a possible combination of information, instruction and training, signage, rescue aids, fencing and the possibly landscaping of the banks and the approaches to the water.

When areas of open water are first assessed or are subject to change the following criteria should be considered when assessing the degree of risk;

(a) Water characteristics

Estimated depth of water

Whether fast flowing or still water

Possible undercurrents or unpredictable variations in flow

Possible degree of water pollution
Possible hidden dangers under water
Width or expanse of water area
Temperature (all open water is persistently cold)
Likely use of the water

(b) Land characteristics

Height of the edge above water
Steepness or slipperiness of the approach to the water
Attractions or allurements at the water's edge
Width and condition of paths along the water's edge
The nature of any adjacent developments/activities and the number and nature of the persons likely to be present (eg. Unsupervised children would imply a higher risk factor)
The degree of control/supervision available through instructors, wardens or others

(c) Additional hazardous factors

The degree of risk present at a water edge will be greatly increased if there is an element of the unexpected for members of the public or if they undervalue a risk through lack of information or awareness. Examples can include;

A path, which meets a water feature directly from a water-free area
An entrance, which meets a water feature at right angles
The sudden narrowing of a path or walkway
A weir or sluice in an area of otherwise calm water

(d) Use of the water and the water's edge

Swimming and diving
Children's Play, swinging from trees across or adjacent to water etc
Mooring of boats
Rowing, canoeing, windsurfing etc
Fishing (angling)
Sailing (full size and model boats)
Feeding ducks and other wildlife
Walking and jogging
Cycle riding

An assessment will allow water areas to be categorised according to the hazards present and the risk attaching to them. Following discussion between the council and the emergency services, it has been agreed that they should be colour coded according to their category as follows;

Red Sites – Large bodies of water identified as presenting a significant level of risk (These sites to be regularly inspected (at least once a year) and subject to educational programmes in schools etc, and following risk assessment, the use of warning and information signage, life saving equipment, compilation of emergency plans, supervision and appropriate control of access as appropriate).

Amber Sites – Bodies of water identified as presenting a medium level of risk (These sites to be inspected as appropriate (but not less than once every two years) and consideration given to the use of educational programmes in schools etc and the use of warning and information signage).

Green Sites – Bodies of water identified as presenting a low level of risk (The risk to be dealt with through raising public awareness, consideration should also be given to the need for the use of educational programmes in schools etc and the use of information and warning signage if appropriate).

6. Safety Inspections

The Council, together with the emergency services, will seek to ensure that routine safety inspections are undertaken (see para' 5 above) of all existing open water sites which it owns/controls and where it provides and maintains water safety equipment. The Council will also ensure that a record is kept of all interventions in respect of monitoring, inspection, maintenance and repair. In the case of privately owned sites it should be made clear that the responsibility in this regard rests with the site owners/managers, who should ensure that regular documented inspections are made of the site(s) under his/her control. To this end the Council will use its best endeavours to encourage site owners/managers to accept the need for such monitoring and inspection , together with the maintenance and repair of any equipment and signage that is in place.

A safety inspection should typically monitor:

- The provision and condition of any rescue/safety equipment
- The condition and position of any safety notices
- The condition of any edge protection equipment
- Any change to the water's edge or access which had been caused by weather changes
- A review of the risk assessments applicable to the site

The inspection should be undertaken with a view to identifying the need or otherwise for the introduction of any further measures necessary to control existing or new risks.

7. Public Education and information

The Council in cooperation with the emergency services, undertakes to provide a continuing programme of education and training with regard to the hazards presented by open water, for schools in the North Lincolnshire area, with particular emphasis on avoiding the potential dangers and how to act in an emergency. The programme will involve presentations within schools and the distribution of posters and leaflets, together with timely reminders to schools at key times during the year (eg. prior to the summer holidays). The council will also make every effort to initiate and/or participate in water safety events and campaigns either individually or in partnership with the emergency services and other appropriate bodies.

Safety signs have an important role in the identification of water hazards, the conveyance of information and the controlling of behaviour and are key to education of the public. The principles of shape and colour indicated by the Health and Safety (Safety Signs & Signals) Regulations 1996 and British Standard 5499, should be adhered to. The standard system of pictogram signs utilizes a red circle for prohibited activities and a yellow triangle for warning of hazards and dangers and is a standard, which is easily recognised by the public. When additional information is required the sign should be rectangular with black symbols and text on a white background. Although, the presentation of general information can be varied, depending upon the environment. The size and nature of the sign should be appropriate to convey the intended message to those using or approaching the water.

Signs should be located in prominent positions, which may be outside the water's edge area; at the entrance to an area containing a water feature; at a strategic location around a feature or at the access points. It may be considered appropriate to co-locate information signs with life saving equipment at a 'Safety Point'. They should be prominent but not overly obtrusive. They should be inspected and maintained to ensure that any reader is provided with sufficient information on the hazards that are present.

8. Edge protection and exclusion

Unsupervised open water can present a high level of risk due to the nature and use of the adjacent footpaths, bridleways and hinterland. To provide for a consistent approach to waterside safety, the Council will follow best practice as recommended by RoSPA within their banding guidelines. It will also promote the guidelines when

seeking to drive up standards of water safety with those that have ownership or management responsibility for private water areas.

If edge protection is to be used as a control measure, the appropriate type of protection could range from a layout, which has an intention to alert the public to proximity of water, or which can guide the public away from the water, or it can form a barrier. Barriers could be of a simplistic form (eg easily stepped over) through to something more substantial such as a high fence, a wall or dense foliage.

The widespread installation of exclusion type fencing will often be inappropriate. The value of waterside developments is often enhanced by access to and by views of the water and extensive fencing can often negate the purpose of such a scheme. The choice of edge protection has, therefore to balance safety considerations with those of the environment (including the needs of wildlife), the need to provide the public with access for water-based activities and of course the cost of improvements. The choice of edge protection at any particular location is necessarily a subjective decision taking into account all the above factors.

The maintenance implications of any safety features must be taken into consideration at an early stage.

A barrier, which has collapsed or safety equipment, which has been vandalised, will not serve the original purpose. Indeed, a more hazardous situation could be created.

In areas where there is only a short drop into relatively shallow water, it may be sensible and practicable to mark the edge by a change in the surface material and the use of bollards. More substantial post and chain fencing, will generally prevent adults from accidentally falling into water, but will not completely deny access. Such fencing should be used where the drop exceeds 2.0 metres and should be close enough to the edge to prevent people walking on the water side of the fence (it should normally be 1 to 1.2 metres high). In less formal areas, similar effects can be achieved by the use of dense evergreen and hedge forming planting between a pedestrian route and water. A one metre high (minimum) post and vertical railing is harder to climb and provides good protection, where access by unsupervised children is anticipated. However, this fencing can often obscure views of open water and may not always be appropriate. High palisade or chain link fencing or solid walls will deter all but the most determined from gaining access to water and may be of value in the case of isolated hazardous areas. It should however, be borne in mind that such fencing can also prevent potential rescuers from gaining access to the water. In situations where there is a temporary influx of visitors to a water's edge site or event, it may become necessary to erect a temporary higher grade barrier than that which is normally present. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has developed a 'Banding system' for categorising and managing the edges and banks of water features. It provides useful guidance for those involved in reducing risk at open water sites;

RoSPA Banding System

Band 1 (No Fence)

This band is for shallow water with an 'ornamental function'. The water depth will not normally exceed 0.5 metres (20in - knee high and wadeable). The edge will be solid and well defined eg. with coping or similar edging. There should be less than 1 metre in height from the edge to the water level. The approach to the edge may also be stepped. The site should not be immediately accessible to young children who can escape supervision.

Band 2 (Post and Chain)

The depth of the water will exceed 0.5 metres. The edge will be well defined and solid and not more than 2.0 metres above the water surface. This band may include foot-bridges in Band 1 areas, where the posts and chains are acting as a guide and a means of identifying the water's edge. Such sites should not be directly accessible to unaccompanied young children. The treatment is distinctive in that there is a minimal fence or bollard feature, which clearly identifies the edge. There is no exclusion expectancy and a simple post and chain fills this role.

Band 3 (Post and Rail with Rescue Aids)

The water will be deep (1.5 metres or more). The edge will be defined and stable, it will not be desirable to preclude total access (nor feasible). To achieve reasonable care a number of other preventative measures are employed to obtain a balance between 'risk' and the amenity that the water provides. Band 3 sites are not likely to include adjacent or nearby dwellings, or structures such as bridges, weirs, cuts etc., or access points which will attract concentrations of people. The staging of an attraction such as a water sport event would temporarily move the categorisation from band 3 to band 4. The typical combination of preventive measures at Band 3 will be a post or bollard with rails or chains. Supporting equipment will possible include grab chains at water level, rescue equipment and appropriate warning notices. Ideally, such areas will include a usual presence of people who are walking or relaxing.

Band 4 (Fence Denying Access)

This will be a deep water location, with additional hazards created by the edge being high above the water level, or by the water itself being not only deep but also fast flowing with dangerous currents. There will be a need to exclude access because of the degree of danger present or because a concentration of people near the hazard impairs other protective controls. In addition, disadvantaged groups such as the

elderly and young children should be protected by Band 4 measures, especially on or near structures, access points, dwellings, shops, schools etc. Band 4 is usually associated with one of a variety of treatments, which range from substantial walls to formidable fences at least 1 metre high. Vertical railings are most common, denying a horizontal foothold to would-be climbers.

Because Band 4 treatment is especially based upon an 'exclusion' principle, the facility to perform rescue is likely to be denied. The provision of rescue equipment can therefore be seen as contradictory and not advised. Hazard warning notices are however, strongly recommended.

9. Purchase and adoption of land with attached open water risks

Before the Council adopts or purchases any area of land with an integral or adjacent open water risk the original owner shall be required to commission a RoSPA or equivalent water safety inspection. This shall be at the owner's expense and any issues identified, will be deemed the responsibility of the owner to rectify prior to adoption or purchase, unless the council agrees through negotiation to undertake any necessary remedial action.

10. Rescue Equipment

The Council will where appropriate following consideration and assessment of a site in accordance with this strategy, put in place around areas of open water, life saving equipment. The presence of such equipment will however, only be of value where the presence of potential rescuers is likely. However, the public must not be drawn into a false sense of security, believing that the presence of rescue equipment makes access to the water safe. In situations where potential rescuers are unlikely to be present or where the rescue equipment is very prone to theft or vandalism, it may not be sensible or practicable to install such equipment. The positioning of this equipment will be dependent upon the outcomes of the assessment and should reflect the likely points of access to the water and the places where a rescue attempt may be safely staged. Section 234 of The Public Health Act 1936 states that; 'A local authority may provide life saving appliance at such places, whether places used for bathing or not, as they think fit'.

Except in fast flowing water most people who fall into the water will remain close to the bank. Where the water is deep or the bank is high, the provision of facilities such as handhold, chains and ladders will enable people to escape from the water themselves or allow rescuers easy access to the water.

Life buoys are considered most suitable for deep water, such as adjacent to steep edges and quarries. Conventional life buoys can only be thrown a distance of approximately 6 metres. Throw lines can often be more suitable where the edge gradient is shallow and directional stability is required. Where the risk assessment identifies that vandalism could adversely affect the integrity of rescue equipment, consideration should be given to making the equipment more robust and to the provision of additional advice or information at the location. Safety signage and

lifesaving equipment should when ever possible, be combined into a position, usually known as a 'Safety Point'. These Points should be highly visible and their locations should be fixed and recorded. They should of course be regularly inspected (at least annually) and the inspections should be documented.

The Council will encourage the positioning of life saving equipment at appropriate locations around areas of open water throughout the area. When promoting the use of life saving equipment, particular attention should be paid to locations, which are particularly hazardous (steep banks accessible to the public, strong and unpredictable currents, high levels of public use at holiday times etc).

Although a conventional lifebuoy has only a limited throwing range, it is generally the most suitable rescue equipment intended for use by the general public. It is easily seen and recognised and is easy to use. A range of suitable lifebuoys is available commercially, they can be either pole or wall mounted and are usually made of toughened polythene. They may have buoyant and rot-proof lifelines of up to 30 metres attached. However, in locations where lifebuoy ropes are likely to be stolen or misused (eg. To make rope swings for children), it may not be prudent to provide a rope.

11. Ice on Open Water

Open water areas can present different risks to the public when frozen over. Such conditions significantly reduce the value of lifebuoys as rescue devices. Life buoys in these circumstances may act as an attraction to vandals as they can be projected across the surface of the ice and used as a form of 'sledge'. During periods of sustained ice it may be appropriate to reconsider the provision of life buoys at particular locations and temporary removal might be justified. Temporary barriers and additional signage, warning people to stay off the ice and/or advising people of the best methods of survival and rescue in the event of an incident, should also be considered.

12. Environmental Issues

All water courses and open water areas in North Lincolnshire should be considered to be unsuitable for bathing/swimming. Possible sources of contamination include; storm water and sewage discharges; agricultural run-off from the use of pesticides and fertilisers or the spreading of slurry on farm land; run-off from waste disposal sites; accidental spillages and the increased use of phosphates, nitrates and other chemicals. Biological contamination is certain to be present and toxic algal bloom may also be a factor. In ponds, streams, lakes, canals and reservoirs there is a likelihood of the presence of rats. Contamination of such water areas by the leptospira bacterium found in rat's urine is likely. It can be transmitted to humans via an open wound or abrasion, through a mucus membrane or through droplets of liquid, resulting in Weil's disease, which is potentially fatal. Workers potentially at risk of contracting this disease should be issued with an appropriate information card,

which can be passed to GPs in the case of illness. It is vital that all cuts and abrasions are protected against contamination with a waterproof dressing.

In addition, protective clothing (gloves etc) should be worn by workers where it is not possible to avoid contact with water that might be contaminated. Any individual ingesting potentially contaminated water should be taken to the nearest hospital for examination and treatment. It is essential that all employees working near open water should be made aware of the emergency procedures that should be implemented in the event of an accident or incident.

In the event of incidents being reported where wildlife is at risk, or pollution (oil , blue-green algae etc) is found to be present in open water the Environment Agency and the relevant teams within the Council should be informed.

13. Water Based Activities

Organised on-water activities should be supervised by competent persons, whose qualifications are recognised by the appropriate governing or controlling authority. The rules and codes of practice of the authority should be followed at all times.

At water areas controlled by the Council no on-water activity should be undertaken without the express permission of the senior officer concerned, who must satisfy him or herself, that all reasonably practicable steps have been taken to satisfy health and safety requirements. Relevant managers should ensure that organisations, which use the council's water areas have adequate insurance cover.

Where the Council seeks to organise or promote a specific water based event it should require the organiser to develop both Standard Operating Procedures and an Emergency Action Plan covering the event. Where an organisation wishes to use an area of water not under the control of the Council for an event, the organisers should be encouraged to submit their plans etc to the Council's Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG).

14. First Aid Provision

There is no specific legal requirement to provide first aid equipment for use by the public. Where appropriate however, having regard to the First Aid at Work Regulations 1981, equipment will be made available to staff.

15. Reporting Accidents and Incidents

Where a member of staff sustains an injury as a result of an accident at work it must be reported in accordance with the Council's written procedures. Where a member of

the public is injured in an incident it too should be reported in the first instance using the Council's H&S Accident Record Book. If it becomes necessary to report an accident to the HSE this should be done on the appropriate form within ten days following the incident.

16. Pleasure Craft

People providing pleasure craft for use by members of the public, should be encouraged to provide personal buoyancy aids (complying with EN393). The use of such buoyancy aids by children is mandatory. In all instances the owners of such craft should be advised to comply with their statutory obligations under health and safety, licensing and other relevant legislation.

17. Employee and Contractor Safety

Council officers responsible for work being undertaken alongside or over water should ensure that detailed procedures have been drawn up with regard to the work activity. Risk assessments should be compiled in accordance with council safety policies and guidance. They also have a responsibility to ensure that sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision is provided when work of this nature is being carried out.

All employees have a duty to report any observed defect, damage or loss of an fence, installation or fitting, which has been provided for the purpose of water safety.

In carrying out a risk assessment in this regard, the following should be taken into account:

- The work activity to be undertaken eg. Construction, demolition, structural maintenance, grounds maintenance, water course clearance, security patrolling, swimming and or diving instruction etc.
- The location of the work activity and any special factors that might be presented by eg. Quays, locks, steep banks, weirs, reservoirs, canals and drains etc
- The persons involved and their qualifications (both with regard to the work concerned and to life saving, swimming ability and first aid knowledge) and their experience of work in, on or close to, water based environments and whether there will be a need for staff to work alone or in pairs.
- In addition consideration should be given to problems that could be caused by inclement weather conditions (high winds, precipitation, extreme heat or cold, flooding etc)

18. Lone Working

Managers are responsible for identifying the risks that may affect their staff when working alone. When working over or adjacent to open water lone workers can be more vulnerable than under normal circumstances. If they fall into the water they may not be able to save themselves and it may be necessary to have a second person present, who is able to respond in the event of an emergency.

When there is no alternative to a person working alone it is vital to ensure that an adequate monitoring or checking system is in place as part of a written safe system of work. Such a system should be the outcome of a risk assessment and will probably require prior training and information; the use of appropriate personal protective equipment; the provision of a mobile phone or radio for use in emergencies etc.

19. Water Safety Group

The Water Safety Group was set up in 2009 as a non-permanent attachment to the Community Resilience Board to consider open water safety issues across the North Lincolnshire area.

NLC

Corporate Safety Team

2010