

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Safety Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room 1, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Monday, 28th January 2008 at 1400 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor D. McGregor – in the Chair

Councillors Mrs R.J. Bowler, P.M. Bowmer and B.R. Murray-Carr.

Union Representatives:-

Unison

R. Frisby and J. Hendy.

Unite

C. Dodsworth and S. Sambrooks.

Officers:-

S. Sternberg (Solicitor to the Council), L. Keeling (Head of Human Resources), T. Walker (Health and Safety Officer) and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

680. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer) and J. Ritchie (Chair).

681. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

682. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

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683. MINUTES – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2007

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor P.M. Bowmer.

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting held on 25th September 2007 be approved as a true record.

684. WASTE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

In the absence of the Street Services Manager the report was deferred to a future meeting.

685. REFERRED ITEM FROM EQUALITIES WORKING GROUP HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER 2007 – DISABLED TOILET IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

At a meeting of the Equalities Working Group the misuse of the disabled toilet in Community Services as a storage facility had been referred to the Safety Committee for consideration.

The Health and Safety Officer advised that although items had now been removed from the toilet a number of cleaning materials still remained. The Chair requested that an email be sent to the Property and Estates Manager and Head of Regeneration to request that these items be cleared immediately.

(Democratic Services)

686. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report which provided feedback on a number of matters arising from the previous meeting.

Instructions had been issued to Heads of Service that the take up of occupational health appointments should be closely monitored. Some departments had now put systems in place and whilst there had been a significant improvement, several appointments had been missed quite recently. The Head of Human Resources would discuss this with the appropriate Head of Service.

Further to questions from Members it was confirmed that these appointments were not transferable as they were mainly job specific health checks.

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In respect of the possibility of flagging files on internal systems to indicate properties on the employee protection register, the Health and Safety Officer advised that the Council did not currently have a universal system to which all departments had access on a regular basis and this was therefore not a workable option. It was more likely that a database would be maintained by the Health and Safety Officer who would advise Heads of Service of properties to be added to and deleted from the employee protection register. Heads of Service would ensure that the flagging of files on internal systems was undertaken. It was added that it was of crucial importance that this was kept up to date for both additions and removals. The Chair added that this should be closely monitored to ensure that Heads of Service were providing the appropriate information to employees.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The Monitoring Officer advised the meeting that policies presented to Safety Committee were generally in draft form and therefore designated exempt, however once agreed and recommended to Council, the policies would be included in the open part of the agenda.

687. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor P.M. Bowmer.

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated Paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the public interest for that to be revealed.

688. SICKNESS ABSENCE/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS AND REVIEW OF MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 4

The Head of Human Resources presented the report to provide the committee with an update on current occupational health and sickness absence figures. The revised policy and procedure was also included for consideration. The Head of Human Resources updated the figures stated in the report in respect of occupational health referrals for the first half of 2007/08.

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The Safety Committee expressed their condolences at the sad loss of John Ford and requested that their recognition and appreciation of the work done by John for the Council be recorded.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.
RECOMMENDED that (1) the report be received,

(2) the managing sickness absence policy and managing sickness absence procedure be referred to Council for approval with a view to implementing the changes from April 2008.

(Head of Human Resources)

689. ACCIDENT AND STRESS STATISTICS EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 2

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report to advise committee of the accident and stress statistics for the period 1st April 2007 to 30th September 2007. The meeting was advised that the number of reportable accidents was down, these mainly being due to manual handling accidents. Further training would be implemented to provide refresher training for employees.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.
RESOLVED that the report be received.

690. CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH POLICY (COSHH) EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 4

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report and attached policy for consideration. The policy provided details of which substances were considered hazardous, the relevant legislation in place and measures taken by the Council to manage the issues involved. Guidance notes were also included setting out the method of carrying out assessments.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.
RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and that Council be recommended to adopt the procedure as Council policy.

(Head of Human Resources)

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691. NO SMOKING POLICY (REVISED) EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 4

The Health and Safety Officer presented the revised no smoking policy for consideration. The revised policy took account of further legislation in respect of private dwellings, including Council tenancies, which were specifically exempted from the requirement to be smoke free where work is undertaken. The policy also provided guidelines for employees working in smoker's homes and advised on action to be taken in the event of clients refusing to refrain from smoking in the presence of Council employees. Guidance would be sent out to tenants to advise them of the policy.

In response to questions in respect of employees' rights, the Head of Human Resources referred the questioner to the guidance included in the report.

A Member commented that the 5 metre exclusion zone around the building forced employees away from the shelter of the building exposing them to the elements. The Head of Human Resources replied that the exclusion zone was put in place in response to complaints that smokers were standing under windows causing smoke to enter the building. It had been previously discussed and agreed at previous meetings that shelters would not be provided. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety added that having shelters may also encourage anti social behaviour.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by C. Dodsworth.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and the revised policy and procedure be adopted as Council policy.

(Head of Human Resources)

692. PROVISION AND USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT POLICY EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 4

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report and policy which covered the Council's duties under Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations to provide guidance on the current use of hand tools.

Further to questions from Members the Health and Safety Officer advised that the Council still had responsibility for ensuring that equipment brought in by employees was checked for safety. Further guidance would be issued.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopt the draft Provision and Use of Work Equipment Policy as corporate policy.

(Head of Human Resources)

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693. WORKPLACE INSPECTION POLICY EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 4

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report including the draft policy and procedure which improved upon the present system by more tightly assigning responsibilities and timetables for inspections.

An update on the current workplace inspections programme was distributed to the meeting.

The reference to Portfolio Holder would be changed to Member Champion throughout the report and policy.

The Head of Human Resources added that advice had been issued to Heads of Service to invite the Member Champion and union representative but to proceed with visits should they be unavailable to attend. This would be incorporated into the policy.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.
RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and the draft policy be recommended to Council for adoption as the Council's Corporate Policy.

(Head of Human Resources)

694. HAND ARM VIBRATION POLICY EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 4

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report and policy to advise of legislative changes and policy initiatives to meet the Council's duties and protect its employees from the effects of vibration at work.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.
RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and the draft policy be recommended to Council for adoption as the Council's Corporate Policy.

(Head of Human Resources)

695. LEGIONELLA CONTROL AND WATER HYGIENE POLICY EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 4

The Health and Safety Officer presented the report including the policy and procedure which were intended to control the risk from Legionella to employees, service users and tenants and to provide legal compliance with the approved code of practice.

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Risk assessments had been carried out at each of the Council's sites and regular maintenance and testing systems had been put in place to manage any problems effectively.

Moved by Councillor B.R. Murray-Carr, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and that the draft policy and procedure be recommended to Council for adoption as the Council's Corporate Policy.

(Head of Human Resources)

The meeting concluded at 1505 hours.